

***Abbott Elementary's* Principal Ava Coleman -
A Contrast for Black Female Administrators**

by

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PROJECT REVIEW INFORMATION

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The Project was approved on November 23rd, 2022 by the following review committee:

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The above review committee determined that the project is acceptable in form and content and that a satisfactory knowledge of the field was covered by the work submitted. A copy of the Certificate of Approval is available from the School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies.

ABSTRACT

Using Mikos' (2014) film analysis technique, the role of Ava Coleman in the mockumentary sitcom *Abbott Elementary* is dissected and contrasted to the researched experiences of Black women principals. The research on Black Female administrators provides a starting point of contrast in examining stereotypes and leadership styles. Further, comparisons are also reviewed based on findings of media portrayals of Black women and school principals. All thirteen 23-minute episodes of the series' first season provide the data source for research. Using Hill Collins's (2000) Black Feminist Theory framework, implications regarding the ability of the role to offer a differing narrative of what it means to be a Black woman in educational leadership are realized.

Keywords: Black Feminist Theory (BFT); Leadership; Stereotypes; Socialization

AUTHOR'S DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this project consists of original work of which I have authored. This is a true copy of the work, including any required final revisions, as accepted by my committee.

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STATEMENT OF CONTRIBUTIONS

I hereby certify that I am the sole author of this work and that no part of this work has been published or submitted for publication. I have used standard referencing practices to acknowledge ideas, research techniques, or other materials that belong to others.

Furthermore, I hereby certify that I am the sole source of the creative works and/or inventive knowledge described in this document.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND SYMBOLS

ABW	Angry Black Woman
BFT	Black Feminist Theory
HBCU	Historically Black College/University
HBIC	Head Black Person in Charge
HNIC	Head N-word in Charge
SBW	Strong Black Woman

Chapter 1. Introduction

Traditionally, the norm for school principals has been predominantly white and male (Armstrong & Mitchell, 2017; Davis & Johnson, 2020; Reed, 2017; Weiner et al., 2021). If someone asked me to imagine a school principal, I would reflexively picture a middle-aged white man in a suit, even though I am a Black female administrator. *Abbott Elementary* (Brunson et al., 2021-2022) is the focus of this project as it uniquely casts a Black woman in the professional role of elementary school principal, Ava Coleman. This Emmy award-winning series (Television Academy, 2022), much like the sitcoms *The Cosby Show* (Carsey et al., 1984-1992) and *The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air* (Borowitz et al., 1990-1996), has a predominantly Black cast, situating the series to influence young Black viewers strongly (Anyiwo et al., 2018). This project contrasts the role of principal Ava Coleman with the researched experiences of Black female school principals. Using Hill Collins' (2000) Black Feminist Thought (BFT) framework, the implications of the depiction of this role are explored.

1.1 Establishing Context

According to Oxford Learner's Dictionary (n.d), socialization is the process of learning how to behave in a way that is acceptable in society. Any medium that can "teach" contributes to socialization (Berry, 1998). Generally, primary socialization occurs from home (Pyburn Craig, 2020); however, secondary socialization can happen from popular culture through the teachings in film and media (Berry, 1998; Beyerbach & Oswego, 2005; Dalton, 1995; Pyburn Craig, 2020; Rogers et al., 2021). The media perpetuates the image of the white male principal, shaping how audiences and principals perceive and understand their professional identity (Glanz, 1997; Tillman, 2007). Wolfrom (2010) found that out of 49 portrayals of school principals on film,

thirteen were depicted by women and only four by Black women. Moreover, Salinas (2021) found that Black women were rarely portrayed in professional settings in family sitcoms.

Abbott Elementary is a mockumentary sitcom focusing on the staff at an urban elementary school in a low-income, high-needs Black majority neighbourhood of Philadelphia (Brunson et al., 2021-2022). An unseen camera crew documents the trials, tribulations and triumphs of a poorly run, under-funded school. Occasionally, the camera crew will conduct one-on-one interviews with the staff. What results is comedy genius providing a social commentary on the dire state of such schools in the United States while making us laugh (Asmelash, 2022a; Asmelash, 2022b; Baldwin, 2022; Carmel, 2022; Broadway, 2022; Dumont, 2022; Maleh, 2021; Poniewozik, 2022; Rao, 2022; Reed, 2022).

Quinta Brunson is the Black American woman who created, produced, wrote and stars in *Abbott Elementary* as a second-grade teacher named Janine Teagues. She created the show for comedic purposes but wanted to move people to become more politically involved in supporting schools and teachers (“Abbott Elementary,” 2022; Broadway, 2022; Najarro, 2022). The pilot for the show aired in December 2021, with positive reviews (Asmelash, 2022a; Asmelash, 2022b; Baldwin, 2022; Carmel, 2022; Dumont, 2022; Maleh, 2022; Poniewozik, 2022; Rao, 2022; Reed, 2022), and is continuing for a second season in Fall 2022 (Asmelash, 2022; Carmel, 2022; Dumont, 2022; Reed, 2022). The series recently won two of the seven Emmys for which it was nominated, including best writing in a comedy series (Quinta Brunson) and supporting actor (Sheryl Lee Ralph for the role of Mrs. Barbara Howard) (Television Academy, 2022).

The character Ava Coleman is the principal at *Abbott Elementary*. Emmy-nominated comedian and actress Janelle James, a Black American woman, portrays this supporting role in the series (Brunson et al., 2021-2022). Her character is the central focus of this project. While

Ava's character provides comedic value (Carmel, 2022), her diction, actions and behaviours provide secondary socialization (Berry, 1998; Beyerbach & Oswego, 2005; Dalton, 1995; Pyburn Craig, 2020; Rogers et al., 2021) of what it is to be a Black female principal for the audience.

1.1.1 Researcher's Positionality

I am a Black Canadian-born woman of Trinidadian heritage. I was raised by a single mother and have one older sister. I am a wife of almost 20 years and a mother of three boys aged 17, 14 and 10. I am an educator who spent 17 years in the classroom before becoming a secondary school administrator, which is my current role. Growing up, despite my circumstances, I identified with the moms in two popular sitcoms, *The Cosby Show* (Carsey et al., 1984-1992) and *The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air* (Borowitz et al., 1990-1996). I wanted to grow up to be Clair Huxtable (*The Cosby Show*) or Vivian Banks (*The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air*), a professional Black woman married to a successful Black man, raising multiple Black children. Mission accomplished! The effect of these two sitcoms on my life is not surprising. Anyiwo et al. (2018) found that frequent consumption of Black-oriented programs by Black youth results in a stronger association with characters. While television media shaped my image of the Black family, I did not have a similar example for my professional life. In a review of Black female roles in sitcoms over five decades from 1970-2010, Salinas (2021) reports that there are few depictions of Black female characters in their professional settings. Given the influential power of media, a lack of representation of Black women in professional roles may subversively strengthen existing stereotypes. This study takes a closer look at these stereotypes.

As a Black female administrator, I navigate my intersectionality of gender and race daily. A Black educator never taught me, and my exposure to Black women in the principal role has been minimal at best. My experience is not rare for Black Canadian students. Dei (1996) found

that several Black students in his study regarding Afrocentricity in Canadian education complained of the lack of Black educators in their schools. Despite this lack of a same-race role model in the field, I started my career in education in 2000. In 2004, I was the first Black teacher to be a department head at my school (at that time, I was also the only Black teacher in the school). Over the years, more diversity has appeared in academic leadership positions within my school board; however, there is much to learn about the Black women administrator experience (Beard, 2012; Bernadeia, 2021; Curtis, 2017; Lomotey, 2019). Navigating my experiences as a Black administrator has been isolating. Starving for this research is what fuels this project.

1.2 Background to the Problem

Media has a powerful influence on education and career pathways (Ewing et al., 2021; Glanz, 1997; Matabane & Merritt, 2014). Wolfrom (2010) reviewed 49 films centred on principals in the leading role. Less than 30% of the portrayals were women, and less than 1% were Black women. Even more concerning, when Black principals are characterized, Tillman (2007) found they are depicted as ineffective or uncaring leaders who rule through intimidation.

Further, there is a lack of research on the experiences of Black female administrators (Beard, 2012; Burton et al., 2020; Conner et al., 2022; Curtis, 2017; Horsford, 2012; Horsford et al., 2012; Jang & Alexander, 2022; Johnson, 2021; Johnson & Fournillier, 2021; Lomotey, 2019). Given the intersectionality of Black women, their experiences in educational leadership roles benefit all educational leaders (Watson & Baxley, 2021). This lack of representation on-screen and in the literature makes studying and contrasting the role of Ava Coleman more crucial for its implications of what it is to be a Black woman and lead a school.

1.3 Framing the Research - Black Feminist Theory (BFT)

Creswell (2014) suggests that qualitative research be grounded in a theoretical framework and worldview. This project maintains a transformative worldview using the BFT (Hill Collins, 2000) framework. BFT (Hill Collins, 2000) allows the focus to remain on Black women, with the discussions and implications centring on our views. Mikos (2014) states that the most crucial task of film analysis is developing a definite cognitive purpose. The mental aim of analyzing the character of Ava Coleman is to consider the implications of secondary socialization (Berry, 1998; Beyersbach & Oswego, 2005; Dalton, 1995; Pyburn Craig, 2020; Rogers et al., 2021) among Black girls and women. I utilize the BFT (Hill Collins, 2000) framework appropriately to conduct this investigation as Black women portray the role, create the series and undertake this analysis.

Patricia Hill Collins (2000) created the BFT framework out of the necessity to centre the experiences and wisdom that come with the unique intersectionality of Black women. This project follows six tenets of BFT (Hill Collins, 2000) as outlined by West (2020):

- 1) Attending to distinctive cultural group consciousness
- 2) Remaining cognizant of within-group individuality
- 3) Illuminating the interdependence of thought and action
- 4) Focusing on the development of positionally reflective intellectual contributors
- 5) Demonstrating responsiveness to the societal context
- 6) Connecting with the broader plight of social justice

(West, 2020, pp. 374-380)

1.3.1 Attending to distinctive cultural group consciousness

Hill Collins (2000) explains that Black women endure similar work and family experiences. These experiences are different from those who are not Black or female. BFT (Hill Collins, 2000) highlights the importance of these experiences. As a Black woman, I relate the findings of this project to my experiences as a contributing member of the cultural group.

1.3.2 Remaining cognizant of within-group individuality

This tenet of BFT (Hill Collins, 2000) refers to the fact that although Black women share common challenges, the responses to these challenges are diverse and unique to the individual (Hill Collins, 2000; West, 2020). One Black woman's response to adverse treatment differs from that of another. As I analyze the role of the Black female principal in *Abbott Elementary*, I note the varying leadership styles as I contrast findings from the literature review.

1.3.3 Illuminating the interdependence of thought and action

This tenet of BFT (Hill Collins, 2000) highlights the importance of individual acts of Black women to combat forms of oppression and how it can affect the standpoint of the entire cultural group (Hill Collins, 2000; West, 2020). This tenet is fundamental to me as I have witnessed and inhabited its effect. My Trinidadian immigrant mother taught me that "proper" English is as close to British English as possible. So I refrain from using the Trinidadian sing-song Patois I hear daily amongst my family members. However, one day during an educational leadership meeting, mainly consisting of white women and men, a Black female principal colleague used Trinidadian Patois to express how tired she felt. This small act opened me up to how much I unnecessarily suppress my culture at work. This simple display of cultural pride from another Black woman has encouraged me to embrace my heritage fully, even at work.

As I research this project, I remain cognizant that the character of Ava Coleman as a Black female principal can have a far-reaching effect on Black female administrators and aspiring Black women administrators.

1.3.4 Focusing on the development of positionally reflective intellectual contributors.

BFT (Hill Collins, 2000) purposefully focuses on Black women who are intelligent contributors from various fields and backgrounds. This tenet charges Black women in influential positions with the onus to view their work from the diverse standpoint of Black women (Hill Collins, 2000; West, 2020).

For this project, tenet four is applied to the Black woman creator of the show, Quinta Brunson, and Janelle James, the actor portraying Ava Coleman. These women are intellectual influencers; therefore, their creations and voices are significant to the research of this project.

1.3.5 Demonstrating responsiveness to the societal context

Tenet five refers to the ability of BFT (Hill Collins, 2000) to be dynamic, adjusting to a changing society. Hill Collins (2000) clearly shows this type of responsiveness regarding how the Mammy figure has changed over the years but still exists.

“Black women still do a remarkable share of the emotional nurturing and cleaning up after other people, often for lower pay. In this context, the task for contemporary Black feminist thought lies in explicating these changing relationships and developing analyses of how these commonalities are experienced differently.” (Hill Collins, 2000 pg. 40)

This research examines stereotypes of Black women in media and discusses how *Abbott Elementary* responds, explicitly analyzing the character role of Principal Ava Coleman.

1.3.6 Connecting with the broader plight of social justice

This final tenet of BFT (Hill Collins, 2000) acknowledges that Black women's struggles are similar to those of other marginalized groups. Triumphs for Black women can and should lead to similar victories in other oppressed groups (Hill Collins, 2000; West, 2020). These findings' implications can potentially benefit other marginalized groups in education.

1.4 The Research Questions

This project aims to investigate the following research questions:

R1 - What are the experiences of Black female school principals?

R2 - How are school principals portrayed in film and television?

R3 - How is the Black female principal in Abbott Elementary portrayed?

R4 - How does the portrayal of the Black female principal in Abbott Elementary compare to the experiences of Black female administrators?

R5 - What are the implications of this portrayal for Black females?

I am conscious of my bias as a Black female in the analysis. For this reason, I use the BFT (Hill Collins, 2000) framework, allowing me to analyze my findings using my authentic Black female view.

1.5 Project Organization

Chapter two includes a literature review that provides the groundwork for the character analysis of Principal Ava Coleman. The review addresses my queries regarding the experiences of Black female administrators, unveiling their history, leadership and intersectional experiences, and the portrayal of principals in film or television. Chapter three provides the methods, including the film analysis's specific steps, coding, and analysis procedure. Chapter four presents the findings, uncovering the portrayal of the Black female principal in *Abbott Elementary*.

Chapter five presents the discussion whereby the findings from chapter four are compared and contrasted with the research. The project concludes in chapter six, presenting the implications of Ava Coleman's role for Black women using the BFT (Hill Collins, 2000) framework.

Chapter 2. Literature Review

This chapter explores relevant literature within the context of this study. Using the research questions as a guide, specifically, I explore literature related to the history and experiences of Black women in educational leadership. The literature surveys how intersectionality affects their leadership and examines common leadership styles for Black women administrators. Finally, the review uncovers how the media serves as a secondary socializer (Berry, 1998; Beyerbach & Oswego, 2005; Dalton, 1995; Pyburn Craig, 2020; Rogers et al., 2021) through its depictions of educators focusing on the portrayal of principals.

2.1 Black Women Stereotypes

Intersectionality is a metaphor for how inequality or disadvantages compound themselves and create differing obstacles from those within conventional ways of thinking about anti-racism, feminism or any other social justice advocacies (Crenshaw, 1989). Black female administrators navigate their intersectionality daily (Aaron, 2020) because the traditional norm of educational leadership roles is male and white (Armstrong & Mitchell, 2017; Davis & Johnson, 2020; Jang & Alexander, 2022; Johnson & Fournillier, 2021; McClellan, 2020; Newcombe & Niemeyer, 2015; Reed, 2012; Tevis et al., 2021; Weiner et al., 2021). Microaggressions based on stereotypes create hardships (Aaron, 2020; Armstrong & Mitchell, 2017; Beard, 2012; Flores, 2018; Gause, 2021; Jang & Alexander, 2022; Johnson & Founillier, 2021; Lomotey, 2019; Moorosi et al., 2018; Peters, 2012; Peters & Miles Nash, 2021; Reed, 2012; Tevis et al., 2021; Townsend, 2021; Weiner et al., 2021; Weiner et al., 2022).

There are five central stereotypes that Black women endure. They include:

- 1) Sapphire or angry Black woman (ABW) (Aaron, 2020; Armstrong & Mitchell, 2017; Davis & Johnson, 2020; Nelson et al., 2015; Tevis et al., 2020)

- 2) Welfare mom (Aaron, 2020; Nelson et al., 2016; Reed, 2012; Tevis et al., 2020)
- 3) Jezebel (Aaron, 2020; Armstrong & Mitchell, 2017; Reed, 2012)
- 4) Mammy figure (Aaron, 2020; Davis & Johnson, 2020; Tevis et al., 2020)
- 5) Strong Black woman (SBW) (Davis & Johnson, 2020; Liao et al., 2020; Nelson et al., 2016).

These stereotypes create difficulties in assuming Black women embody one or more of these generalized personas.

2.1.1 Sapphire or ABW

The Sapphire or ABW stereotype places Black women as emasculating, hostile, loud and angry (Aaron, 2020; Armstrong & Mitchell, 2017; Davis & Johnson, 2020; Nelson et al., 2015; Tevis et al., 2020). Black women administrators express concern about being stereotyped as an ABW (sapphire) when they communicate passion in their leadership (Aaron, 2020; Armstrong & Mitchell, 2017; Davis & Johnson, 2020; Nelson et al., 2015; Tevis et al., 2020). This stereotype cause Black women to shift their identities to dissociate (Aaron, 2020; Armstrong & Mitchell, 2017; Burton et al., 2020; Collins, 2000; Johnson & Fournillier, 2021; Peters, 2012; Reed, 2012; Tevis et al., 2020; Townsend, 2021).

2.1.2 Welfare Mom

This negative stereotype depicts Black women as lazy, uneducated, dependent and seeking unearned wealth (Aaron, 2020; Nelson et al., 2016; Reed, 2012; Tevis et al., 2020). Black women administrators are subjected to the welfare mom stereotype receiving greater scrutiny for their leadership abilities (Gause, 2021; Johnson, 2021; Johnson & Founillier, 2021; Miles Nash & Peters, 2020; Newcombe & Niemeyer, 2015; Tevis et al., 2021; Townsend, 2021)

despite entering the position with more experience and higher levels of education (Berry & Reardon, 2022; Lomotey, 2019).

2.1.2 Jezebel

The Merriam-Webster online dictionary defines a Jezebel as an impudent, shameless, or morally unrestrained woman (Merriam-Webster, n.d.). Labelling Black women with this hypersexualized stereotype provided a rationale for the widespread sexual assault of enslaved Black women by white men during slavery (Hill Collins, 2000).

The Jezebel or hypersexualized stereotype is actualized in Black women's leadership as they express their subjugation to comments about their appearance (Aaron, 2020; Armstrong & Mitchell, 2017; Beard, 2012; Peters, 2012; Reed, 2012; Townsend, 2021; Weiner et al., 2022; Weiner et al., 2021).

2.1.4 Mammy

The mammy figure stereotype also derives from slavery when Black women often cared for white families. The mammy figure stereotype asserts Black women as nurturing, asexual, incredibly selfless and subservient (Aaron, 2020; Davis & Johnson, 2020; Hill Collins, 2000; Tevis et al., 2020).

Watson & Baxley (2021) found that Black women are uniquely equipped with a history of “motherwork” and caring in their educational leadership. However, the subservient aspect of this stereotype may attribute to Black female principals being overlooked for their contributions (Beard, 2012; Tevis et al., 2020).

2.1.5 Strong Black Woman (SBW)

The SBW stereotype incorporates the same characteristics as the mammy figure except for the attribute of subservience. Liao et al. (2020) affiliate the strength associated with this stereotype with determination to succeed, independence and work ethic.

The SBW stereotype may not present as an issue, but it can lead to the assumption that Black women can effortlessly take care of and bear the emotional burdens of others (Liao et al., 2020). The frequent placement of Black women administrators in the most high-needs schools, with a high population of Black and minority students, with low socioeconomic status, significant behavioural issues and achievement gaps (Bass, 2012; Jang & Alexander, 2022; Moorosi et al., 2018; Peters, 2012) may be evidence of this assumption. Resiliency is also a common and necessary characteristic of Black female principals (Chance, 2021; deBruyn & Mestry, 2020; Jang & Alexander, 2022), which may further feed into the SBW stereotype, causing a catch-22 situation.

2.2 History of Black Women in Educational Leadership

"...Then they talk about this thing in the head; what's this they call it? [member of audience whispers, "intellect"] That's it, honey. What's that got to do with women's rights or negroes' rights? If my cup won't hold but a pint, and yours holds a quart, wouldn't you be mean not to let me have my little half measure full?

Then that little man in black there, he says women can't have as much rights as men, 'cause Christ wasn't a woman! Where did your Christ come from? Where did your Christ come from? From God and a woman! Man had nothing to do with Him.

If the first woman God ever made was strong enough to turn the world upside down all alone, these women together ought to be able to turn it back, and get it right side up again! And now they is asking to do it, the men better let them."

(Halsall, 2021)

Black woman activist Sojourner Truth delivered this speech in 1851 at a women's convention in Akron, Ohio (Halsall, 2021). It speaks to the history of Black women's resiliency, strength, reliance on faith, and ability to influence and lead for transformation. As this speech

suggests, there is a rich history of Black women in leadership roles in education (Aaron, 2020; Alston, 2020; Conner et al., 2022; Halsall, 2021; Horsford, 2012). Throughout slavery in the United States of America in the late nineteenth century, Black women were the caretakers and educators of Black children (Aaron, 2020; Alston, 2012). This educational role continued through the civil rights movement in the United States (Conner et al., 2022; Horsford, 2012). The Brown vs. School board decision a century later, in 1954, led to the desegregation of schools, resulting in Black students integrating into traditionally white and more advantaged schools (Horsford, & Tillman, 2012; Moore, 2013; Peters, 2019). Unfortunately, hundreds of Black educators became unemployed (Peters, 2019). It was not until the 1970s that Black administrators became highly sought after to offset the charges of institutional racism (Moore, 2013; Peters, 2019). Black women, in particular, became the bridge to education for Black children (Horsford, 2012; Horsford & Tillman, 2012; Peters, 2019). Despite the surge in hires in the seventies, currently, there is a lack of representation of Black women in administrative roles in academia (Gause, 2021; Jang & Alexander, 2022; Peters, 2021). According to Jang & Alexander (2022), Black women administrators in the United States currently make up 8% of the principals in elementary schools and a mere 4% in secondary schools. Unfortunately, in Canada, racial demographic information of school administrators is limited. However, Ryan et al. (2007) reported that Canadian trends are similar to the United States. Although there is an increase in the diversity of administrators, it has not kept pace with the rise in the diversity of Canadian students (Ryan et al., 2007).

2.3 Black Female Principals and Leadership

The assumption that all Black Female principals have a shared leadership style is ignorant at best. However, similar demonstrations of leadership emerge in the research.

Commitment and ethic of care for students or servant leadership is a reoccurring feature of Black women leadership (Aaron, 2020; Bass, 2012; Beard, 2012; de Bruyn & Mestry, 2020; Flores, 2018; McClellan, 2020; Miles Nash & Peters, 2020; Newcombe & Neimeyer, 2015; Peters, 2012; Peters & Miles Nash, 2021; Townsend, 2021; Watson & Baxley, 2021). Identity politics and self-awareness or authentic leadership is also a prevalent leadership style presented in the literature (Armstrong & Mitchell, 2017; Beard, 2012; deBruyn & Mestry, 2020; Gause, 2021; Johnson, 2021; Johnson & Fournillier, 2021; Johnson & Founillier, 2022; Moore, 2013; Newcombe & Niemeyer, 2015; Reed, 2012; Tevis et al., 2020; Townsend, 2021; Williams, 2021). A commitment to social justice and change is another emergent theme in the literature and relates to transformational leadership (Johnson, 2021; Johnson & Founillier, 2021; Miles Nash & Peters, 2020; Moore, 2013; Moorosi et al., 2018; Patton & Jordan, 2017; Peters & Miles Nash, 2021; Reed, 2012; Tevis et al., 2020; Watson & Baxley, 2021; Weiner et al., 2022; Williams, 2021). I now provide an overview of the servant, authentic, and transformational leadership literature within the context of Black female principals.

2.3.1 Servant Leadership and Black Female Principals

Servant leaders empathize and nurture their followers (Northouse, 2019). Robert K. Greenleaf first coined Servant Leadership in 1970 (Dugan, 2017). Although Greenleaf has roots in Judeo-Christianity, he proposed that servant leadership is for all faiths and backgrounds (Greenleaf Center for Servant Leadership, 2021). Extracting from Greenleaf's work, Spears (2002) identifies ten characteristics of servant leaders. The first three characteristics are listening, empathy and healing. These three traits are abundant throughout the research as Black woman principals share their concern over their underserved students, particularly their Black students (Beard, 2012; Flores, 2018; Johnson & Fournillier, 2021; McClellan; 2020; Miles Nash & Peters,

2020; Newcombe & Niemeyer, 2015; Peters, 2012; Peters & Miles Nash, 2021; Watson & Baxley, 2021; Weiner et al., 2022; Williams, 2021). Traits four through seven outlined by Spears (2002) are awareness, persuasion, conceptualization and foresight. Peters & Miles Nash (2021) explain that Black women are unique in that, based on everyday experiences of anti-Black racism and gender discrimination, they have foresight and lead from multiple perspectives. Stewardship, commitment to the growth of people, and building community are the last three traits that embody servant leadership, according to Spears (2002). Stewardship refers to leading for the common good. Having a solid conviction of faith and spirituality naturally points to serving for the more significant benefit of the community. The history of Black women in education conveys a leadership style rooted in spirituality and mothering (Aaron, 2020; Bass, 2012; Beard, 2012; de Bruyn & Mestry, 2020; Flores, 2018; Lomotey, 2019; McClellan, 2020; Miles Nash & Peters, 2020; Newcombe & Niemeyer, 2015; Peters, 2012; Peters & Miles Nash, 2021; Watson & Baxley, 2021). In this way, Black women educational leaders often lead with a firm hand to help students and staff achieve high standards and goals.

2.3.2 Authentic Leadership and Black Female Principals

Northhouse (2019) notes that scholars have not unanimously accepted a single definition of authentic leadership. George (2003, as cited by Dugan, 2017) was the first to popularize the idea of authentic leadership. This type of leadership is similar to transformational leadership as it considers what is morally good while leading. However, there is an added component of being self-aware. Dugan (2017) refers to a plethora of research that suggests authentic leadership has to do with positive psychological elements, self-development and fostering a positive ethical climate. Avolio and Walumba (2014, as cited in Dugan 2017) outline four main competencies associated with authentic leadership. These are self-awareness, knowing who you are and how

you present to others; relational transparency or being deemed trustworthy in relationships; balanced processing or the ability to see issues from multiple perspectives and an internalized moral perspective or ethical values. Authentic leaders often have a lived experience that shapes their belief system. According to George et al. (2007), “The journey to authentic leadership begins with understanding the story of your life” (p. 132). Black women administrators navigate an education system that historically has not included their story (Armstrong & Mitchell, 2017; Beard, 2012; Gause, 2021; Johnson & Fournillier, 2021; Johnson & Fournillier, 2022; Townsend, 2021; Watson & Baxley, 2021; Weiner et al., 2021; Williams, 2021). To effectively lead in this system, Black women must become self-aware. Intersectionality of Black women naturally allows for balanced processing and an internalized perspective in decision-making. Drawing from lived experiences, Black women administrators can problem-solve issues from multiple views (Johnson & Fournillier, 2021; Peters & Miles Nash, 2021; Watson & Baxley, 2021). As previously stated, leaning on spirituality for guidance and strength (Johnson, 2021; Lomotey, 2019; Newcombe & Niemeyer, 2015), Black women administrators uphold morals in their leadership.

George (2008) offers five core characteristics of authentic leadership. These are passion which drives purpose; values that direct behaviour; relationships that nurture connectedness; self-discipline, which leads to consistency; and heart which provides compassion.

A passion that drives purpose refers to understanding what you are passionate about to define your purpose for leading. *Values that direct behaviour* refers to deeply held beliefs that cause leaders to take specific actions. *Relationships that nurture connectedness* are those long-lasting and trusting relationships that result in deep commitment from others. *Self-discipline, which leads to consistency*, is shown by setting high standards for oneself and

others and admitting and demanding accountability. *A heart which provides compassion* means having empathy and the strength to make difficult decisions. McClellan (2020) offers an example of these leadership traits when analyzing the Black female principal in her study, stating, “Mrs. Gee’s tough love mixed with care and concern replicates an authentic leadership practice of simultaneously nurturing and protecting.” (p.263).

2.3.3 Transformational Leadership and Black Female Principals

Downton (1973, as cited in Dugan, 2017) originates transformational leadership through the theory of “rebel leadership.” Burns (1978, as cited in Dugan, 2017) infused ethics and morality into the idea of transformational leadership. Burns (1978, as cited in Dugan 2017) explains that transactional leadership, where followers receive reward or punishment for their work, was the most common form of leadership. However, Burns (1978, as cited in Dugan 2017) argued that transforming leadership is more effective as it is concerned with achieving common goals based on the followers' and leaders' values, aspirations and motivations (Dugan, 2017; Northouse, 2019). Transformational leadership further evolved when Bass (1985, as cited in Dugan, 2017) proposed that both transactional and transformational leadership are necessary for effectiveness. Bass’s (1985, as cited in Dugan 2017) explanation of transformational leadership moved away from the ethical format and focused more on the charisma aspect of the style. Bass and Steidlmeier (1999) ensured the placement of morality in transformational leadership by asserting that leaders are not supporting the overall good as pseudo-transformational leaders. The social justice lens of the leadership style presented by Black women administrators indicates transformational leadership. Black women principals show commitment to leadership designed to elevate students in need, focusing on social justice that aims to combat educational systems rooted in racism and gender inequity (Johnson, 2021; Johnson & Founillier, 2021; Miles Nash &

Peters, 2020; Moore, 2013; Moorosi et al., 2018; Patton & Jordan, 2017; Peters & Miles Nash, 2021; Reed, 2012; Tevis et al., 2020; Watson & Baxley, 2021; Weiner et al., 2022; Williams, 2021).

There are four agreed-upon attributes of transformational leadership. They include Idealized influence, Inspirational motivation; Intellectual stimulation; and Individualized consideration (Dugan, 2017; Northouse, 2019). *Idealized Influence* means exhibiting charisma and role-model behaviour. Antonakis (2012) asserts that this type of influence includes risk-taking. *Inspirational motivation* is the ability to set high expectations that others want to achieve. *Intellectual stimulation* involves encouraging others to question and find answers. *Individualized consideration* is the investment in the development of others.

Black women principals work at high-needs schools (Bass, 2012; Jang & Alexander, 2022; Peters, 2012), combatting adverse school climates, setting high expectations and decreasing achievement gaps (Jang & Alexander, 2022). Transformational leadership traits align with this type of leadership. Black women educational leaders often pay it forward by mentoring Black women teachers and administrators (de Bruyn & Mestry, 2020; Johnson & Fournillier, 2022), further affirming these transformational qualities.

2.4 Media as a Secondary Socializer

Secondary socialization refers to how we learn socially acceptable ways to behave from other sources rather than at home (Berry, 1998; Beyerbach & Oswego, 2005; Dalton, 1995; Pyburn Craig, 2020; Rogers et al., 2021). Media is a strong provider of secondary socialization (Adams et al., 2014; Berry, 1998; O'Connor et al., 2000; Rogers et al., 2021), particularly for Black youth, as they spend more time-consuming media (Anyiwo et al., 2018; Cox & Ward,

2019; Matabane & Merritt, 2014; Salinas, 2021). The remainder of this literature review will focus on depictions of Black women and principals on-screen.

2.4.1 The Portrayal of Black Women on Screen

Cox and Ward (2019) examined the portrayal of Black women in 12 scripted programs. Salinas (2021) did a content analysis of Black women in family-based sitcoms from the 1970s to the 2010s. These studies found that three Black women stereotypes in media prevail: the SBW, Jezebel and Sapphire (ABW). Modern-day representations of these stereotypes have significantly changed. Salinas (2021) notes that Black women often inhabited the SBW and sapphire (ABW) stereotypes in more domesticated and maternal roles in Black family sitcoms through the 1970s-2010s. However, Cox & Ward's (2019) study looking at the most viewed television programs in 2016 revealed a slightly differing result. While the stereotypes are still intact, the mode of portrayal differs substantially. The most poignant difference is that Black women are often depicted as unmarried professional leaders (Cox & Ward, 2019). Despite this difference, the three stereotypes of SBW, jezebel and sapphire maintain (Cox & Ward, 2019; Rogers et al., 2021; Salinas, 2021). Rogers et al. (2021) note that Black women are often portrayed as jezebels in music videos, as sapphires (ABW) on reality television and as SBW in political figures and athletes.

2.4.2 Portrayal of Educators on Screen

Media has a powerful influence on education and career pathways (Ewing et al., 2021; Glanz, 1997; Matabane & Merritt, 2014). A 2014 study found that females positively correlated their decision to attend a Historically Black College/University (HBCU) with their viewership of Black series that depicted HBCUs. This phenomenon is referred to as the Cosby effect, as the *Cosby Show* (Carsey et al., 1984-1992) was the first series to make mention of HBCUs in its

script (Matabane & Merritt, 2014). Ewing et al. (2021) also describe an example of media influence on career pathways: the *CSI* effect. *CSI* (Zuiker et al., 2000 - 2015) is a crime scene investigation series that had two significant unintentional impacts. The first was that it led to unrealistic juror expectations in court, and the second was a drastic increase in applications to universities for criminology courses (Ewing et al., 2021). Similarly, the increasingly negative portrayal of educators in film (Beyerbach & Oswego, 2005; Ewing et al., 2021) coincides with a decreasing attraction to a profession in education (Ewing, 2021). Understanding that portrayals of educators and education can impact the decision to enter the field is critical to this project.

Distinct characteristics emerge when looking specifically at the role of school principals in media. They are principals as authoritarian, bureaucratic, buffoon or numbskull and villain (Glanz, 1997; Tillman, 2007; Wolfrom, 2010). Wolfrom (2010) reviewed 49 films centred on principals in the leading role. Only four of these portrayals were by Black women. Furthermore, Black people are portrayed as intimidating and ineffective principals (Tillman, 2007).

Research on Black female principals on-screen is limited (Tillman, 2007; Wolfrom, 2010), likely due to the lack of Black women portrayed in the role. This lack of representation makes studying and contrasting the role of Ava Coleman more crucial for its implications of what it is to be a Black woman and lead a school.

Chapter 3. Methods

This chapter describes the research design, data collection, and analysis procedures. The methodology draws upon Creswell's (2014) outline for a qualitative study with a transformative worldview using film analysis. This study utilizes the BFT (Hill Collins, 2000) theoretical framework to centre on Black women who have traditionally been marginalized. The methods focus on content, acting, and narrative as it communicates with Black female viewers, such as myself. Mikos's (2014) 14-step film analysis process, which centres the communication with viewers as a whole, is the framework applied to the methodology.

3.1 Mikos 14-Step Film Analysis

The decision to use Mikos' (2014) 14-step film analysis relates to secondary socialization (Berry, 1998; Beyerbach & Oswego, 2005; Dalton, 1995; Pyburn Craig, 2020; Rogers et al., 2021). Mikos's (2014) design explicitly acknowledges the interaction between the presentation on film and societal contexts. The framework grounds film analysis in communication and cultural studies (Mikos, 2014). This film analysis approach focuses on the idea of reception and appropriation. Reception is how the viewer sees the film, whereas appropriation is how the film becomes translated into society (Mikos, 2014) or, in other words, secondary socialization (Pyburn Craig, 2020). Since the analysis is grounded in cultural studies, applying the BFT (Hill Collins, 2000) framework is seamless. On the following page is a table that outlines the fourteen steps of the film analysis process. The remainder of this chapter clarifies how each step is fulfilled for the completion of this project.

Table 1

Mikos' 14-Step Film Analysis Process

1. Development of a general cognitive purpose

2. Watching the visual material

3. Theoretical and historical reflection

4. Development of a concrete cognitive purpose

5. Development of questioning

6. A sampling of the material for analysis

7. Fixing of analytic tools

8. Collection of data

9. Description of data collection

10. Analysis of data – Inventory of the film components

11. Interpretation and contextualization of analyzed data

12. Evaluation I – Assessment of the analyzed and interpreted data

13. Evaluation II – Assessment of the results with regard to the cognitive purpose and the operationalization

14. Presentation of the results

(Mikos, 2014, p.420)

3.2 Steps 1 and 2 Cognitive Purpose and Visual Material

The first step of Mikos' (2014) film analysis is to develop a general cognitive purpose for the film analysis. The general cognitive purpose of this project is to analyze the representation of a female Black administrator on film. Step two requires the researcher to view the visual material. For a few days, I binge-watched the entire season of *Abbott Elementary*. This first viewing was simply for enjoyment and to understand the context of the series. My next step was to re-watch each of the thirteen 23- minute episodes, paying particular attention to the role of principal Ava Coleman. I took notes on my initial impressions of the character and how it

affected my understanding of Black women in the principalship. After this viewing, I researched articles and interviews on the series, comparing my initial reactions to those published. Further, I researched how Black female principals, in general, are depicted in media, as outlined in the previous chapter.

3.3 Steps 3 and 4 Theoretical and Historical Reflection and Concrete Cognitive Purpose

The third step in the film analysis is to have some theoretical and historical reflection. As a Black female administrator, this step brought me to think about what it means to have such a representation demonstrated. I realized the importance of highlighting the views of Black women in both the historical and present tense. I want to amplify our traditionally marginalized voices. This step cemented the decision to utilize the project's BFT framework (Hill Collins, 2000). This theoretical framework allows for analysis of the implications of Black women in educational leadership, using authentic Black women's viewpoints. The literature review presented in the previous chapter provides a historical reflection on Black women in education. Recognizing the historical importance of Black women as educational leaders demonstrates how this role has the potential to impact how Black women perceive their character.

Articles were retrieved using the Ontario Tech library with Omni search. Specifically, academic articles from 2010 to the present were reviewed to discover the experiences of Black female administrators in schools. This research was limited to peer-reviewed articles. A total of 29 articles were selected for the historical reflections on the experience of Black female administrators in schools. An overview of these findings can be found in Appendix 1. Unfortunately, the historical search for the portrayal of Black female administrators on film proved to be more challenging. The search window was expanded to include dissertations and

peer-reviewed articles dating back to 2007. A total of 11 articles were reviewed for the historical findings of Black women and principals on film.

Step four requires the development of a concrete cognitive purpose. The findings from the literature review confirmed my cognitive purpose to analyze the *Abbott Elementary* television series to explore how a Black woman educational leader is portrayed to viewers. Specifically, I wonder about the implications of this depiction on Black women, given its potential for secondary socialization (Berry, 1998; Beyerbach & Oswego, 2005; Dalton, 1995; Pyburn Craig, 2020; Rogers et al., 2021) and the potential effects it may have on educational and career decisions of Black women.

3.3 Steps 5 and 6 Questioning and Sampling

Step five refers to questioning and serves as the basis for the literature review in this project. The review provided context and underpinnings for research coding. First, pertaining to Black women, the research reveals stereotypes that Black female administrators endure. These stereotypes include Sapphire (ABW) (Aaron, 2020; Armstrong & Mitchell, 2017; Davis & Johnson, 2020; Nelson et al., 2015; Tevis et al., 2020), Jezebel (Aaron, 2020; Armstrong & Mitchell, 2017; Reed, 2012), Welfare Mom (Aaron, 2020; Nelson et al., 2016; Reed, 2012; Tevis et al., 2020), SBW (Davis & Johnson, 2020; Liao et al., 2020; Nelson et al., 2016) and Mammy (Aaron, 2020; Davis & Johnson, 2020; Tevis et al., 2020). The question used for analysis becomes, does the character of Ava Coleman portray these stereotypes? Each of these stereotypes is then created as a code for analysis.

The literature review also reveals common leadership styles among Black women educational leaders. Following the same format for the stereotypes, these leadership style traits

were bundled as described in the literature review and became codes for analysis. The question is whether principal Ava Coleman depicts similar leadership qualities.

Finally, the research also reveals that principals are often depicted as authoritarians, bureaucrats, numbskulls/buffoons or villains in the media (Glanz, 1996; Tillman, 2007; Wolfram, 2010). Again, these findings create more codes for analysis, and the question is whether the Black principal character follows this finding.

Step six is the sampling of material for analysis. For this project, the visual material consists of all thirteen 23-minute episodes of season one of *Abbott Elementary* via a streaming service described in the subsequent section.

3.4 Steps 7 and 8 Analytical Tool and Data Collection

Step seven requires selecting analytical tools for analysis, and step eight is the actual data collection. The two analytical tools chosen were selected out of convenience and cost. First, the Disney Plus platform was selected as the entire season one of *Abbott Elementary* is available on this platform. Also, this application has a closed caption option allowing transcription to be completed with ease. The ability to rewind, pause and fast-forward also simplifies analysis. Using Disney Plus was convenient and cost-effective as I had already subscribed to the platform.

The second analytical tool utilized for this project is the free qualitative data analysis application QDA miner lite (Provalis Research, 2022). This application was used for coding the data. QDA miner lite (Provalis Research, 2022) was chosen because it was free, easy to use, and referred by my supervisor.

3.5 Steps 9 and 10 Description and Analysis of Data

The functions of the Disney Plus application were used to transcribe the entire script of the role of Ava Coleman for each episode. I took pertinent notes using Creswell's (2014) approach,

where the researcher is a complete observer and understands that communication with the audience is necessary for this analysis. These notes were informed by the literature review findings, my research questions, and my experiences as a Black female school administrator. Interactions with other characters were also recorded, providing context to the narrative being analyzed. Specific reactions and comments made by other characters in the episodes that pertain to principal Ava Coleman were noted to enhance understanding of context.

Figure 1 shows the codebook created by the QDA miner lite application (Provalis Research, 2022). Table 2 is the elaborated codebook used for coding the transcription. Creswell (2014) refers to the importance of trustworthiness and credibility in qualitative studies. My project supervisor iterated coding using this elaborated codebook to enhance these factors.

Figure 1
QDA Miner Lite Codebook

- **Servant Leadership**
 - Listening/Empathy/Healing
 - Awareness/persuasion/foresight
 - Stewardship/commitment to others
- **Authentic Leadership**
 - Passion/Purpose
 - Values/Behaviour
 - Relationship/Connectedness
 - Self-Discipline/Consistency
 - Heart/Compassion
- **Transformational Leadership**
 - Idealized influence/Charisma
 - Inspirational Motivation
 - Intellectual Stimulation
 - Individuallized consideration
- **BW Stereotypes**
 - SBW
 - Sapphire/ABW
 - Jezebel
 - Welfare Mom
- **Principal Stereotypes**
 - Authoritarian
 - Numbskull/buffoon/clueless
 - Bureaucratic
 - Villain
- **Surprising Themes**
 - Paranoia
 - Tech Savvy
 - Demeaning to Others
 - Self Serving
 - Trendy
- **Emergent Leadership Style**
 - Transactional
 - Laissez-Faire

Findings from the literature review informed the initial codes on leadership styles and stereotypical portrayals of Black women and principals on-screen. These codes are in the top portion of Table 2. Viewing the series and transcribing the script reveals the necessity for new codes. These new codes are indicated in the lower portion of Table 2. Surprising themes encompass Ava’s full range of personality traits. At the same time, the emergent leadership style theme considers the character’s true leadership style.

Table 2
Elaboration of Data Analysis Codebook

Code	Descriptor(s)	Examples	Reference
Servant Leadership	Listening/Empathy/Healing	-Waiting while being spoken to -Responding to requests -Caring for others -Showing compassion	Spears, 2002
	Awareness/Persuasion/Foresight	-Showing concern for how others might be feeling -Convincing people to pursue activities -Understanding reactions to actions	
	Stewardship/Commitment to Others	-Offering help -Willing to work with others for a positive outcome	
Authentic Leadership	Purpose that drives passion	- Caring so much that one is unafraid of consequences of speaking their truth	George, 2008
	Values that direct behaviour	-Actions that show a commitment to moral beliefs	
	Relationships that nurture connectedness	- spending time with people doing things they both enjoy -offering help to people you care about -forgiveness	
	Self-discipline that leads to consistency	-reliability and dependability	
	Heart that provides for compassion	Helping those who cannot help themselves	

Code	Descriptor(s)	Examples	Reference
		-forgiveness	
Transformational Leadership	Idealized influence or Charisma	- Outgoing behaviour designed to uplift and encourage others	Bass & Avolio, 1994
	Inspirational Motivation	-Compliments -Encouragement	
	Intellectual Stimulation	-Researching -Questioning	
	Individualized Consideration	-Mentoring -Appealing to others in order to uplift	
Black Woman Stereotypes	Sapphire or Angry Black Woman	-Reacting angrily unnecessarily -Being rude and disgruntled	Aaron, 2020; Armstrong and Mitchell, 2017; Davis and Johnson, 2020; Nelson et al., 2015, Tevis et al., 2020
	Welfare Mom	-Laziness, Idleness -Expecting something for nothing -lack of qualification or education	Aaron, 2020; Nelson et al., 2016
	Jezebel	-hypersexualization -home wrecker	Aaron, 2020
	Mammy Figure	-maternal -self-sacrificing -nurturing	Aaron, 2020; Davis & Johnson, 2020; Tevis et al., 2020
	Strong Black Woman	-determination to succeed -strength to bear burdens -independence and self-control	Davis and Johnson, 2020; Liao et al., 2020; Nelson et al., 2016
Principal Stereotypes	Authoritarian	-Bossy -Unconcerned with others input -Hierarchical beliefs	Glanz, 1997; Tillman, 2007; Wolfrom, 2010
	Numbskull/buffoon	-Clueless -Unaware of the impact of actions -Simple minded	
	Bureaucratic	-Concerned with rules and regulations	
	Villain	-Vengeance	

Code	Descriptor(s)	Examples	Reference
		-Looking to bring others down	
Surprising Themes	Paranoia	-Preparing for the world to end -Believing she might lose her job?	Emergent from script and broadcast
	Tech Savvy	-Social Media Awareness -Competence with technology	
	Demeaning to Others	- Insulting and degrading comments meant for comedic purposes	
	Self Serving	-Doing things for personal gain -Taking undeserved credit	
	Trendy	-Comments referring to popular culture -Speaking in slang or doing something to seem younger	
Emergent Leadership Style	Transactional	-Contingent Reward - contractual, expect other to work for reward (monetary usually) -Active Management by Exception - monitor followers and corrects mistakes when made -Passive Management by Exception - monitors and notes and may punish instead of correct	Avolio, 2011; Bass, 1985
	Laissez-Faire	-Passive -Avoids responsibility	

3.6 Steps 11-14 - Interpretation, Evaluation and Presentation

The remaining steps of Mikos' (2014) film analysis process are included in this project's discussion, implications and conclusions. In these chapters, I use BFT (Hill Collins, 2000) to dissect the role of Ava Coleman in terms of Black women stereotypes, leadership styles and principal portrayals. According to Mikos (2014), these conclusions are a form of appropriation of a film's initial reception. These chapters will evaluate the implications of the depiction of this role in terms of secondary socialization (Berry, 1998; Beyersbach & Oswego, 2005; Dalton,

1995; Pyburn Craig, 2020; Rogers et al., 2021) of how Black women see themselves as educational leaders.

Chapter 4. Findings: Analyzing Ava Coleman

This chapter presents findings regarding how Ava Coleman is portrayed as the Black female principal in *Abbott Elementary*. The series is a mockumentary situation comedy allowing characters to speak candidly to the viewing audience through an unseen camera crew. This feature lends itself to Mikos's (2014) film analysis procedures of communication with the viewer allowing for a better understanding of the beliefs and intentions of the character.

The QDA miner lite (Provalis Research, 2022) software allows for coding outputs that reveal the count, percentages of all codes, cases and percentage of cases. For this project, the count refers to the number of instances the code occurs over all episodes. The percentage of codes acknowledges how prevalent the code is amongst all codes. The case refers to episodes, and the case percentage is how often the code occurs within all episodes.

4.1 Ava and the Depiction of School Principals

The depiction of school principals in media falls into the following categories: Authoritarian, Bureaucratic, Numbskull/Buffoon or Villain (Glanz, 1997; Tillman, 2007; Wolfrom, 2010). Table 3 shows the instances of stereotypical principal traits demonstrated by Ava Coleman throughout the series. Each of these coding descriptions will now be described in the coding context.

Table 3
Principal Stereotypes Portrayed by Ava Coleman

Code	Description	Count	% Codes	# of Episodes	% of Episodes
Authoritarian	Commanding; Unilateral decision making	25	7.1%	10	76.9%
Bureaucratic	Aware and/or concerned with policy	11	3.1%	6	46.2%
Numbskull / Buffoon	Oblivious, uneducated, clueless	63	17.8%	13	100%
Villain	Vengeful, intent to harm, cruel	4	1.1%	1	7.7%

4.1.1 Authoritarian

The character demonstrated 25 instances of authoritarian behaviour, spanning ten of the thirteen episodes. Since Ava acquired the principalship via blackmail, she feels untouchable, allowing her to feed into the stereotype of the autocratic principal. Ava unilaterally decides to use emergency funding for a plastic sign instead of the necessities she promised the teachers. Later in this first episode, Ava calls an impromptu meeting taking away their lunch break (Brunson & Einhorn, 2021). Ava is not even subtle with this request as she uses the PA system to announce the meeting saying, *“Teachers, it has come to my attention that some of you, one of you, think it’s okay to go over my head. So during lunch break, this lunch break we will be having a trust workshop so we can learn to become a work fam.”* (Brunson & Einhorn, 2021)

In episode three, Ava creates a teacher wishlist video that demoralizes the teacher without her consent (Murphy & Einhorn, 2022). In episode four, after learning that one of the kindergarten classes is reading well above grade level, Principal Coleman holds an assembly to display the students’ talent without discussing it with the kindergarten teacher (Rubenstein & Einhorn, 2022). Ava also shuts down the gifted program in episode five, exclaiming, *“We shuttin’*

this down. He gettin' too smart.” (Temple & Sohn, 2022) when one of the gifted students recognizes that she is not doing her job. Principal Coleman also takes over the step class in episode nine with little concern for Ms. Teagues, who is instructing the class (McCrorry & Davani, 2022). Over the entire season, traits of being an autocratic leader show up in over 70% of the episodes.

4.1.2 Bureaucratic and Villain

There are a few examples of Ava being bureaucratic or villainous. There were only eleven instances of bureaucratic behaviour and a mere four instances of villainy throughout the entire season. When Ava is bureaucratic, it is due to an awareness of administrative duties rather than fulfilling them. For instance, in episode one, she refuses to report that one of her teachers kicked a student for fear it would ruin her reputation. When one of the teachers says to report that a child was harmed to the school board, Ava responds with, *“Hey, harmed? I handled this. No need to let them know that a child was harmed on my watch (turns to camera crew), on the school's watch, to be clear.”* (Brunson & Einhorn, 2021). Also, in episodes nine and thirteen, Ava admits that she has not filled out the liability paperwork to allow students to participate on the Step team and a trip to the zoo, respectively (McCrorry & Davanin, 2022; Temple & Einhorn, 2022).

Principal Coleman does not inhabit much of a villain quality. While one of the emergent themes is that Ava is demeaning to others, the intention to harm or gain vengeance is apparent only in the first episode. In this episode, Principal Coleman actively seeks revenge on teacher Ms. Teagues for trying to report her to the superintendent (Brunson & Einhorn, 2021). Other instances with no malicious intent are not included in the villain category. However, they are included in an emergent theme to be discussed.

4.1.3 Numbskull/Buffoon

As seen in Table 3, Ava demonstrates the characteristics of a numbskull/buffoon in every episode. These characteristics appear an average of almost five times per 23-minute episode.

Early in the pilot episode, the character cluelessly reveals to the camera crew that she attained the principalship through blackmail (Brunson & Einhorn, 2021). Her lack of qualifications ensures numerous instances of numbskull behaviour, providing comedic value to the show. Her cluelessness is solidified right at the beginning of episode one. When the character experienced teacher, Mrs. Barbara Howard, explains that she does not ask Ava for help because she recognizes that Ava cannot do anything to aid. Ava responds, *“So understanding! Be like Mrs. Howard people.”* (Brunson & Einhorn, 2021).

Other antics include frantically preparing for the end of the world, speaking slang and referring to trends to appear cool or young, and asking what the acronym HR means after overtly flirting with a staff member (Brunson et al., 2021-2022). When the electricity goes out because Ms. Teagues tries to fix a lightbulb, instead of trying to mitigate the issue, Principal Coleman responds hysterically with, *“Okay, this is it y'all. The end times. It's three months early, but it's happening. Gregory is the only person who can stay in my bunker, so stop asking!”* Then, after Ms. Howard brings reason to the situation; Ava directs everyone to follow Barb's instructions (Brunson & Einhorn, 2022). Principal Coleman consistently wants to show how young and trendy she is. In episode three, Ava discusses her Tik Tok posts. Then, she hashtags adult video stars to get more views on a teacher wishlist video (Murphy & Einhorn, 2022). Another example of principal Coleman's numbskull behaviour is her admission that she signs anything put in front of her. When Ms. Teagues reminds her that she signed off on her coaching Step team, Ava's

response is: “*Oh, I sign anything that's put in front of me. That's how I ended up co-signing my ex's car loan.*” (McCroory & Davani, 2022).

The entire series is premised on teachers' scrambling to undo or cope with Principal Coleman's clueless leadership in every episode. In a *New York Times* review, Carmel (2022) refers to the character as “the show's comedic foil.”

4.1.4 Emergent Themes

Self-serving behaviour is one of the emergent traits Principal Coleman inhabits. This characteristic appeared 34 times over nine of the thirteen episodes in the season. Principal Coleman makes personal purchases using school funding, uses the school as her personal space and has no regard for the professional conduct expected of a principal (Brunson et al., 2021-2022). Examples include adding personal spa items to teachers' wishlists (Murphy & Einhorn, 2022); planning to remodel a caretaking closet into her “*woman cave*,” and playing sexually suggestive songs over the PA system during the school open house (Rubenstein & Celotta, 2022). However, toward the end of the season, Principal Coleman starts to show more consideration for others. This finding is explored in more depth when examining her leadership skills.

Other surprising themes in Ava's behaviour include paranoia, demeaning others for humour, and being tech-savvy and trendy. Ms. Coleman's paranoia is apparent in her doomsday prepping (Brunson & Einhorn, 2022; Murphy & Einhorn, 2022) and her awareness of how close she is to being fired (Rubenstein & Celotta, 2022; Temple & Einhorn, 2022). Ava is perpetually demeaning to her staff. Demoralizing her teachers feeds into the villain stereotype of principals. However, how she delivers the insults is clearly for comedy, not spite, meriting a separate code. Both the viewing audience and the other characters within the show are acutely aware that Ava's

insulting comments are for humour. To reinforce this point, in episode three, Ava looks into the camera after making a derogatory comment about Ms. Teagues' smartphone to say, "*I'm kidding; she knows I'm playing*" (Murphy & Einhorn, 2022). As such, these exploits are not in the villain category. These humorous insults appear an average of four times per episode (Brunson & Einhorn, 2021-2022). These amusing slights of other characters provide a large portion of the comedic worth of the sitcom.

Being trendy and tech-savvy emerge as re-occurring traits of Ms. Coleman. Evidence of Ava being trendy includes speaking in slang, such as greeting the staff with "*What it do...*" (Brunson & Einhorn, 2021; Rubenstein & Einhorn, 2022). She also refers to current reality TV shows *Survivor* (McCrary & Davani, 2022), *The Bachelor* and *Love after Lockdown* (Nichols & Cherry, 2022). Her trendiness is also evident as she makes mention of several Black celebrities, including Beyonce (McCrary & Davani, 2022; Murphy & Einhorn, 2022), Meek Mills, Drake (Nichols & Einhorn, 2022), Cardi B (McCrary & Davani, 2022) and Lil Mama (Nichols & Cherry, 2022). Ava displays tech-savviness with her ability to create social media videos and expertise with technology. In episode three, this is apparent as Ms. Teagues enlists her help to create a wishlist social media video (Murphy & Einhorn, 2022). Ava's capability with technology appears again in episode twelve when she makes motorized talking tablets in preparation for her presentation to the board (Nichols & Cherry, 2022).

4.2 Ava and Black Woman Stereotypes

The literature review reveals five stereotypes of Black women perpetuated on film. These are ABW or Sapphire (Aaron, 2020; Armstrong & Mitchell, 2017; Davis & Johnson, 2020; Nelson et al., 2015; Tevis et al., 2020), Jezebel (Aaron, 2020; Armstrong & Mitchell, 2017; Reed, 2012), Welfare Mom (Aaron, 2020; Nelson et al., 2016; Reed, 2012; Tevis et al., 2020),

SBW (Davis & Johnson, 2020; Liao et al., 2020; Nelson et al., 2016) and Mammy (Aaron, 2020; Davis & Johnson, 2020; Tevis et al., 2020). Table 4 overviews the findings of Black woman stereotypes throughout the season. There were no findings of The Mammy or Strong Black Woman stereotype detected in the role. According to Cox and Ward (2019), the three central Black women stereotypes currently upheld in media are Jezebel, SBW and Sapphire. Thus, it is unsurprising that there were no findings of the Mammy trait, but the lack of evidence of the SBW trait is a shock. Liao et al. (2020) define the SBW Schema as follows:

“...determination to succeed, self-control, independence, and work ethic, while caregiving is exhibited by prioritizing others’ needs, being self-sacrificing, and supporting families/communities.” (Liao et al., 2020, p. 85)

Table 4
Black Women Stereotypes Portrayed by Ava Coleman

Code	Description	Count	% Codes	# of Episodes	% of Episodes
Jezebel	Hypersexualized, Flirtatious	22	6.2%	10	76.9%
Mammy	Maternal and Subservient	0	0	0	0
Sapphire (ABW)	Loud, Aggressive, Confrontational	2	0.6%	2	15.4%
SBW	Resilient, Reliable, Constant	0	0	0	0
Welfare Mom	Unqualified, Lazy	6	1.7%	3	23.1%

Principal Ava only shows a determination to succeed by blackmailing the superintendent; she shows no self-control, work ethic or self-sacrificial behaviour. While not offering any semblance to the SBW stereotype, Ava’s behaviour is reminiscent of the Welfare Mom stereotype. This stereotype alludes to Black women being lazy, underqualified and receiving financial gain when unmerited (Aaron, 2020; Nelson et al., 2016). Examples of principal Ava perpetuating the

Welfare Mom stereotype include adding spa items for her personal use to a teacher's wishlist in episode three (Murphy & Einhorn, 2022) and idly popping bubble wrap and trimming a chia pet at her desk in episode five (Nichols & Einhorn, 2022). Ava displayed Welfare mom behaviour six times throughout the entire series. A strong example of a moment when she displays the welfare mom mentality is when she admits to not doing paperwork because of partying. Ava tells two of the teachers, *“My bad y'all, she was supposed to skip second grade, but they told me during Essence fest. I missed a lot of paperwork during that month.”* In this example, the teachers had been trying to motivate a student with poor behaviour (Nichols & Einhorn, 2022).

The Sapphire or ABW stereotype is almost non-existent in Ava's character. Episode seven is the first time Ava displays a hint of the Sapphire stereotype. The second time was in episode eleven. In both instances, the displays of anger were mild and short-lived. The first instance appears when Ms. Teagues tells principal Coleman to have a great day; Ava responds with, *“Don't tell me what kinda day to have. Being all presumptuous and rude.”* (Peterman & Celotta, 2022). In context, this comment was made more to impress the volunteer art teacher that was also present for the conversation. The second instance of ABW occurs in episode eleven when Ms. Coleman and the teachers try to discover which kids have been jumping on desks. While interrogating one of the students, Ava shows some anger saying, *“Don't you play with me, boy!”* (Murphy & Kosar, 2022). Other than these two instances, Ms. Coleman's behaviour is relaxed and jovial in every episode.

The Jezebel stereotype is the most pronounced, exhibited 22 times over ten episodes in the series. Although for comedic value, Ava overtly sexually harasses Mr. Eddie, the new Black male substitute teacher on staff. She makes innuendos that implicate his race and masculinity. Examples include pretending to mistake him for a male stripper, referring to him as *“Hershey*

Kiss,” “*Chocolate Drop*” (Brunson & Einhorn, 2021) and “*Young Idris*” (Rubenstein & Einhorn, 2022). This theme was consistent and appeared in ten of the thirteen episodes of the season.

4.3 - Ava and Leadership

Authentic, Servant and Transformational Leadership emerged as common leadership styles of Black women principals in the literature review. Ava Coleman’s character in *Abbott Elementary* displays very few examples of these leadership styles. The following describes the findings from coding episodes based on these leadership traits.

4.3.1 Ava and Servant Leadership

Figure 2
Servant Leadership Traits Displayed Throughout the Series

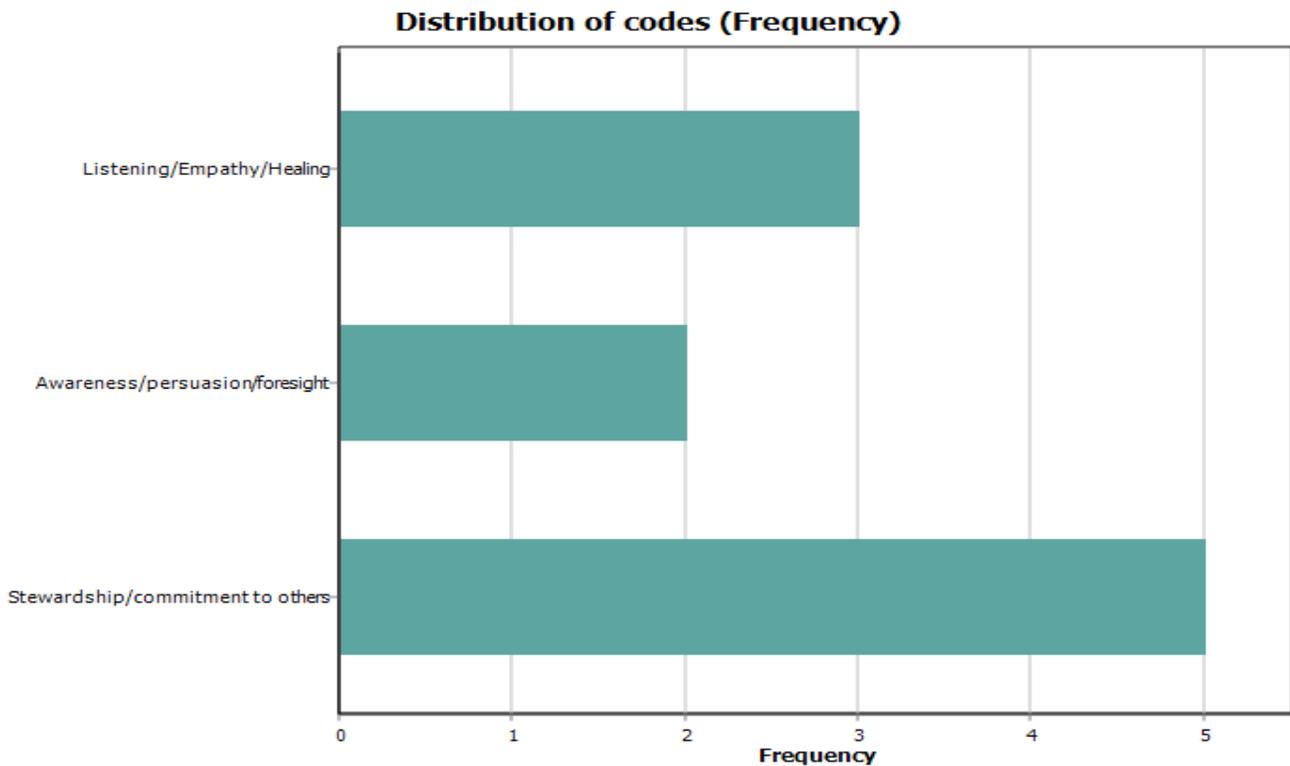


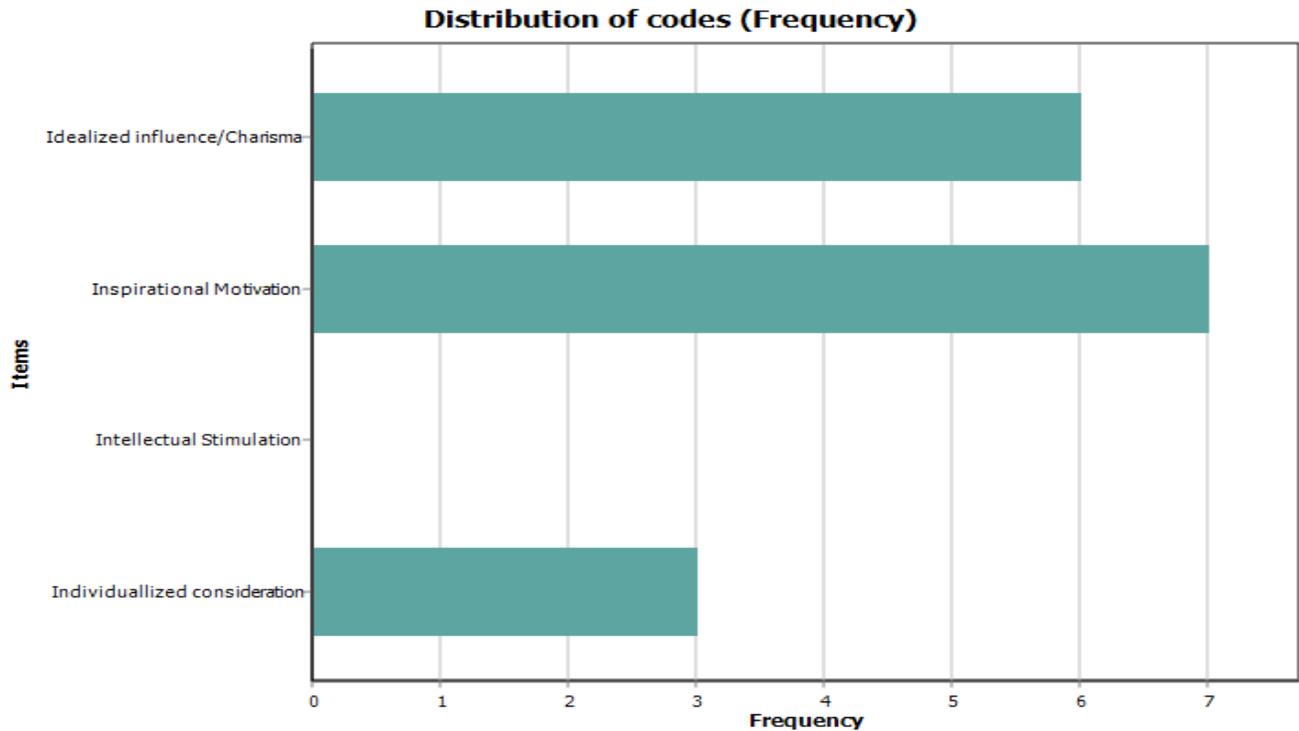
Figure 2 shows the frequency with which Principal Coleman displays servant leadership qualities throughout the series. Only ten instances occur in less than half of the episodes in the season. In the pilot episode, Ava tells Ms. Teagues that she will request emergency funding for

rugs and teacher aides. Making this request shows servant leadership, as it serves the needs of students and teachers. However, when Principal Coleman receives the emergency budget, she spends it on an exterior school sign that includes her image. During the presentation of the sign to the school, Ava says, “*We could have got aides, we could have got rugs, but then I thought no, we need something more immediate.*”(Brunson & Einhorn, 2021). In another pseudo-example of servant leadership, Ava helps a teacher create a video wishlist. By the end of the episode, it is clear that Ava makes the video to add personal items to the wishlist and to go viral on social media (Murphy & Einhorn, 2022).

4.3.2 Ava and Transformational Leadership

Figure 3 displays the frequency with which Ava encompasses transformational leadership qualities in the series. Throughout the series Principal Coleman is charismatic. Charisma, or idealized influence, is the first component of transformational leadership (Dugan, 2017; Northouse, 2019). However, it is not until episode nine that Ava uses this charisma to inspire students. While coaching a Step team, Principal Coleman is outgoing and engages with the students, ultimately producing an empowering performance (McCrory & Davani, 2022). In this same episode, Ava positively reinforces the students but then demeans Ms. Teagues, which is contrary to the component of individualized consideration of transformational leadership.

Figure 3
Transformational Leadership Traits Displayed Throughout the Series



It is essential to note that the majority of displays of transformational leadership occur later in the season. While two minor displays of inspirational motivation are apparent in episodes three and four, the remainder of the examples occurs mainly in episode nine, with more direct examples occurring in the final two episodes of the season. Also of important note is the absence of the transformational trait of intellectual stimulation. This lack of a character trait allows principal Coleman to perpetuate the numbskull/buffoon principal stereotype.

4.3.3 Ava and Authentic Leadership

Northouse (2019) expresses that while there is not a single accepted definition of authentic leadership, there is agreement that authentic leaders do what is morally good. Principal Coleman is authentic in that she remains true to her personality throughout the series. However,

morality is not Ava Coleman’s strong suit. Bass et al. (2008) state that an authentic leader has five attributes:

- 1) A passion that drives purpose;
- 2) Values displayed in behaviour;
- 3) A heart that shows compassion;
- 4) relationships nurtured by connectedness, and
- 5) Self-discipline that leads to consistency.

Unfortunately, the immoral personality of Ava Coleman does not resonate with authentic leadership traits. Table 5 provides contradictory examples of Ava’s corrupt behaviour in each episode that prevent her from being an authentic leader.

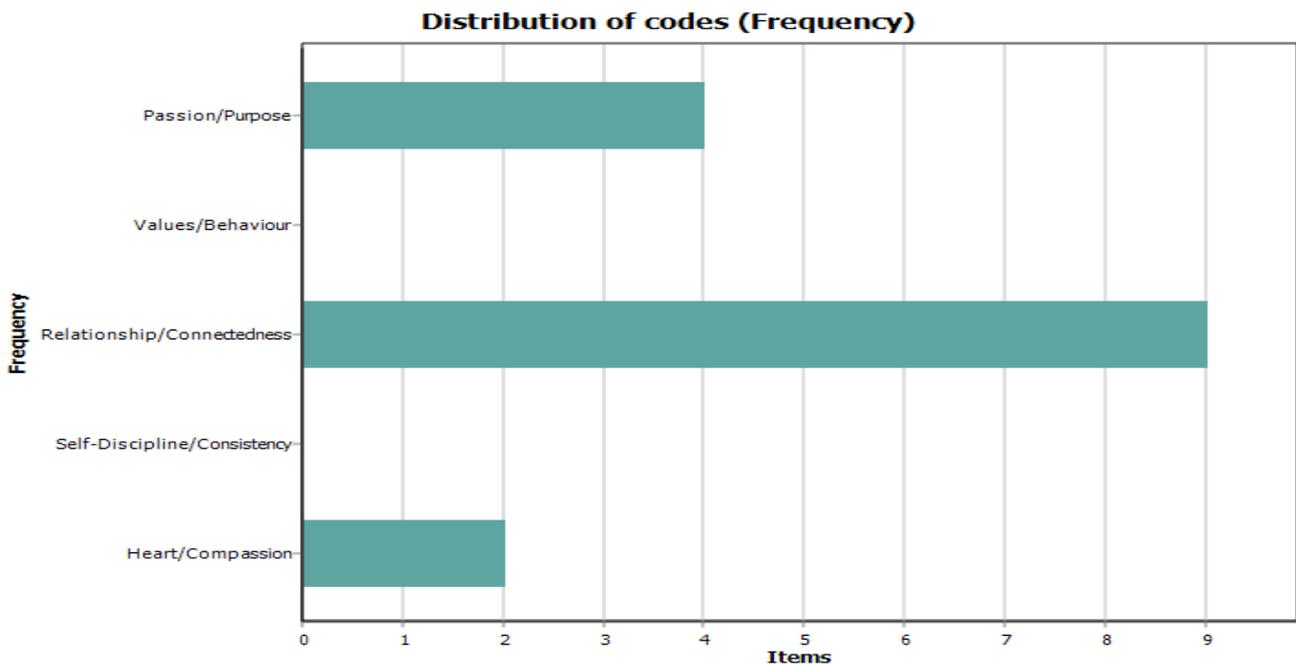
Table 5
Immoral Behaviour Displayed By Ava

Episode	Evidence of Lack of Morality or Selfish Behaviour
1- The Pilot (Brunson & Einhorn, 2021)	Purchases an exterior sign with her face on it instead of necessities for students
2 - Light Bulb (Brunson & Einhorn, 2022)	Makes no effort to save students when she believes there is an imminent apocalypse
3 - Wishlist (Murphy & Einhorn, 2022)	Adds personal spa items to teacher’s wishlists
4 - New Tech (Rubenstein & Einhorn, 2022)	Plans to sell school board distributed tablets for profit when they become obsolete
5 - Student Transfer (Nichols & Einhorn, 2022)	Makes a bet against Ms. Teagues’ teaching abilities
6 - Gifted Program (Temple & Sohn, 2022)	Refers to gifted students as the smart kids in front of other students
7 - Art Teacher (Peterman & Celotta, 2022)	Concerned only that the new ‘cool’ art teacher likes her and not with her lack of competence
8 - Work Family (Tan & Karas, 2022)	Overtly ridicules Ms. Teagues because of her life choices

Episode	Evidence of Lack of Morality or Selfish Behaviour
9 - Step Class (McCrory & Davani, 2022)	Makes inappropriate sexual innuendos to students
10 - Open House (Rubenstein & Celotta, 2022)	Continually reminds the superintendent that she is blackmailing him
11 - Desking (Murphy & Kosar, 2022)	Unconcerned with safety of students, but concerned with her online reputation
12 - Ava vs. Superintendent (Nichols & Cherry, 2022)	Refers to teacher as subordinate
13 - Zoo Balloon (Temple & Einhorn, 2022)	Takes the school on an unsanctioned trip to the zoo

Similar to the observation of transformational leadership qualities, Ava’s character demonstrates some evidence of authentic leadership in later episodes of the season. Figure 4 shows the frequency with which authentic traits are displayed over the entire season.

Figure 4
Authentic Leadership Traits Displayed Throughout the Series



Ava's interest in Step leads to authentic leadership traits in episode nine. In this episode, principal Coleman communicates with students and appreciates Ms. Teagues (McCrorry & Davani, 2022). In a rare display of heart and compassion, Ava divulges to Ms. Teagues that she took time off work to help care for her grandmother (McCrorry & Davani, 2022). However, Ava's most prominent demonstration of authentic leadership occurs in episode twelve, *Ava vs. Superintendent* (Nichols & Cherry, 2022). In this episode, Ms. Coleman must formally request the board of directors for additional funding.

Although she is ill-prepared for the presentation, she uncharacteristically and passionately expresses the effectiveness of her teachers. Her final statement to the panel is, “Don't give us the money because we need it; give it to us because everyone at Abbott deserves it” (Nichols & Cherry, 2022). These examples show the authentic leadership traits of relationships that lead to connectedness, a heart that shows compassion, and passion that leads to purpose. However, the authentic leadership traits of values that shape behaviour and discipline that lead to consistency are entirely void of the character's personality.

4.4 Ava's Emergent Character Traits

Figure 5
Emergent Characteristics of Ava Coleman

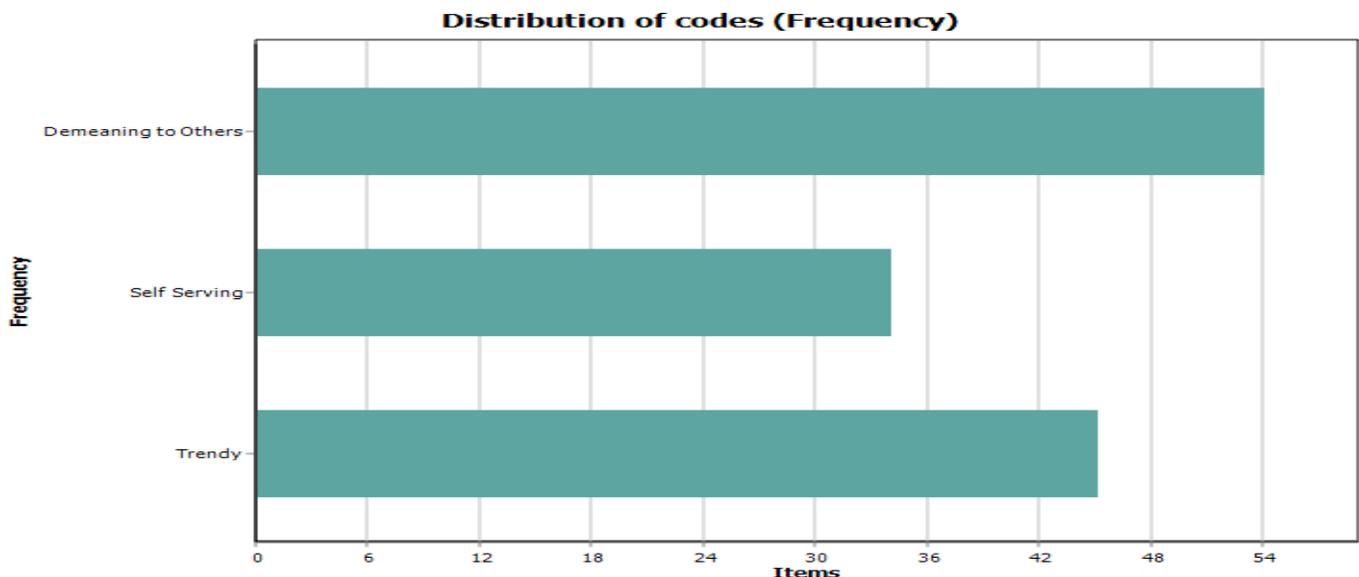


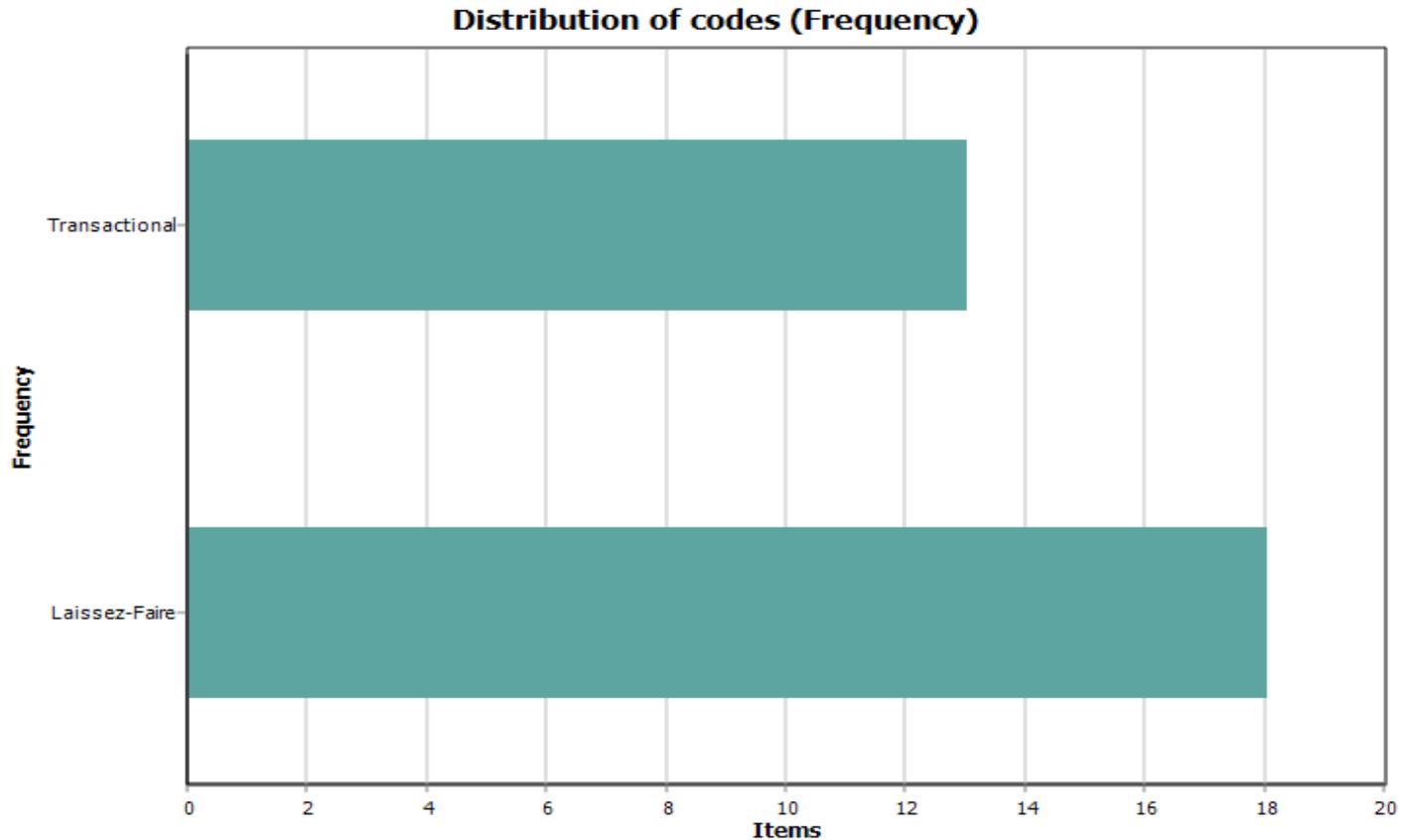
Figure 5 displays the frequency of emergent traits that did not always align with one of the aforementioned Black women stereotypes. These included demeaning to others (generally for comedic purposes), self-serving and trendy. These qualities contradict servant, authentic and transformational leadership styles. Ava's trendy traits somewhat overlap with the transformational leadership trait of charisma. However, the trendy trait rarely had anything to do with the inspiration or motivation of others.

4.5 Ava's Emergent Leadership Style

The findings thus far show that Principal Coleman does not adhere to the leadership styles of Black women that materialized in the literature review, leaving it necessary to discover Ava Coleman's dominant leadership style in the show. After re-watching and reviewing the script, her self-absorbed, carefree character aligns closely with a Laissez-Faire and Transactional leadership approach. Bass and Avolio (1994) describe transactional leadership as applying a reward (usually monetary) or consequence for work performance. A laissez-faire approach is where a leader lets things slide, avoids making decisions and is satisfied to sit back and let others take the lead (Avolio, 2011). Evidence of transactional leadership occurs in eight episodes, while laissez-faire leadership occurs in nine episodes. Figure 6 shows the high incident rates of these behaviours throughout the season.

Figure 6

Transactional and Laissez-Faire Traits Displayed Throughout the Series



Achieving the principal position through blackmail is the first evidence that Ava is a transactional leader. There are four other instances of transactional leadership apparent in this first broadcasting. Ava first, not so subtly, tells a teacher it will come from her pay cheque if she wants a teacher's aide. She whispers to the teacher, *"Do you want to split your salary with somebody else?...No? I didn't think so."* She then fires this same teacher for poor conduct. Finally, Ava explains to the staff that they must respect her to show respect for the school (Brunson & Einhorn, 2021). Throughout the rest of the series, it is evident that Ava makes many decisions based on personal gains. She agrees to help with a wishlist video to obtain spa items and to go viral online (Murphy & Einhorn, 2022). While creating this wishlist video, she enlists the help of a student. Ava admits that offering the student a dollar improved her performance

when the student did not perform well. Ava explains the student's performance, *"Now she can act, she couldn't do it, and then I pulled out a dollar, and that little girl was Viola Davis."* (Murphy & Einhorn, 2022). This reward tactic is typical of transactional leadership and is consistent with her self-serving behaviour.

Principal Ava Coleman rarely makes a leadership decision, alluding to a laissez-faire leadership style. Attaining the position through blackmail provides job security for the character, resulting in no need to perform well. Principal Coleman trusts that the teachers will do what is necessary for the school to run smoothly for the benefit of the students. From the beginning of the season, it is clear that the teachers are running the school, and Ava is more of a hindrance to progress. In the pilot episode, Barbara Howard, the most experienced teacher, says she does not ask for help because she knows Principal Coleman will not do much about it (Brunson & Einhorn, 2021).

In episode two, when the school loses electrical power, Ava directs the staff to listen to Barb for instructions (Brunson & Einhorn, 2022). Later, in the season's final episode, Ava gives no direction on finding a lost child on a trip to the zoo. Once again, teacher Mrs. Howard instructs the staff (Temple & Einhorn, 2022). In episode three, Ms. Teagues, the main character, threatens to quit. Ava laughs at the thought because she knows Ms. Teagues loves the job and cares for the students (Murphy & Einhorn, 2022). The most blatant demonstration of her laissez-faire style is when two teachers helping her prepare for a presentation tell her that she will have to include data and facts in her presentation, and she responds with, *"Well, then this is pointless. I've spent my whole life avoiding those two things."* The laissez-faire style is fermented when the two teachers say they will assist with the presentation. Ava responds, *"I love it! This is*

like a group project at school, where I bring the energy, and you guys bring whatever doesn't require personality. This is a good idea." (Nichols & Cherry, 2022).

Given that Principal Ava is not qualified for the position, it is not surprising that she does not adhere to the leadership styles that emerged as typical for Black female administrators. Ava's transactional and laissez-faire styles of leadership align with her character development.

4.6 Ava and the Impact of Intersectionality

Identity politics, or having to negotiate their leadership based on their intersectionality, is prevalent in the findings from the literature review (Armstrong & Mitchell, 2017; Beard, 2012; deBruyn & Mestry, 2020; Gause, 2021; Johnson, 2021; Johnson & Fournillier, 2021; Johnson & Founillier, 2022; Moore, 2013; Newcombe & Niemeyer, 2015; Reed, 2012; Tevis et al., 2020; Townsend, 2021; Williams, 2021). Although portrayed as clueless in her position throughout the series, Ava Coleman exudes comfort in her vocation. She displays confidence in her role, comparing herself to two well-known Black principals portrayed on screen. This conviction is evident in episode three when Ava refers to herself as the "HBIC" (Rubenstein & Einhorn, 2022). HBIC is an altered acronym from HNIC, standing for head n-word in charge. It was used in the 1989 movie *Lean on Me* (Avildsen, 1989), in which actor Morgan Freeman portrayed legendary Principal Joe Louis Clarke. Toward the end of the same episode, Ava uses the iconic movie *Coach Carter* (Carter, 2005) starring Samuel L. Jackson as a coach who improved the grades of his basketball team. On stage, she says to the staff and student body, *"It all started when I was watching Coach Carter for the 17th time. Now...I've done more for this school in one year than he did for the whole movie."* (Rubenstein & Einhorn, 2022). Comparing and believing her abilities to be better than Joe Clarke and Coach Carter displays her confidence in her role as principal.

Chapter 5. Discussion

The negative stereotypical portrayal of Black women (Cox & Ward, 2019; Rogers et al., 2021; Salinas, 2021) and principals (Glanz, 1997; Tillman, 2007; Wolform, 2010) is sustained in the media. The new series *Abbott Elementary* created by a Black woman, positions itself with the ability to interrupt these harmful dialogues. This section addresses steps eleven to thirteen of Mikos' (2014) 14-step method of film analysis as outlined in chapter three. Here, I interpret, evaluate and contextualize the findings reported in the previous chapter using the BFT (Hill Collins, 2000) framework presented in the introduction. This chapter compares Ava Coleman to Black female administrators' experiences concerning their intersectionality and leadership found in the literature review. It also contrasts the depiction with previous depictions of principals in the media.

5.1 Ava Character Contrast

The literature review illuminates trials that Black female principals experience in the role due to their intersectionality. Scrutiny of qualifications is one of these hardships (Gause, 2021; Johnson, 2021; Johnson & Founillier, 2021; Miles Nash & Peters, 2020; Newcombe & Niemeyer, 2015; Tevis et al., 2021; Townsend, 2021). In contrast to this finding, Principal Coleman unapologetically broadcasts her lack of capability, letting people know she attained the job by blackmailing the superintendent (Brunson & Einhorn, 2021; Rubenstein & Celotta, 2022).

The one obvious similarity is that Ava is leading in an underprivileged school, which according to the research, is the norm for Black women principals (Bass, 2012; Jang & Alexander, 2022; Moorosi et al., 2018; Peters, 2012). However, Ava's leadership style is the most notable contradiction to the literature review findings.

The character Ava Coleman proves to be an atypical portrayal of a Black woman but a typical portrayal of a principal as seen on screen. In film and television, school principals are often depicted as authoritarian, bureaucratic, numbskull/buffoons and villains (Glanz, 1997; Tillman, 2007; Wolfram, 2010). Principal Coleman perpetuates this portrayal, especially the numbskull/buffoon quality, which occurs in every episode of the season.

The stereotypical depiction of Black women on-screen represents women as SBW, Sapphire/ABW, Jezebel, Welfare Mom and Mammy (Cox & Ward, 2019; Rogers et al., 2021; Salinas, 2021). Recent research reveals that the three most dominant stereotypical portrayals of Black women are SBW, Jezebel and Sapphire (Cox & Ward, 2019; Salinas, 2021). While Principal Coleman inhabits some of these stereotypical traits, most notably the Jezebel and Welfare Mom stereotypes, it is significant that she does not display any SBW and negligible Sapphire/ABW qualities.

Contrasting the findings of the experiences of Black female principals to the character development of principal Ava Coleman, there are stark differences. First, Ava presents as unbothered by her lack of credentials and her intersectionality. The literature review reveals that having their leadership qualifications scrutinized (Gause, 2021; Johnson, 2021; Johnson & Founillier, 2021; Miles Nash & Peters, 2020; Newcombe & Niemeyer, 2015; Tevis et al., 2021; Townsend, 2021) and subjection to microaggressions due to their intersectionality (Aaron, 2020; Armstrong & Mitchell, 2017; Beard, 2012; Flores, 2018; Gause, 2021; Jang & Alexander, 2022; Johnson & Founillier, 2021; Lomotey, 2019; Moorosi et al., 2018; Peters, 2012; Peters & Miles Nash, 2021; Reed, 2012; Tevis et al., 2021; Townsend, 2021; Weiner et al., 2021; Weiner et al., 2022) are common difficulties that Black female administrators endure.

The research points to Black female educational leaders often presenting with Servant, Authentic and Transformational leadership qualities (Aaron, 2020; Armstrong & Mitchell, 2017; Bass, 2012; Beard, 2012; de Bruyn & Mestry, 2020; Flores, 2018; Gause, 2021; Johnson, 2021; Johnson & Fournillier, 2021; Johnson & Founillier, 2022; McClellan, 2020; Miles Nash & Peters, 2020; Moore, 2013; Moorosi et al., 2018; Newcombe & Neimeyer, 2015; Peters, 2012; Peters & Miles Nash, 2021; Reed, 2012; Tevis et al., 2020; Townsend, 2021; Watson & Baxley, 2021; Williams, 2021). The character Ava Coleman obliterates these findings with emergent “self-serving” and “demeaning to other” attributes that are apparent in every episode. Further observations reveal the character to display Transactional and Laissez-Faire leadership qualities.

5.2 Maintaining Principal Stereotypes - BFT perspective

Abbott Elementary continues the stereotypical numbskull/buffoon portrayal of a principal. In every episode, principal Ava Coleman's foolish antics strengthen the stereotype of school leaders being simple and clueless. Her lack of alignment with the leadership styles consistently displayed by Black female educational leaders allows for maintaining the stereotype. While it is unfortunate that this negative principal stereotype is upheld from a BFT (Hill Collins, 2000) perspective.

The finding that Black female administrators often lead, demonstrating Servant, Authentic and Transformational leadership qualities (Aaron, 2020; Armstrong & Mitchell, 2017; Bass, 2012; Beard, 2012; de Bruyn & Mestry, 2020; Flores, 2018; Gause, 2021; Johnson, 2021; Johnson & Fournillier, 2021; Johnson & Founillier, 2022; McClellan, 2020; Miles Nash & Peters, 2020; Moore, 2013; Moorosi et al., 2018; Newcombe & Neimeyer, 2015; Peters, 2012; Peters & Miles Nash, 2021; Reed, 2012; Tevis et al., 2020; Townsend, 2021; Watson & Baxley, 2021; Williams, 2021) may easily perpetuate Black woman stereotypes when translated

on-screen. Servant Leadership traits include being other-focused (selfless) and stewardship (Spears, 2002), resembling the Mammy figure. Authentic Leadership qualities include being passionate, values-oriented, self-disciplined and consistent (Avolio & Walumba 2014, as cited in Dugan 2017). Transformative leadership qualities include charisma, motivation and intellectuality (Dugan, 2017; Northouse, 2019). All of these characteristics are embodied in the SBW stereotype. Thus, offering a portrayal of this type of leader in the role of the Black principal could easily slip into further affirmations of these stereotypes.

Instead, creator Quinta Brunson is in sync with the overall consciousness of Black women, the first tenet of BFT (Hill Collins, 2000). She recognizes that as Black women, we have been overly subjected to these stereotypes and wisely presents principal Ava Coleman as a transactional and laissez-faire leader. Allowing Ava to be carefree, self-centred and clueless strongly challenges the SBW, Sapphire and Mammy stereotypes. Challenging these stereotypes also aligns with the second tenet of BFT (Hill Collins, 2000), which highlights the importance of within-group individuality. As I observed the series as a Black female school administrator, I often found myself envious of the character. The envy stemmed from Ava's freeness to be who she was. Principal Coleman did not seem concerned with anyone's perception of her. This trait is beneficial for Black women as educational leaders. The research found that Black women educational leaders often needed to shift their identities to succeed in their roles (Armstrong & Mitchell, 2017; Johnson & Fournillier, 2021; Townsend, 2021).

5.3 Challenging Stereotypes: The BFT Perspective

As a Black woman in education, I am thrilled at the creation of *Abbott Elementary*. Quinta Brunson, the Black female creator of the show, explains that her experiences in the Philadelphia school system and being a school teacher's daughter inspired the series's concept

(Broadway, 2022; Najarro, 2022). Viewing the school system through a Black woman's eye challenges the standard view of schooling presented by white writers and producers. Brunson aims to show the positive in a predominantly Black underfunded school while making the community aware of the inequities in funding (Broadway, 2022). Broadway (2022) refers to a 2018 study that found that wealthier white school districts receive about \$1200 more per student than poorer non-white districts in the US.

5.3.1 - Challenging the Portrayal of Black Schools in American Media

Growing up in the 90s, I became desensitized to the media narrative of predominantly Black schools in America being poorly run and underfunded with out-of-control students. I consumed this message on film through movies such as *Lean on Me* (Avildsen, 1989), *Boyz in the Hood* (Singleton, 1991), *Dangerous Minds* (Smith, 1995), *Bring it On* (2000), *Save the Last Dance* (Carter, 2001) and *Freedom Writers* (LaGravenese, 2007). The message was also reinforced by my lack of examples of Black schools on television. The channels I was exposed to in Canada did not provide an alternative Black school story. I grew up watching series such as *Diff'rent Strokes* (Grossman et al., 1978-1986), *The Facts of Life* (Elinson et al., 1979-1988), *Saved by the Bell* (Engel, 1989 - 1993), *90210* (Spelling et al., 1990 - 2000), *The Cosby Show* (Carsey et al., 1984 - 1992) and *The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air* (Borowitz et al., 1990 - 1996). While the last two examples did have a majority Black cast, they either rarely showed the school system (*The Cosby Show*) or attended a majority White School (*Fresh Prince of Bel-Air*). The first example, *Diff'rent Strokes* (Grossman et al., 1978-1986), did have Black main characters; however, like in *The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air* (Borowitz et al., 1990-1996), they were navigating an affluent white society. As a Canadian, I could not identify with these stories. However,

unbeknownst to my consciousness, I was internalizing messages communicating that predominantly Black schools and their educators are inferior.

Quinta Brunson refreshingly provides a contradictory narrative. The stereotype of Black public schools being underfunded remains, but the quality of educators is challenged. The teachers portrayed at *Abbott Elementary* are passionate, caring and hardworking. The students, though demanding, are not depicted as hopeless. These factors illuminate Brunson's ability to encompass the BFT (Hill Collins, 2000). The show's narrative demonstrates awareness of social context and the broader plight of social justice. These are critical points of the BFT (Hill Collins, 2000) framework.

5.3.2 Challenging Black Woman Stereotypes

In chapter two, the literature review reveals that Black women are stereotypically portrayed as Mammys, SBW, Sapphire (ABW), Welfare Mom and Jezebel (Cox & Ward, 2019; Rogers et al., 2021; Salinas, 2021). As a Black woman administrator, I have internalized the SBW stereotype and sometimes struggle to live up to it. It is difficult not to allow these images to control our self-perceptions and, ultimately, our self-actualizations (Hill Collins, 2000; Gines, 2015). As I am on a journey of continuous self-development, I embrace the SBW stereotype with my eyes wide open. I am aware of the positives as well as the negatives of this stereotype. Research points out that adhering to the SBW stereotype can increase the likelihood of anxiety and depression (Anyiwo et al., 2018; Liao et al., 2022). However, collective and spiritual coping have some mediating factors (Liao et al., 2022). Leadership roles such as principalship easily lend themselves to the SBW stereotype when portrayed by a Black woman. The disruption of these stereotypes displayed by the character of Ava Coleman is essential. Principal Coleman is not your stereotypical Mammy, SBW, or Sapphire. She inhabits some typical Jezebel and

Welfare Mom qualities, but the series does not make this the main focus of her character. Principal Coleman shows two trivial examples of the Sapphire or ABW stereotype. However, most notably, Principal Coleman displays no attributes of the Mammy figure or SBW stereotype. This depiction offers a unique and individual substantiation of a Black woman, which strengthens the placement of the series in the BFT (Hill Collins, 2000) framework.

Similar to the findings of the Cox & Ward (2019) study, Black women are depicted as single when they are portrayed in professional roles. This rings true for Ava's character. She also stereotypically displays Jezebel behaviour as a single Black woman. However, Ava does not embody the SBW or ABW stereotypes, offering a different narrative to what is frequently presented. It is also important to note that Quinta Brunson casts two other Black females in critical roles as teachers. The first is herself as Ms. Teagues, a second-year, second-grade teacher, and the other is Emmy-Award winner Sheryl Lee Ralph as an experienced kindergarten teacher, Ms. Barbara Howard. Both of these characters are in committed long-term relationships. These representations challenge the jezebel stereotype for Black women, leaving the few moments where Ava is portrayed as hypersexualized for comedy as opposed to a representation of all Black women.

5.3.3 Other Characters Challenging SBW

While I have chosen to focus on the character of Ava Coleman, the other two Black female main characters previously mentioned also challenge the SBW stereotype. Janine Teagues fumbles her way through teaching, directly challenging the SBW stereotype because she does not have it all figured out. She yearns to learn and desires mentorship and guidance from senior teacher Mrs. Barbara Howard.

Mrs. Howard, on the other hand, reflects many SBW traits. She is organized and supports her students and colleagues. However, the SBW stereotype is questioned in the second episode when she shares the need to have a separation between work and home. Mrs. Howard explains that she needs to rejuvenate and cannot give endlessly (Brunson & Einhorn, 2022). Another chink in the SBW armour is revealed when Barb has difficulty utilizing new technology and resorts to cheating (Rubenstein & Einhorn, 2022). Both of these actions are not typical of SBW. Creator Brunson is methodic in displaying these three Black women. Each character is nuanced with strength but does not fall into the stereotypical categories of SBW, Sapphire or Jezebel. These portrayals align seamlessly with tenets one and two of the BFT (Hill Collins, 2000) framework. These varying depictions consider these three Black women going through similar experiences (tenet one) but allow for individual expressions of situations (tenet two).

Chapter 6. Implications and Conclusions

The narrative of *Abbott Elementary* offers a differing view of what it is to be a Black female administrator. This uncommon depiction of a professional Black woman provides a generation of Black female viewers with an alternative to SBW expectations as commonly seen on film (Cox & Ward, 2019; Rogers et al., 2021; Salinas, 2021). Creator Brunson is careful not to over-prescribe any of her Black female characters to the traditional stereotypes of Black women portrayed on television. Ava Coleman is a flawed principal of an elementary school, perpetuating the numbskull/buffoon stereotype of principals on screen (Glanz, 1997; Tillman, 2007; Wolfrom, 2010) but challenging stereotypes of Black women. From a BFT (Hill Collins, 2000) perspective, this portrayal may provide an alternative interpretation of what it means to be a Black woman and an educational leader.

6.1 Implications

As a Black female administrator, my first reaction to the role of Ava Coleman was frustration. Watching a Black female portrayed as a buffoon, self-serving, and essentially a calamity walking as a principal was challenging to watch and accept. As a Black woman, I am sensitive to the depiction of Black women who are often subjected to negative stereotypes (Aaron, 2020; Armstrong & Mitchell, 2017; Davis & Johnson, 2020; Liao et al., 2020; Nelson et al., 2015; Reed, 2012; Tevis et al., 2020). For a Black female principal to be depicted as a numbskull felt like another harmful blow. Of all the Black women stereotypes previously described, SBW has positive connotations. Reflecting, I realize I subscribe to the SBW stereotype and feel protective of it. However, studies show that adherence to the SBW stereotype correlates to higher rates of anxiety and depression among Black women (Anyiwo, 2018; Gines, 2015; Liao et al., 2020). Understanding this unfavourable result of the SBW schema presents the

positive in the clueless school principal depiction that is Ava Coleman. This portrayal challenges the SBW stereotype, allowing Black women in education to be less than strong and perpetually self-sacrificing in the role. Superficially, this sounds like a bad thing. However, digging deeper is necessary. White and male depictions in media have enjoyed a variety of demonstrations, allowing for a range of secondary socialization messages for white people and men. For Black women, we have been subjected to mainly the SBW, Sapphire or ABW and Jezebel (Cox & Ward, 2019; Rogers et al., 2021; Salinas, 2021) illustrations of our nature. As such, Ava Coleman's carefree, unqualified and self-serving behaviour in the role provides some variety in our representation.

Principal Coleman's leadership style presents stark differences when contrasted to Black female school administrators. The research shows that Black female principals often lead through a Servant, Authentic or Transformative leadership lens (Armstrong & Mitchell, 2017; Beard, 2012; Flores, 2018; Gause, 2021; Johnson, 2021; Johnson & Fournillier, 2021; Johnson & Fournillier, 2022; McClellan, 2020; Miles Nash & Peters, 2020; Moore, 2013; Moorosi et al., 2018; Newcombe & Niemeyer, 2015; Patton & Jordan, 2017; Peters, 2012; Peters & Miles Nash, 2021; Reed, 2012; Tevis et al., 2020; Townsend, 2021; Watson & Baxley, 2021; Weiner et al., 2022; Williams, 2021). *Abbott Elementary*, on the other hand, shows Principal Coleman as a Transactional and Laissez-Faire (Avolio, 2011; Bass & Avolio, 1994) leader. Again, this finding, at first glance, is disturbing as it aligns with the Welfare mom and Jezebel stereotypes. However, the sitcom's entire makeup must be considered to properly use a BFT (Hill Collins, 2000) lens.

First and foremost, the series was created by a Black woman. Understanding this gives perspective. Principal Coleman is not the only Black female character in the show. *Abbott Elementary* does an exemplary job at providing multiple narratives of what it is to be a Black

woman in education. The two other main Black women characters provide a balance to the message. While this project focused on the role of Ava Coleman, the overall messaging about Black women in education is encouraging.

Applying tenet three of BFT (Hill Collins, 2000), Quinta Brunson is an intellectual contributor highlighting various portrayals of Black women by effectively disrupting the usual stereotypes. Ava Coleman's role deliberately challenges the SBW, Sapphire (ABW) and the Mammy figure stereotypes. Ava Coleman's character may fall into negative principal stereotypes and occasionally adhere to the Jezebel and Welfare Mom stereotypes. However, it is counterbalanced with the other portrayals of Black female characters. While frustrating at first, Principal Ava Coleman's character can be considered in the context of tenet five of BFT (Hill Collins, 2000), which West (2020) describes as responsive to the changing society.

Black women principals' leadership credentials are often scrutinized (Gause, 2021; Johnson, 2021; Johnson & Founillier, 2021; Miles Nash & Peters, 2020; Newcombe & Niemeyer, 2015; Tevis et al., 2021; Townsend, 2021), even though they are often more qualified than their white counterparts (Berry & Reardon, 2022; Lomotey, 2019). Ava's numbskull nature directly refutes the notion of having to work twice as hard to achieve parity with White counterparts. Ava is free to behave how she wants without fear of judgment. Unlike the Black principal experience in the research, Ava's character does not display the need to shift her identity in order to fulfill the principalship (Aaron, 2020; Armstrong & Mitchell, 2017; Burton et al., 2020; Collins, 2000; Johnson & Fournillier, 2021; Peters, 2012; Reed, 2012; Tevis et al., 2020; Townsend, 2021).

6.2 Conclusions

This project explored how the role of Black female elementary school principal Ava Coleman in the sitcom *Abbott Elementary* contrasts with the experiences of Black female administrators. The result was a divergence from the researched experiences and leadership styles of Black female administrators and Black woman stereotypes.

Further examination of the portrayal of principal Ava Coleman using a BFT (Hill Collins, 2000) framework revealed implications for Black women. The character allows Black women to see themselves in a professional role but not being depicted as an SBW, Sapphire (ABW) or Mammy figure. This departure from the SBW stereotype is necessary. Though the SBW stereotype has positive connotations, it has also been linked to mental health issues among Black women (Anyiwo, 2018; Gines, 2015; Liao et al., 2020). Thus, allowing the role of principal Ava Coleman to be portrayed as carefree with a laissez-faire leadership style is refreshing. Creator Quinta Brunson, is genius in balancing Ava's portrayal with the depiction of two other Black female main characters, Ms. Teagues and Mrs. Howard. Both of these characters are nuanced, not overly adhering to any Black woman stereotypes outlined in this project.

Abbott Elementary appreciates the diversity of styles and abilities that Black women encompass, allowing for a wide range of secondary socialization messages to be received by the audience, particularly young Black women. Quinta Brunson, the Black female creator declares she created the sitcom foremost for comedic value but also wanted to expose the world to real issues that face the public school system in the United States ("Abbott Elementary," 2022; Broadway, 2022; Najarro, 2022). This examination reveals that Ms. Brunson has also brilliantly provided unique and positive images of Black female educators that provide diverse secondary socializing messages to young Black viewers. This finding is significant for me, as the messages

I received from film and television regarding Black schools and educators were consistently negative growing up. *Abbott Elementary* highlights Black educators as caring and supportive. I hope this messaging may have a similar impact as the Cosby effect on HBCUs and attract more Black people into careers in education. As it has been found that TV series can have an affect on education and career choices (Ewing et al., 2021; Glanz, 1997; Matabane & Merritt, 2014), future research should be considered to determine if *Abbott Elementary* has impacted the enrollment of Black students into educational programs.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 - Studies on the Experiences of Black Women Administrators

Study	Participants	Research Instrument	Impact of Intersectionality	Points on Leadership Style
Aaron (2020)	Four Black women principals in the United States	Interviews using intersectionality theory and black feminist epistemology	All four participants discussed challenges based on racial stereotypes that challenged their leadership.	All four participants had a student-centred leadership approach
Armstrong and Mitchell (2017)	Two Black women Canadian principals	Semi-structured interviews lasting 90 minutes surrounding personal and professional experiences surrounding gendered and racialized experiences	Both principals expressed the need to shift personas to be better accepted in their roles due to both their racialized and gendered identifications.	Both Black administrators were aware of the need to fulfill a role so that their leadership could be heard.
Bass (2012)	Five Black women educational leaders in the United States	Employs the Black Feminist Caring framework to the participants' decision-making skills	Black women leaders are disproportionately placed at challenging urban schools and are made to correct issues caused by previous zero-tolerance policies	All leaders were student-centred and showed a high degree of caring and goal to do what was right over policies and procedures
Beard (2012)	One Black deputy superintendent in the United States	Decision-Making based on the theoretical framework of Black Feminist Theory and Ethics of Care	Being silenced in terms of contribution and experience, which is attributed to being an outlier...that is Black and female leader as opposed to white and male.	Inclusion of cultural experiences to inform decision making rooted in ethics of care
Berry and Reardon (2022)	Staff Data from 2011-2012 Schools	Chi-square tests	Black principals were found to acquire higher levels of education	

Study	Participants	Research Instrument	Impact of Intersectionality	Points on Leadership Style
	and Staffing Survey conducted by National Centre for Educational Statistics - United States		and have more administrative and managerial roles prior to entering educational leadership roles compare to their white counterparts	
Brown (2014)	Eight Black female educational superintendents	In-Depth interviews	Black women superintendents endure hardships due to their intersectionality of race and gender	Black women leaders have to be resilient and understand relationships and politics.
de Bruyn, N., & Mestry, R. (2020)	Fifteen in-service female Black principals in South Africa	Narrative analysis	Principals demonstrated resiliency as a result of discrimination due to their gender and race. Black women were mentored by other Black women to move into leadership roles	The leadership style that emerge showed an ethic of care towards students
Flores (2018)	Three Black women principals	Information was derived from the three participants from a larger one year extensive study on school leaders' understanding of educational gaps and their use of data for decision making. Semi-structured interviews were used and a critical race theory framework was applied to the participants' counter-narrative.	All participants related the issue of systemic racism leading to more gaps in education.	The three principals also had a sense of a holistic approach to their struggling students and referred to them as “our” students.

Study	Participants	Research Instrument	Impact of Intersectionality	Points on Leadership Style
Gause (2021)	Three Black community college presidents	Narrative inquiry and semi-structured protocol	Black women educational leaders were more closely scrutinized and had their credentials questioned.	Leadership aims to make institutions more welcoming and inclusive of women; particularly women of colour
Jang & Alexander (2022)	Twenty-six Black female secondary school principals, extracted from a larger study sample	Quantitative analysis using multiple regression analysis and linear mixed effect modelling	Black women principals disproportionately lead in high-needs school with a higher percentage of Black students; Black women principals have a positive relationship with the instructional leadership of teachers; Achievement scores in math of schools with Black female principals were improved	Black women principals are seen as “clean-up women” committed to transforming negative school culture with limited support. Transformational leadership traits highlighted
Johnson (2021)	Six African American Female Superintendents in the United States	Qualitative interviews	Black women superintendents grapple with negative assumptions about their capabilities in the role and how they achieved the position	Lead with a social justice lens - want to do what is right and lean on their faith for guidance
Johnson and Fournillier (2021)	Four Black female senior level leaders in education	Three rounds of 60-minute interviews each and supplemental data retrieved from artifacts and media-based sources of information	Black women educational leaders have to establish their identities as they are not considered the “norm”. While conscious of their identity they also have to navigate the complexities of equity in their leadership while balancing their own race, gender and responsibility	Black women leaders for a lens of social activism to do what is right and equitable, despite what has always been done. They are prepared to deal with the consequences of doing good work.
Johnson and Fournillier (2022)	Four Black female senior level leaders in education	Three rounds of 60-minute interviews each and supplemental data	Discussion of the importance of education, collaboration, exposure and mentorship in terms of helping	Authenticity and truth were recognized as key features of their leadership style

Study	Participants	Research Instrument	Impact of Intersectionality	Points on Leadership Style
		retrieved from artifacts and media-based sources of information	Black women fulfill leadership roles	
Lomotey (2019)	Review of research of Black women principals from 1993-2017	57 research reports including dissertations, journal articles and book chapters	21% of the research involved race; 10% involved barriers due to gender	Spirituality and servant leadership was noted as a common theme among the research of Black women principals
McClellan (2020)	Six Black girls from grade 5-8 who have a Black woman as their principal	Participant observation; interview protocols with open-ended questions and focus groups	Students felt that the Black woman principal had to decide if she is for them or against them. This alludes to the nature of the principalship not intuitively being for a Black woman	Students felt that the Black woman principal cared authentically and although sometimes consequences were hard they were always done for their benefit
Miles Nash and Peters (2020)	Three Black women school leaders	Case studies of how Black women leaders helped Black girls succeed in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) education	Black leaders all felt it necessary to help Black girls in STEM as they understood the disadvantage of being scrutinized because of their gender and race.	Black women leaders felt responsible to make a difference for these Black girls to prepare them for the hardships they may face in the future
Moore (2013)	Seven Black women principals and 15 Black women assistant principals	In-depth semi-structured interviews guided to discuss the idea of tokenism but allowing participants to discuss their lived experiences	Black women administrators feel obligated to be race specialists in their schools as they are often the only one representing their race. Many have to use their moments of experiencing racism to stop, interrupt and educate.	Social activism is apparent in their leadership styles; the sentiment of using their powerful role for good
Moorosi et al. (2018)	Three Black women principals from	Interviews using intersectionality	All three women expressed experiences of racism and sexism in	The ladies expressed a social justice lens of paying it forward in the way

Study	Participants	Research Instrument	Impact of Intersectionality	Points on Leadership Style
	England, South Africa and the United States of America	framework and applying a life history narrative as a social constructivist approach	their position as principal. All three discussed being placed in marginalized schools with higher Black populations.	they lead.
Newcombe & Niemeyer (2015)	Three Black women principals	Two-hour focus group interviews	Having to overcome community sentiments of lack of trust because of being “different” from the leaders they were used to	Culturally responsive educational leadership as a spiritual calling to do the right thing. Using trust and authenticity for positive change that serves students
Patton & Jordan (2017)	One Black woman assistant principal	Observations and discussions regarding professional development combatting White privilege amongst staff	The assistant principal was accused of being a troublemaker and targeting staff for taking on issues of race.	Leadership displayed was authentic as the participant was willing to do work that was deemed socially responsible despite the consequences
Peters (2012)	Two African-American female principals	In-depth interviews	Black women often placed in high-needs urban schools to act as change-makers. Gender and age seemed to negatively impact their ability to carry on their leadership more so than race	Leadership style stemmed from caring for students and being all the things that the students were lacking
Peters & Miles Nash (2021)	Research history on Black women educational leadership	Review of the history and on Black women leadership in education and how it informs intersectional leadership	Black women are uniquely designed to have an intersectional leadership style based on common lived experiences of anti-Black racism and gender	Leadership with social activism, commitment and care
Reed (2012)	Three Black women principals	Multi-case study; Tour of school to assist in building	All three participants discussed discrimination on the basis of sex	Historical and lived experience led all three Black women principals to lead

Study	Participants	Research Instrument	Impact of Intersectionality	Points on Leadership Style
		context; Semi-structured interviews using the four assumptions of Black feminist thought framework	and gender. Differences among the participants were mostly surrounding age. The older participant seemed to express more experiences with more overt oppression, whereas the younger two discussed more subtle experiences with oppression.	for a change.
Tevis et al. (2020)	Three Black women administrators	Autoethnographic accounts of lived experiences as Black women administrators	All three participants found that they were not afforded the same time capital as their colleagues and that their titles did not afford them the same respect. They attributed this to discrimination based on their sex and gender. They also noted that they were described as angry and intimidated whereas their White counterparts were passionate.	Leadership that sheds light on the discrimination and inequities in the leadership roles
Townsend (2021)	Five African American women administrators	In-depth interviews with open-ended questions	Black women administrators are under greater scrutiny of qualification and are given a larger workload. Black women administrators feel the need to present themselves in a manner that is acceptable to others and frequently deal with microaggressions	Trying to be authentic leaders and encourage their students to do the same
Watson and Baxley (2021)	Using Motherwork to reframe the praxis of school	Review of literature	Black women are uniquely equipped with a history of “motherwork” and caring in their educational leadership	Leading through caring first; combatting the realities of anti-Blackness in education

Study	Participants	Research Instrument	Impact of Intersectionality	Points on Leadership Style
	leadership			
Weiner et al. (2021)	Eight Black women principals and Two assistant principals	Semi-structured interviews three separate times, lasting about 60 minutes. The microaggression framework was utilized.	The participants expressed feelings of microaggressions often through being the sole Black person in their environments, leading them to feelings of isolation. Discussion of how principal training often left their experience completely out of the discussion; or when it was discussed it focussed solely on how White administrators should become more aware of issues of race. Lack of mentorship from other Black administrators was also discussed.	
Weiner et al. (2022)	Twenty Black female principals	Three 1-2 hour interviews with each participant - A total of 60 interviews	Black female principals had to deal with microaggressions from district leaders and performative woke-ness by colleagues in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic and the aftermath of the murder of George Floyd	Social justice leadership displayed to combat the negative effects of Covid-19 pandemic on the Black community. Leading by raising hope and optimism despite the difficulties of the pandemic and the impact of the murder of George Floyd
Williams (2021)	One Black female charter school leader	Autoethnographic methods to analyze and interpret experiences as a Black woman charter school leader	Serving the community through multiple consciousnesses - race, culture, national, economical and political factors;	The author implemented transformational leadership as she navigated the complexities of running a charter school of underserved Black students

Appendix 2 - Impact of Intersectionality on Black Women Principals

Impact	Studies Noted	# of studies
Scrutiny of Leadership Abilities	Gause, 2021; Johnson, 2021; Johnson & Founillier, 2021; Miles Nash & Peters, 2020; Newcombe & Niemeyer, 2015; Tevis et al., 2021; Townsend, 2021	7
Enduring Microaggressions	Aaron, 2020; Armstrong & Mitchell, 2017; Beard, 2012; Flores, 2018; Gause, 2021; Jang & Alexander, 2022; Johnson & Founillier, 2021; Lomotey, 2019; Moorosi et al., 2018; Peters, 2012; Peters & Miles Nash, 2021; Reed, 2012; Tevis et al., 2021; Townsend, 2021; Weiner et al., 2021; Weiner et al., 2022	16
Lead in High-Needs Schools	Bass, 2012; Jang & Alexander, 2022; Moorosi et al., 2018; Peters, 2012	4
Expectation of being a Race Specialist	Moore, 2013; Johnson & Founillier, 2021; Patton & Jordan, 2017	3

Appendix 3 - Leadership Styles of Black Women Principals

Leadership Style	Studies Noted	# of studies
Servant - Student Centred/ Ethic of Care	Aaron, 2020; Bass, 2012; Beard, 2012; de Bruyn & Mestry, 2020; Flores, 2018; Lomotey, 2019; McClellan, 2020; Miles Nash & Peters, 2020; Newcombe & Niemeyer, 2015; Peters, 2012; Peters & Miles Nash, 2021; Watson and Baxley, 2021	12
Transformational/ Social Justice lens	Gause, 2021; Jang & Alexander, 2022; Johnson, 2021; Johnson and Fournillier, 2021; Moore, 2013; Moorosi et al., 2018; Peters & Miles Nash, 2021; Reed, 2012; Tevis et al., 2020; Watson & Baxley, 2021; Weiner et al., 2022; Williams, 2021	12
Authentic/Spiritual	Flores (2018); Johnson, 2021; Johnson & Fournillier, 2022; McClellan, 2020; Newcombe & Niemeyer (2015); Patton & Jordan, 2017; Townsend, 2021	7

Appendix 4 - Co-Occurrences of Codes

	Authoritarian	Awareness/persuasion/foresight	Bureaucratic	Demeaning to Others	Heart/Compassion	Idealized influence/Charisma	Individuallized consideration	Inspirational Motivation	Jezebel	Laissez-Faire	Listening/Empathy/Healing	Numbskull/buffoon/clueless	Paranoia	Passion/Purpose	Relationship/Connectedness	Sapphire/ABW	Self Serving	Stewardship/commitment to others	Tech Savvy	Transactional	Trendy	Villain	Welfare Mom	
Idealized influence/Charisma	2	1	1	2	1	2																		
Individuallized consideration	3	1	1	3	1	1	3																	
Inspirational Motivation	5	2	2	5	1	1	3	5																
Jezebel	8	2	5	10	1	2	2	4	10															
Laissez-Faire	8	1	6	9	1	2	2	3	8	9														
Listening/Empathy/Healing	3	1	1	3	0	0	1	2	2	1	3													
Numbskull/buffoon/clueless	10	2	6	13	1	2	3	5	10	9	3	13												
Paranoia	4	1	3	5	0	1	1	2	5	4	1	5	5											
Passion/Purpose	3	2	1	3	1	1	2	3	3	2	1	3	2	3										
Relationship/Connectedness	3	2	1	3	1	1	2	3	3	2	1	3	2	3	3									
Sapphire/ABW	1	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	0	0	0	2								
Self Serving	8	1	5	9	0	1	2	4	7	7	3	9	4	2	2	1	9							
Stewardship/commitment to others	3	2	0	3	1	1	1	2	3	2	1	3	1	2	2	0	2	3						
Tech Savvy	5	1	3	6	0	0	1	3	4	4	1	6	2	2	2	2	5	2	6					
Transactional	7	2	4	8	1	1	3	5	7	6	3	8	4	3	3	0	6	2	3	8				
Trendy	8	2	4	11	1	1	3	5	8	7	3	11	3	3	3	2	8	3	6	7	11			
Villain	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	1		
Welfare Mom	2	1	0	3	0	0	0	1	3	2	1	3	2	1	1	0	3	2	2	2	3	0	3	