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Connecting Title I Schools and the Pre-*Brown* Era: Do Contemporary School Principals Espouse Pre-*Brown* Educational Beliefs?

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to determine what school and principal characteristics influence the alignment of contemporary leaders' beliefs with African American principals' beliefs working during the pre-*Brown v. Board* era. Using OLS multiple regression on a sample of Georgia school principals, the study found a statistically significant relationship ($b=.252$, $p \leq 0.05$) supporting that principals who worked in Title I schools encompassed higher levels of pre-*Brown* beliefs than principals of non-Title I schools. This finding indicates that leaders of Title I schools, much like the leaders who led the segregated schools for people of color during the pre-*Brown* era, instill a set of values that among other attributes are student-centered, optimistic, and dedicated which impacts school culture and potentially positive student outcomes.

Keywords

equity, Title I Schools, educational reform, Georgia, principals

Introduction

African American and other children of color tend to be educated in largely poor, overcrowded, segregated urban schools with diminished educational resources (Frankenberg & Orfied, 2012; Noguera, Pierce & Ahrams, 2016) that are geographically isolated from the majority population

(Morris & Morris, 2000). More than six decades after the *Brown v. Board* Supreme Court decision followed by desegregation and its subsequent white flight, concentrations of students of color remain largely educated in residential and educationally segregated "single race schools" (Brown, 2003, p. 71) that are labeled Title I schools. These segregated settings bear some resemblance, geographically and economically, to those in which pre-*Brown* children were educated (Darling-Hammonds, 2010; Flessa, 2009; Frankenberg & Orfield, 2012; Orfield & Lee, 2004; Rothstein, 2015). Despite the intent of *Brown v. Board* to provide all children with equal educational opportunities through school desegregation, children of color are still educated in largely segregated school settings with the focus primarily on the inadequacies of students in these geographical settings (Horsford, 2009; Noguera, 2003).

Darling-Hammonds (2010) reported that 72% of African American students attended predominantly minority schools compared to 63% in 1980 (p. 23). In addition, since 2002, political and demographic forces in the largest metropolitan, urban, and suburban districts have produced educational situations similar to those prior to desegregation. Specifically, African American and Latino students "are far more segregated … where nearly 90% of students in their schools are non-White" (Orfield & Frankenberg, 2014, p. 727). Further, nearly 50% of school-aged students are children of color, 21% speak a language other than English at home, and one in five of all public schools are high poverty schools (NCES, 2014).

During Jim Crow segregation, segregated communities were closed by law (Gates, 1994; Khalifah, 2018), and African Americans were forced to live within the same restricted areas. Contemporarily, "African Americans, Latinx, and American Indians are significantly more likely than White people to live in poverty (U.S. Census Bureau, 2016 quoted in Gorski, 2018, p. 49) and in segregated neighborhoods. Pre-*Brown* principals, faced with systemic inequities, still successfully educated African American children and prepared to them to compete in a society that was not then open to them (Juergensen, 2015; Tillman, 2004).

Inasmuch as there is a paucity of information about the belief systems upon which contemporary principals' leaders base their goals and practices, (Convertino & Graboski-Bauer, 2018; Devos & Bouckenoughee, 2009, p. 175), and given some similarities in challenges facing urban school leaders in the state of Georgia as they attempt to educate pre-dominantly African American, low income children, the purpose of this study was to determine what school and principal characteristics influence the alignment of contemporary leaders' beliefs with African American principals' beliefs working during pre-*Brown*.

With desegregation and the mass firing of Black administrators, particularly male administrators (Haney, 1978, p. 94) and teachers, displacement and firing was most prominent among Black principals, (Ladson-Billings, 2004; Morris, 2009), educators lost the educational history and institutional networks (Walker, 2018) that had previously educated and propagated their pedagogical models for leadership and teaching were destroyed (Croft et al., 2018; Lyons & Chelsey, 2004; Morris, 2009; Morris & Morris, 2000; Tillman, 2004). Because previous structures and educational institutions were dismantled during desegregation, school leaders appear to have been left without a clear, structured network to inform principal practice (Walker, 2018). In contrast, pre-*Brown* principals had the benefit of the Historical African American Pedagogical

Network (HAAPN) (Croft, Pogue, & Walker, 2018; Walker, 2018) that trained and propagated beliefs and strategies about how to educate African American children. As a result, post-*Brown* school leaders likely lost this collective pedagogical leadership knowledge. This work determined whether contemporary principals espoused similar beliefs to those held by pre-*Brown* African American school leaders.

The following research question guides this study:

Do school and principal characteristics influence the alignment of contemporary school principal's beliefs with African-American principal beliefs of the pre-Brown era?

The Historical African-American Pedagogical Network

The Historical African American Pedagogical Network (HAAPN) (Croft et al., 2018; Walker, 2009, 2013, 2015, 2018) grounds, informs, and provides context and theoretical framing for the construction of this work. The HAAPN provides a lens with which to understand the prevalence of a leadership paradigm of pre-*Brown* principals (Croft et al., 2018; Walker, 2009, 2013, 2015, 2018). Specifically, the HAAPN explains a systematic network designed to educate African American children despite inequities imposed on school leaders, teachers, and children. Although leaders of segregated schools were believed to be substandard, to the contrary, the HAAPN represents a network of precepts and ideals upon which leadership and teaching were based (Croft et al., 2018; Walker, 2013, 2015).

The HAAPN model substantiates the existence of a leadership paradigm in which school leaders' beliefs about African American children served as the foundation for their practice (Croft et al, 2018; Walker, 2009, 2015). The HAAPN explicates the existence of a professional network of African American leaders during segregation (Walker, 2009, 2015) and accounts for the recurrence and propagation of practices based on common beliefs of pre-*Brown* principals. The HAAPN served as one conduit through which African American leaders throughout the South experienced similar professional development, and as a result, demonstrated similar leadership practices (Walker, 2018).

Based on specific goals and practices, the HAAPN substantiates a reconstruction of a historical paradigm of leadership that has either been forgotten or disregarded by considering the social, ethnic, and cultural context (Croft, in press; Guba & Lincoln, 1994).

Beliefs of Pre-*Brown* Principals about Educating Children

Despite the disadvantages of shorter school terms, lack of district resources, and deprivation of parental resources, principals maintained two sets of beliefs: one set based on the steadfast belief in the educability of all children; and a second, that it is the school's moral and ethical responsibility to educate all children. Fundamentally undergirding their beliefs was that all children can learn and that educating children despite societal, familial, or other barriers and insuring student success was the school's responsibility. In this regard, the cornerstone of success for many African American principals during this era was the belief that "all African-American children can learn regardless of their background" (Lomotey, 1990, p. 193). They further believed that allowing children not to learn was never a choice (Jones, 1981). While other educators during

this time period may have espoused similar beliefs and goals, African American school leaders believed that the future hinged on their insuring the success of their students. As a result, African American pre-*Brown* principals believed that "if one child is not achieving at his [stet] maximum potential, or close to that maximum potential, then we've failed" (Lomotey, 1990, p. 193).

Confronted with hostile societal inequities, pre-*Brown* African American principals crafted and implemented a leadership paradigm that protected and uplifted children. Based on aspirational and resistant beliefs, guided by specific roles, and supported by practices, this leadership paradigm was designed to prepare students to move beyond the exigencies of an oppressive society, both academically and socially (Croft, in press). Even though these beliefs are characterized as aspirational and resistant beliefs (Croft, in press), they encompass what is considered "best practices" in contemporary leadership. As best practices, they serve as a focus and basis for analyzing the leadership practices of contemporary school leaders**.**

Aspirational Beliefs

Instructionally focused aspirational beliefs were born out of the belief that education could prepare students to compete and succeed in a society in which they did not presently live (Author, in press). Designed to mitigate the oppression of a hostile society, resistant beliefs also instilled hope in a better future and prepared students to resist the dominant narrative that African American children were innately inferior (Rokeach, 1972).

Resistant Beliefs

Resistant beliefs espoused the idea that education had the power to prepare students for full inclusion and participation in a democratic society and to overcome and resist prevailing societal and institutional barriers, inequities and perceptions engendered by endemic racism (Croft, 2017; Gates, 1994; Irvine & Irvine, 1983, p. 420; Milner & Howard, 2004; Savage, 2002; Tillman, 2004; Walker, 1996, 2000).

Robins (2016) describe core beliefs as a statement of fundamental convictions and values. As a result, "selecting principals with the core beliefs that drive individuals to ensure children and youth should come first, at all cost, and is paramount to the success of students as well as principals and teachers" (p. 17). Khalifa and Brown (2015) further contend that in order to develop equitable schools one must consider the importance of "school leaders' beliefs" (p. 78) -- the motivation behind principal and student goals and practices (p. 703).

Educational literature is rife with the understanding that beliefs are essential facets to developing and sustaining the educational success for marginalized students, particularly African American children (Bickmore & Dowell, 2015; Convertino & Graboski-Bauer, 2018; Guerra & Nelson, 2009; Parajes, 1992, 1993; Rokeach, 1972). The pedagogy of leadership that pre-*Brown* principals experienced was propagated through the HAAPN, a formalized network designed to train and develop African American school leaders and teachers (Croft et al., 2018; Walker, 2018). Beliefs about how to best educate African American children was fundamental to the pre-*Brown* pedagogy of leadership. Because the HAAPN along with the belief systems of pre-*Brown* school leaders was lost during desegregation (Walker, 2018), a rationale for this study includes exploring the extent

to which contemporary educators embrace similar beliefs that successfully educated pre-*Brown* African American students.

Methodology

This study's population was composed of all active school principals in the state of Georgia during the 2017-2018 academic school year. The population of principals served in either a traditional public school, public charter school, or independent schools (n=1622). From this population, principals were randomly selected using a simple random sampling technique and were offered an opportunity to partake in the study by completing the electronic survey. All principal contact information was provided by the Georgia Department of Education as well as school and district websites.

Through the electronic survey, principals provided demographic, school characteristic, and principal belief information. To assist in determining if there was a relationship between pre-*Brown* principal beliefs and school Title I status, a power analysis (Cohen, 1988) was employed to determine an adequate sample size. The recommended parameters for an OLS estimation process (i.e., a medium effect size [f^2=0.15], an α level of 0.05, and a β level of 0.80) with 10 predictors were analyzed using GPower statistical software which identified a necessary sample size of 118 participants. An over sampling technique was used to insure an adequate sample was acquired which resulted in a total of 172 participants responding to the survey; however, 30 participants were removed from the study due to missing data which rendered a total of 142 participants. Prior to removal, the missing data was examined for potential patterns or biases in missing information and none were identified. Considering the sample size was much larger than the power analysis's recommendation and adequate power would be sustained if the sample size was reduced, a listwise deletion method was chosen as the means to address missing data as opposed to imputation.

Table 1
Descriptive Statistics

Principal Characteristics	Count and Percentages
Gender	
Males	58(40.8%)
Females	84(59.2%)
Ethnicity	
White	100(70.4%)
Non-White	42 (29.6%)
School Level	
Elementary School	76(53.5%)
Middle School	28(19.7%)
High School	24(16.9%)
Combination Schools	14(9.9%)
School Environment	
Urban School	26(18.3%)
Suburban School	57(40.1%)
Rural School	59(41.5%)
School Type	
Traditional Public School	105(73.9%)
Public Charter School	23(16.2%)
Independent School	14(9.9%)
Title I Status	
Title I school	96(67.6%)
Non-Title I school	46(32.4%)
Socioeconomic Status (SES)	
High Poverty School	84(59.2%)
Moderate Poverty School	35(24.6%)
Low Poverty School	23(6.2%)

Independent Variable

Title I school status served as the independent variable for this study. Title I schools were used in this study because they are largely populated geographically, if not economically, by Black and Brown children and in this respect, they most resemble schools during segregation. The basic principles of Title I is that schools with large concentrations of low-income students will receive supplemental funds to assist in meeting students' educational goals. Low-income students are determined by the number of students enrolled in the free and reduced lunch program. Similar to the pre-Brown era, leaders of color often were employed in low-income schools and endured comparable issues faced by Title I schools today. To capture Title I status in the dataset, principals who indicated they were employed at a Title I school were dummy coded as "1", while principals who were not employed at a Title I school were coded as "0". Table 1 indicates 96 participants were employed in Title I schools whereas 46 participants were not employed in a Title I school (67.6% and 32.4%, respectively).

Covariates

Potential confounding variable were addressed by including them in the analysis as covariates. Each of these covariates were chosen because of their potential impact on the dependent variable, i.e., pre-*Brown* beliefs (Flessa, 2009; Giles, 1975; Middleton, 2010; Rothstein, 2015). For instance, age, years of experience, and gender were included in the model because of their potential relationship with principals' pre-*Brown* beliefs.

We specifically controlled for age and years of experience because of the potential likelihood of leaders of color who were educated and/or mentored by leaders during the pre-*Brown* era and may have adopted pre-*Brown* beliefs. Likewise, gender was statically addressed because research has purported correlations (r=.457) supporting a positive relationship between principals' gender and principals' tenure (Middleton, 2010, p. 69) particularly "in secondary settings where the principalship is heavily weighted in favor of males" (Lee, Smith, & Cioci, 1993, p. 154). Although most of the school leaders during pre-*Brown* were male, a few notable female principals "opened schools in the North and the South and served dual roles as principals and teachers" (Tillman, 2004, p. 108). Because of the empirical nuances in gender differences in school leadership, principal's beliefs—specifically pre-*Brown*—may also differ. As noted in Table 1 and Table 2, the average principal's age in the sample was 48 years, the average years of leadership experience was 8 years, and the male to female ratio was 58:84, respectively.

Ethnicity is the essential factor that influenced the pre-*Brown* era. Schools during this period were segregated by race, and school leaders of color were held in high regard in the raising, protecting, and development of the youth in the African American community. It is said that Black principals during pre-*Brown* and up to the second half of the twentieth century were as influential as Black preachers and served as key role models to the community (Anderson, 1988; Henig, Hula, Orr, & Pedescleaux, 1999; Irvine & Irvine, 1983; Tillman, 2004; Walker, 1996, 2009). Due to the limited number of certain minority racial compositions in the sample, the ethnicity variable was dichotomized (i.e., Minority and Non-Minority) and all minorities were grouped so that each ethnic strata (i.e., African American, Asian, Hispanic, Native America/Pacific Islander, other)

would be accounted for in the analysis. The sample of principals in this study consisted of 42 minority principals and 100 Non-minority principals (see Table 1). Although there are roughly 50% more Non-minority principals compared to minority principals in the sample, this statistic is reflective of the actual U.S. principal population (Taie & Goldring, 2017).

Similar to personal characteristics, school characteristics can potentially influence principals' pre-*Brown* beliefs. Because of the empirical literature supporting school environment, school type, school socioeconomic status (SES), and school enrollment, each of these variables were controlled for in our model. The school environment variable addressed the schools urban, suburban, and rural status. Urban schools are connected to the education of pre-*Brown* schools in relationship to the lingering unequal distribution of services and inequitable structures that existed during pre-*Brown* and presently (Tillman, 2004). More often, like their pre-*Brown* predecessors, they were frequently characterized by failure, inadequate funding, and—in contrast to pre-*Brown*—often lack high expectations for their children (Flessa, 2009). The sample, as noted in Table 1, consisted of 26 urban schools, 57 suburban schools, and 59 rural schools.

To capture school type, participants were asked to define their school as either a traditional public school, public charter school, or independent school. Each of these school types have unique missions and cultures that are organizationally developed or developed by school leaders. Considering the potential impact of school type on the overall functioning of the school, one can suspect that this component can influence a leader's beliefs. As noted in Table 1, Roughly 74% of the sample was composed of traditional public schools, while roughly 16% and 10% were respectively public charter and independent schools.

SES and student enrollment are both variables that impact student achievement (Buckman & Tran, 2015, 2018), but both also influence leadership practices and school culture. Schools during the pre-*Brown* era experienced both large student enrollment and high percentages of students living in poverty. For example, during segregation, "60% of Negroes worked at jobs in the lower echelons of the occupational hierarchy with limited occupations mobility" and were at the lowest rungs of society in terms of the economy (Henderson, 1961, p. 4-5). Educating students to withstand situations like the one's described shaped the views of principals of color during this era, and one may hypothesize that principals who work in similar environments as principals of the pre-*Brown* era may have similar beliefs.

For the purposes of this study, we used a percentage of students receiving free and/or reduced lunch status to capture SES. Principals were asked to identify whether their school was high poverty (i.e., 60%-100% free and/or reduced lunch eligibility), moderate poverty (i.e., 26%-59% free and/or reduced lunch eligibility), or low poverty (i.e., 0%-25% free and/or reduced lunch eligibility). Table 1 highlights that the sample consisted of 84 high poverty schools, 35 moderate poverty schools, and 23 low poverty schools. Likewise, principals were asked to provide the total number of students enrolled in their schools. Table 2 indicates the average student enrollment for the sample was 824 students. It is important to note that although poverty is associated with Title I status, the "no multicollinearity" assumption for multiple regression was tested and results indicated all independent variables were not highly correlated (i.e., Variance Inflation Factor (VIF)) was less than 3 for all independent variable comparisons.

Dependent Variables

Principals of color during the pre-*Brown* era served disadvantaged students that often lacked district resources in their segregated schools. These principals held a set of beliefs that supported the learning ability of all children as well as the school's moral and ethical responsibility to educate all children.

To assess principals' pre-*Brown* beliefs, a 9-item questionnaire was configured that captured the beliefs of principals of color during the pre-*Brown* era. Items included statements related to: 1) one's beliefs about education's impact on culture and students' upward social mobility, 2) responsibilities of the school in educating the whole child, and 3) education's impact on students' future success. In addition, the content of the items included in the survey were validated by a panel of experts to ensure the items on the survey, in fact, captured the beliefs of principals of color during the pre-*Brown* era. The survey, for psychometric purposes, underwent an Exploratory Factor Analysis and internal consistency procedures to further validate the instrument.

Items on the survey were rated on a four-point, Likert-type scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Higher ratings on the scale signified stronger alignment of their beliefs with the beliefs of principals of color during the pre-*Brown* era, while lower ratings on the scale signified weaker alignment of their beliefs with the beliefs of principals of color during the pre-*Brown* era. The average rating for participant pre-*Brown* beliefs was 3.35 (see Table 2 below).

Table 2
Descriptive Statistics

Principal Characteristics	Mean	Standard Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Age[a]	48	7.78	34	66
Leadership Experience[a]	8	5.95	0	30
Enrollment[b]	824	679	121	7600
Pre-Brown Principal Beliefs[c]	3.35	.364	2.00	4.00

Note: [a]Years, [b]Students, [c]Principal Belief Likert Scale

Factor Analysis

An exploratory factor analysis was conducted to assess the factorability of the original 14 items examined in the pre-*Brown* Principal Beliefs survey. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy was .68 and the Barlett's test of sphericity was significant ($x^2(142) = 303.23$, $p < .05$) both of which support the parameters and assumption necessary in conducting the analysis. Given that all items communalities did not exceed .3, which indicates all items did not share some common variance, items not meeting this threshold were removed from the analysis. As such, the factor analysis was conducted on nine items.

The initial three Eigenvalues of the nine factors represent 32.3%, 16.4%, and 14.3% of the total variance before leveling off on the screen plot. The aforementioned three values were the only Eigenvalues that were greater than one and, therefore, were selected as the three factors. When utilizing Principal Axis factoring and an Oblimin rotation method, items exceeding .5 were grouped with its respective factor. Themes were developed for each factor based on the grouped items. The themes were as follows: 1) education's impact on culture and class (2 items), 2) educating the whole child (3 items), and 3) education's impact on adult success (4 items). Considering all factors were combined to create a composite score to serve as the dependent variable, internal consistency was measured across all factors using Chronbach's alpha (α=.723) and was found to be within the acceptable range (i.e., α>.7; (Nunnally, 1978)).

Results

To empirically address our research question, this study utilized an OLS Multiple Regression procedure with a simultaneous order of entry to inferentially evaluate the beliefs of Georgia principals. The dependent variable in this regression analysis was principal's pre-*Brown* beliefs while the independent variable was school Title I Status. Table 3 reports the coefficients, standard of error, and level of significance for the independent variable and all covariates.

According to the results of this study, there exists a relationship between principal beliefs and school Title I status. This finding indicates a positive relationship between Title I Schools and principal pre-*Brown* beliefs (b=.252, $p \leq 0.05$). This can be interpreted as the views of principals of Title I schools are more aligned to the principals of the pre-*Brown* era than principals who do not serve in Title I schools.

Title I status was the only variable found to be statistically significant at the $p \leq 0.05$ level; however, two other variables were found to be marginally significant (i.e., $p \leq 0.10$) and worthy of discussion. Both gender and ethnicity were found to be marginally significant (b=-.134, $p \leq 0.10$ and b=-.164, $p \leq 0.10$; respectively). These findings denote male principals' views are more aligned with the views to principals of the pre-*Brown* era than female principals and non-minority principals' views are more aligned with the views to principals of the pre-*Brown* era than minority principals.

Table 3
OLS Multiple Regression Model of Principal Pre-Brown Beliefs

Variables	Coefficients
Constant	3.59***
	(.240)
Females	-.134+
	(.068)
Non-White	-.164+
	(.085)
Age	-.006
	(.005)
School Level	-.027
	(.037)
Principal Experience	-.003
	(.006)
School Environment	.003
	(.051)
School Type	.058
	(.054)
SES	.109+
	(.065)
Enrollment	-2.879E-5
	(.000)
Title I	.252*
	(.104)
R^2	.136
N	142

Note. Standard of errors appear in parentheses
Dependent Variables: Principal Pre-Brown Beliefs
+ $p \leq 0.10$
**$p \leq 0.05$*
***$p \leq 0.01$*
**** $p \leq 0.001$*

Discussion

While increasing numbers of children continue to be educated in urban districts with neighborhoods with majority African American student populations (Brown, 2003), leadership preparation programs persistently exclude other perspectives and paradigms "that include scholarship and knowledge of African Americans" (Brown, 2005, p. 585). This study is significant because it identified whether contemporary principals also espouse similar beliefs and, if so, to what extent do their beliefs align with the beliefs of pre-*Brown* principals during the segregated era. Studying the leadership paradigms and beliefs systems of educators geared specifically for children of color may be instructive. In this light, with circumstances that seem eerily similar to those experienced by children under segregation, this study provides valuable information that can be used to provide insights into leadership paradigms as well as discussion for leadership preparation providers. By appropriating lessons from the past geared specifically for African American students, this study provides an additional dimension to the requisite skills of contemporary leaders to incorporate into present models of leadership.

To respond to the research question, "Do school and principal characteristics influence the alignment of contemporary school principals' beliefs with African American principal beliefs of the pre-*Brown* era?"

The significant finding in this study is that there is an alignment of the beliefs held by pre-*Brown* principals and the beliefs held by contemporary principals of Title I schools. Because contemporary Title I schools in segregated settings bear some resemblance, geographically and economically, to those in which pre-*Brown* children were educated (Darling-Hammonds, 2010; Flessa, 2009; Orfield & Frankenbert, 2012; Howard, 2010; Orfield & Lee, 2004; Rothstein, 2015), this finding is significant because principals of Title I school's views are aligned with the pre-*Brown* principals who espoused and based their practices and goals for educating children around aspirational and resistant beliefs that led to success of students during this era (Anderson, 1988; Juergensen, 2015; Walker, 1996). This alignment may also suggest that contemporary principals, faced with similar challenges to pre-*Brown* principals, may ground their leadership practices on a similar belief system to pre-*Brown* principals. The significant alignment of contemporary principal beliefs about educating children with pre-*Brown* school leaders also suggests Title I principals believe: 1) in their ability to impact the instruction of the children, and 2) believe that they can improve the educational delivery for the students they serve.

Further, because these schools are similar to pre-*Brown* schools, it is important to note that contemporary principals have higher levels of pre-*Brown* beliefs that were the foundation of successfully educating students during segregation. This finding indicates that contemporary school leaders of Title I schools, much like the leaders who led segregated African American schools, based their work on a set of educational beliefs that were student-centered, aspirational, dedicated to resisting negative stereotypes, all of which potentially contribute to school culture and positive student outcomes. This finding suggests that because of the challenges inherent in schools with mostly African American students, Title I principals may see the necessity of espousing aspiration and resistant beliefs to combat the myriad challenges.

Using the HAAPN as a lens, this study reveals that the beliefs of male principals are marginally significant indicating a potential alignment of their views with the views of minority principals of the pre-*Brown* era. As such, male principals express a positive alignment with the pre-*Brown* principal beliefs in contrast to female principals. This alignment with male principals is congruent with the fact that most of the principals during the pre-*Brown* era were male.

This alignment with pre-*Brown* principal beliefs is interesting because pre-*Brown* principals were trained and worked within the HAAPN, formalized professional learning networks, including the Georgia Teachers and Educators Association (GTEA), and experienced the benefit of a formalized leadership training (Croft et al., 2018; Walker, 2018). With the vacuum created by desegregation, the loss of Black educators (Haney, 1998; Ladson-Billings, 2004; Morris, 2009), and the destruction of Black teacher and educator organizations such as the GTEA (Walker, 2018), no structured networks exist to propagate paradigms for leadership specifically designed to teach and lead African American children. In contrast to pre-*Brown* principals, contemporary who have no formalized networks that espouse a pervasive educational belief system, contemporary principals rely on specified standards of evaluation to guide their leadership (Barge, 2014).

Ironically, another marginally significant finding was that non-minority principals' views were more aligned with the views of principals of the pre-*Brown* era than minority principals. This finding is interesting because it suggests a system of aspirational and resistant beliefs that non-minority principals espouse about educating their students. It is important to note that this finding is not at the .05 level and may be due to chance.

Another interpretation of this finding may suggest that Black school leaders may rely on basic reaffirming beliefs about educating their students to refute pervasive and pejorative narratives about their students' abilities (Milner, 2012). This finding aligns with beliefs of pre-*Brown* school leaders, who in the face of negative characterizations and educational disparities, used their belief system to dispel the negative light in which their students were cast. In other words, even though contemporary Black principals lost a positive aspirational and resistant belief system used to successfully educate African American children, vestiges of that system remain in the beliefs of principals who lead Black and Brown children.

Conclusion

Using the Past to Inform the Present Implications from the Past

Even though contemporary school leaders do not work within a segregated system mandated by law, they do serve children who are largely segregated from the majority populations in low income communities and schools where educational and economic disparities persist. As a result, school leaders must find ways to disrupt and ameliorate these disparities. They must begin to find ways to close the opportunity gaps (Carter & Welner, 2013) that poverty creates. Closing these opportunity gaps means finding ways within their leadership practices to help students aspire to move beyond their environments and to resist the forces that would keep students locked in their situations. To do this school leaders must find ways to augment their curricula with aspirational and resistant practices including but not limited to citizenship instruction, enhanced curriculum,

and expanded extracurricular activities. This study suggests several steps that can be taken by school leaders to more fully educate children, particularly marginalized children.

First, school leaders should re-access and reflect on their basic beliefs for wanting to be leaders (Khalifa, 2018). Despite pre-*Brown* leaders' use of beliefs to insure students' full inclusion in the democratic process and disrupt inherent systemic inequalities, the beliefs that stand most in contrast to today's educational system are 1) the belief that student success is the school's responsibility; 2) the overall development of the child is crucial; 3) and that it is the school's responsibility to address the needs of the whole child. These pre-*Brown* beliefs were and can be a foundation on which educational leaders make decisions about how and why they practice educational delivery.

Equally important as the "raison d'être" for principal leadership is the hiring of qualified and dedicated teachers who espouse the same or similar belief systems (Tran et al., 2020). Those responsible for hiring principals must ensure that the people they hire believe that their first job is to ensure that children in their students are first priority (Morris & Morris, 2000; Rodgers, 1975; Walker, 1996, 2000, 2009).

Inasmuch as contemporary Title I schools are largely populated by poor Black and Brown families, and few principals live or are an integral part of the communities in which they work, principals may not share similar beliefs and communal understandings about how to educate children in the communities they serve. In contrast to their predecessors, and in the absence of a codified educational belief system, contemporary principals can articulate schoolwide beliefs and practices that address their students' needs.

Implications for Future Research

This study suggests that male Title I leaders align most with the beliefs of pre-*Brown* African American principals. One area of future research might be to study the ways by which these Title I principals came by their beliefs, especially related to their preparation programs and/or their mentors. A second area of inquiry would be to investigate more thoroughly the educational belief system of female principals. Even though neither female African American nor female non-African American principals aligned with the beliefs of pre-*Brown* principals more than males, an interesting study might center on the actual beliefs of these principals.

Other areas of future research would center around discovering the belief systems of students in leadership preparation programs to determine their dispositions prior to service and non-minority principals in private school settings to determine the extent to which their beliefs align with pre-*Brown* school leaders. This study would be important because it would suggest that non-minority school leaders may inherently believe that all their students can learn. An important area of study would be to conduct a similar study with principals of African Centered schools to determine to what extent their views align with those of pre-*Brown* African American principals. The results from this study might suggest a connection to the propagation of these beliefs across the diaspora. In the absence of a network to expose school leaders to this historical paradigm, research into what extent this paradigm is embedded in leadership programs would be informative.

Contemporary leaders must look to past systems that have enforced, and inculcated children, parents, and educators' beliefs about their inherent inequality. Because educational paradigms born out of oppression, suppression, and inequality bear the scars and vestiges of enslavement even these paradigms are lodged in escaping the stays of the oppressor. Today, African American school leaders must also resist deficit ideologies This study suggests that the belief systems of African American male principals transcended the deficit circumstances of their schools.

Finally, "successful education depends on faith. People invest their resources in things they believe in (McGill, 2015, p. 86). Pre-*Brown* leaders held a vision of student success and worked to articulate and operationalize their success through their leadership beliefs (Croft, in press; Walker 1996). In a similar way, and under similar circumstances, some contemporary principals like their predecessors, still articulate and operationalize a vision of quality education based on comparable aspirational and resistant beliefs. Given the limited success of schools under the present models of leadership, pursuing alternative perspectives about delivering education for African American children might prove fruitful (Brown, 2003).

Limitations

In any study, all findings should be interpreted through their limitations. It should be noted that while Title I schools frequently are heavily populated with Black and Brown students, many Title I schools are also populated with poor and white students in rural areas. Although this study utilized a random sampling technique which increases generalizability, the findings are only generalizable to similar school types, levels, and environment within the state of Georgia. In addition, pre-*Brown* beliefs prior to this study had not been explored quantitatively; therefore, this study is breaking new ground in this particular area with this type of method. The results from this study indicated the independent and control variables in our model accounted for 13.6% of the variance in pre-*Brown* Beliefs. This factor alone supports the need for future research to identify additional unique factors that influence pre-*Brown* beliefs.

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