

A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY OF THE TEACHING MOTIVATION FOR TEACHERS
OF COLOR IN PREDOMINANTLY WHITE SCHOOLS

by

Jennifer Lynn McConnell

Liberty University

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

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Abstract

The phenomenological study explores how teachers of color describe their lived experiences and motivations to teach at predominantly White K–12 public schools in Pennsylvania. The theory guiding the study is Herzberg's two-factor theory of motivation, which postulates that certain factors in the workplace, known as motivators, lead to job satisfaction. In contrast, others lead to dissatisfaction, known as hygiene factors. Herzberg's theory provides a valuable lens through which to examine the motivations of teachers of color to teach at predominantly White K–12 public schools in Pennsylvania. The qualitative research study explores the underlying factors influencing these teachers' commitments via interviews, document analysis, and journal prompt responses. The research methodology ensures thorough member-checking, systematic auditing, and transparent reporting to maintain credibility, dependability, and confirmability. The study also prioritizes ethical considerations, including obtaining informed consent from participants and ensuring the confidentiality of participant data. Ten research participants volunteered to participate, and the study's findings reveal intrinsic motivators such as the need for cultural representation and the desire to make a meaningful impact are crucial to their commitment to teaching in predominately White environments. The study's results also support Herzberg et al. (1993/2017) two-factor motivation-hygiene theory, showing that job satisfaction in this context stems from aspects related to the nature of the work itself and teachers' capacity to foster an inclusive and culturally diverse educational environment. The findings suggest that school and community leaders should go beyond recognizing diversity and inclusion and focus on creating supportive, adaptable, and equitable educational environments.

Keywords: diversity in education, racial representation in teaching, culturally responsive pedagogy, minority teachers, teacher retention

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Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to God, the source of all my blessings.

To my incredible husband and best friend, Tim, and our five exceptional children, Hannah, Emma, Ben, Jake, and Sarah, whose unwavering support throughout the process has made all this possible. Your unrelenting patience, understanding, and encouragement kept me going. I could not have done this without your patience, love, and support; thank you for believing in me every step of the way.

To my mom, who has been my lifelong cheerleader. With deep respect, I honor her resilience in the face of adversity.

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List of Abbreviations

Culturally Relevant Pedagogy (CRP)

Department of Environmental Protection (DEP)

National Center for Education Statistics (NCES)

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Overview

Undeniably, there is a significant lack of representation of teachers of color in the United States (U.S.) education system (Ardley et al., 2020; Milner, 2020a). Despite expanding diversity among K–12 learners in American public schools, only 20% of educators, including teachers and administrators, are people of color (National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 2023). The qualitative, phenomenological study aims to explore how teachers of color describe their lived experiences by applying Herzberg's two-factor motivation-hygiene theory to examine their decisions to teach at predominantly White K–12 public schools in Pennsylvania. The research aims to add to the existing body of knowledge on the successful recruitment and retention of teachers of color to inform district leaders, principals, and teacher educators about best practices for improving diversity among teachers in schools. Chapter One offers a comprehensive overview of the topical problem, including its historical context, social context, and theoretical underpinnings. It further outlines the problem statement, purpose statement, significance of the study, primary research questions, and definitions. Finally, a summary of the proposed study is provided to conclude the chapter.

Background

Despite the challenges that teachers of color face in predominantly White schools, the study will explore the teaching motivations of teachers of color in K–12 public schools in South-Central Pennsylvania. The narrative's comprehensive investigation will combine historical, social, and theoretical lenses. The historical context provides an understanding of critical events, including the colonization of America and the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision that contributed to the lack of teachers of color in public schools today (Carter Andrews et al., 2018;

Urban et al., 2019). In addition, the shortage has wide-reaching social implications, as it limits students' exposure to diverse populations and the essential skills needed in an increasingly global, multicultural society (Hughes et al., 2020). Herzberg's two-factor motivation-hygiene theory will be used as the theoretical framework to interpret participants' responses and assist in understanding the teaching motivations of teachers of color. Herzberg et al.'s (1993/2017) two-factor theory posits that intrinsic and extrinsic factors are critical for exploring an individual's motivation levels, and the theory will allow a comprehensive assessment of the various factors that influence the motivation levels of teachers from diverse backgrounds. By exploring the phenomenon in greater depth, the research aims to further researchers' understanding of the lived experiences of teachers of color and their motivations to teach at predominantly White K–12 public schools. With the results of the exploration and a deeper understanding of the phenomenon's historical, social, and theoretical implications, a more equitable environment to attract and retain teachers of color can potentially be created.

Historical Context

Understanding the complex past of the American education system before and after European colonization is integral to understanding the lack of teachers of color (Horne, 2018; Urban et al., 2019). Urban et al. (2019) noted before colonization, America's indigenous peoples had established cultural traditions and educational practices that served to bridge generations, define individual roles, and maintain their association with the land. The researchers explained that despite their knowledge and customs, Native Americans became known as resistant learners by the Europeans. Furthermore, while the Europeans had their own need for learning, they nevertheless assumed a role of dominance, and over time, English Protestants brought a wealth of linguistic, political, social, and religious traditions to the continent's east coast. These

traditions greatly facilitated their ability to establish cultural dominance over the 13 colonies, creating hierarchical and class-bound systems and limiting education opportunities. These educational opportunities focused primarily on white males, with marginalized groups like Native Americans and African Americans largely overlooked. (Urban et al., 2019).

The historical lack of diversity among public school teachers can be attributed to the lasting impact of White supremacy, segregation, and discrimination. White supremacist ideologies perpetuated a system in which power and resources were predominantly allocated to white individuals, creating an imbalanced distribution of control and influence (Kokka & Chao, 2020). According to Golub (2005), in 1896, *Plessy v. Ferguson*, a landmark Supreme Court ruling, upheld the concept of 'separate but equal,' further establishing the constitutional justification for segregation laws. As the 19th century unfolded, the rise in multiracial communities presented challenges for legislation that enforced racial segregation. However, legislation such as Jim Crow laws and racially discriminatory policies systematically perpetuated inequality in education, limiting the opportunities for non-white teachers to enter the profession (Golub, 2005). These practices continued well into the 20th century and persist today.

The deep roots of systemic racism in American educational history have directly impacted teacher diversity, manifesting in several significant ways. Benson et al. (2021) noted that in 1954, the *Brown v. Board of Education* Supreme Court ruling made segregated schools unconstitutional, decreasing the number of Black educators employed by public school districts. Around 82,000 Black teachers lost their jobs during this period. The loss created a void that has yet to be addressed. Additionally, structural racism contributes to the shortage of teachers from diverse backgrounds (Rodriguez-Mojica et al., 2020). Biased hiring and recruitment practices are barriers that limit opportunities for teachers of color (Burns Thomas, 2020). Moreover,

educational policies often prioritize middle-class values over those of other racial and ethnic groups, creating an environment where non-White teachers might feel marginalized and their voices unheard (Benson et al., 2021). These historical factors have resulted in a lack of teacher diversity within public schools.

Social Context

The shortage of teachers of color in public schools has far-reaching repercussions beyond education (Farinde-Wu et al., 2020; Hughes et al., 2020). As teachers of color confront systemic racism, biases, and discrimination in universities and schools, there are many social results for their students (Farinde-Wu et al., 2020). Limited contact with diverse cultures can increase prejudice, as students are not exposed to people who may have contrasting cultural experiences (Hughes et al., 2020). Furthermore, when teachers of color do exist in classrooms, students of color gain a sense of inclusion and representation (Blum et al., 2021). The research can potentially contribute to the current understanding of creating a fair environment for educators of color, combating systemic racism, and enhancing representation (Endo, 2022). The outcomes of the study may positively influence the health and well-being of students and faculty, along with the learning climate and overall academic success in schools. Understanding the lived experiences of teachers of color's motivation to teach at predominantly White K–12 public schools may add to the body of knowledge about why they have decided to stay despite their challenges. The research results may help foster an inclusive and equitable setting for all members of society. The study's findings can inform the development of equitable hiring processes, policies, and procedures that prioritize recruiting and retaining teachers of color. By implementing these changes, schools can work towards creating a more diverse and representative teaching force, which benefits both students and educators.

Theoretical Context

The complexity of the issues surrounding the lack of teachers of color in public schools necessitates a theoretical basis for understanding the motivations of educators of color. In the area's current scholarly work, Critical Race Theory (CRT) offers a framework to challenge and respond to systemic racism within the education system (Gordon & Cui, 2018). At its inception, CRT was not meant to be a theoretical framework but intended to challenge and transform societal oppression (Cabrera, 2018). Critical theorists acknowledge that the social creation of race and whiteness and their social relevance are inseparable from American society's history of social organization (Frankenberg, 1997; Guess, 2006). In this context, CRT provides a lens to examine race and ethnicity as pervasive aspects of society, enabling researchers to dissect and understand the challenges teachers of color face (Gordon & Cui, 2018).

Moreover, the expansion of critical studies research emphasizes the necessity of exploring whiteness and its relationship to systems of racial oppression (Owen, 2007). Whiteness, being associated with nationhood, connotes privilege, thus facilitating colonial expansion, the destruction of Indigenous communities, and the marginalization of non-white populations (Frankenberg, 1997; Green et al., 2007). The association spurs economic, political, social, and cultural advantages compared to the "other" non-whiteness, signifying the grip and influence of whiteness in classroom settings (Green et al., 2007; Owen, 2007). Hence, critical theories challenge societal oppression and evaluate the impact of whiteness, providing an in-depth scholarship into the social reality of race, where whiteness plays a crucial role (Guess, 2006). By exploring and understanding the challenges associated with being a teacher of color, researchers may begin to identify the interventions necessary to foster a supportive atmosphere for teachers of color.

In addition to CRT, Interest Convergence Theory and Intersectionality Theory provide valuable frameworks for understanding the multifaceted undercurrents within the educational system (Bell, 1980; Crenshaw, 1988). Interest Convergence Theory is a theoretical framework for understanding the racial inequities within the education system and suggests that White individuals or institutions only support racial justice when it aligns with their interests (Bell, 1980). Correspondingly, Intersectionality Theory explores how multiple forms of identity, such as race, gender, and class, intersect and influence each other, resulting in unique forms of discrimination and privilege (Crenshaw, 1988). Chan et al. (2018) focused on the complex dynamics of privilege and oppression faced by counselors, educators, and students. The researchers noted individuals identifying with multiple cultural groups and identities may experience both privilege and oppression, making it crucial to explore how individuals might identify with multicultural counseling and social justice competencies when experiencing both simultaneously (Chan et al., 2018). Interest Convergence Theory and Intersectionality expand understanding of the systemic factors shaping teachers' experiences of color (Bell, 1980; Chan et al., 2018; Crenshaw, 1988).

Problem Statement

The problem is there is a shortage of teachers of color in K–12 public schools in Pennsylvania (NCES, 2023; Pennsylvania Department of Education [PDE], 2023; Shaw-Amoah et al., 2020). According to Shaw-Amoah et al. (2020), only 6% of teachers in Pennsylvania identify as people of color. While the student population is becoming increasingly more diverse, fewer teachers of color are choosing to enter and remain in the field of education (Benson et al., 2021). Teacher shortages have long plagued public education with limited success in alleviating the scarcity. The teacher of color shortages has caused other issues, such as racial gaps between

teachers and students and racial biases (Aloi & Bialka, 2022). Furthermore, exposure to diversity within the classroom encourages all students to become more accepting and welcoming of individuals from different backgrounds while preparing them to live and work in a multicultural society (Hughes et al., 2020). Whereas researchers have identified the causes of the demographic mismatch, more research is needed to identify effective and practical solutions for recruiting and retaining teachers of color.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of the qualitative, phenomenological study aims to explore the lived experiences of teachers of color who teach at predominantly White K–12 public schools in Pennsylvania. At this stage in the research, lived experiences will be generally defined as the firsthand accounts and interpretations of teachers of color who teach at predominantly White K–12 public schools in Pennsylvania. The theory guiding for the study is Herzberg's two-factor theory of motivation. Teaching motivation is generally defined as the internal and external factors that drive teachers to perform teaching tasks with commitment, dedication, and professionalism to produce quality education. It is closely linked to job performance, physical and mental health, and career decisions, which are all necessary for successful teaching practice (Bas, 2022). Predominantly White suburban schools are located outside major cities and serve 55% or more students who identify as White. There is limited research on the lived experiences of teachers of color who teach in predominantly White, suburban schools. The information obtained through the study aims to uncover practical methods for recruiting and retaining teachers of color for district leaders, principals, and teacher educators.

Significance of the Study

The transcendental phenomenological study will contribute to the existing knowledge concerning how teachers of color describe their lived experiences of motivation to teach at predominantly White suburban public schools. This viewpoint is underrepresented in the current research (Witmer & Wimer, 2022). Data collected throughout the research is intended to uncover motivators contributing to sustained service in education. The research aims to enrich existing knowledge in the field, offering theoretical, empirical, and practical viewpoints. In essence, the study will contribute to the body of knowledge regarding the motivation of teachers of color in suburban public schools.

Theoretical

The study's theoretical significance exposes how the lived experiences of teachers of color influence their motivation to teach in predominantly White, suburban schools. Teachers of color often feel tokenized or excluded from school decision-making because of their race (Burns Thomas, 2020). Additionally, they frequently lack access to the administrative support and professional development opportunities they need for further growth (Salas et al., 2021). The proposed study will contribute to the theoretical underpinnings of the problem by providing insights into why teachers of color remain within predominantly White suburban schools despite encounters with discrimination. The transcendental phenomenological study will collect data on the teaching motivations of teachers of color using Herzberg's two-factor motivation-hygiene theory as the theoretical framework. Finally, the study will provide information that may potentially be used by district leaders, principals, and teacher educators to identify effective recruitment and retention strategies for teachers of color.

Empirical

The empirical significance of the study contributes to the phenomenological research literature by acknowledging and allowing for the exploration of teachers of color's lived experiences in predominantly White suburban schools. Many districts are taking steps to ensure a more diverse teaching force, such as creating equitable hiring practices (Lac, 2019), providing salary incentives for educators of color (Petts, 2020), promoting programs within minority communities (Scott & Alexander, 2018), and establishing partnerships between universities and school systems (Burns Thomas, 2020). The research is essential because it will add to the existing literature on teacher recruitment and retention, specifically related to increasing teacher diversity. Additionally, the proposed study will provide insight into how to increase and retain teachers of color in predominantly White suburban schools, which could lead to more successful learning environments for students.

Practical

The study may have potential significant pragmatic implications for district administrators and teacher educators. A greater comprehension of how teachers of color describe their lived experiences of motivation to teach at predominantly White K–12 public schools perceivably could lead to more effective recruitment schemes and improved retention tactics. D. J. Childs (2019) has demonstrated that a diverse teaching staff is associated with higher student achievement and enhanced cultural awareness. In addition, Lac (2019) has suggested that having teachers of color as role models increases the possibility of students of color aspiring to professions in education. Therefore, the exploration may contribute to the knowledge base on motivators that direct the current recruitment and retention endeavors of teachers of color in predominantly White suburban schools.

Research Questions

The proposed research is a qualitative study that will employ a transcendental phenomenological approach. The research will primarily concentrate on how teachers of color describe their lived experiences and motivations to teach at predominantly White K–12 public schools. Herzberg's two-factor motivation-hygiene theory (Herzberg et al., 1993/2017) will be utilized as the guiding framework to reveal the teaching motivations of teachers of color in these educational settings. The ultimate goal of the research is to understand better the realities these teachers face daily. Moreover, this understanding may illuminate their motivations to teach in predominantly White K–12 public schools.

Central Research Question

How do teachers of color describe their lived experiences of motivation to teach at predominantly White K–12 public schools?

Sub-Question One

How do teachers of color describe their lived experiences of motivation concerning Herzberg's two-factor motivation-hygiene theory to teach at predominantly White K–12 public schools?

Definitions

The information below provides an overview of keywords and phrases used throughout the manuscript. In addition, there are definitions for each term and additional information to help explain their meanings. Each term is meticulously defined to facilitate comprehension. The supplementary data further clarifies the meaning and context of these terms. The information can be used as a guide to assist with understanding the manuscript's content.

1. *Culturally relevant pedagogy (CRP)* - CRP is a powerful approach to teaching that seeks to create a learning environment where all students can flourish. It emphasizes valuing all students' knowledge, skills, and backgrounds and encourages collaboration between school and home cultures (Kondo, 2022).
2. *Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory of Motivation-Hygiene* - The dual-factor or motivational-hygiene theory states that job satisfaction and dissatisfaction are motivated by different factors and have an inverse relationship. According to this theory, satisfaction results from intrinsic factors of a job, such as recognition and responsibility. Conversely, dissatisfaction stems from extrinsic aspects, such as working conditions or company policies (Herzberg et al., 1993/2017).
3. *Implicit Bias* - Implicit bias encompasses the beliefs and attitudes held by an individual or group on a subconscious or subliminal level, which can influence how they interact with particular students or groups (T. M. Childs & Wooten, 2022).
4. *Racial Microaggressions* - Racial microaggressions are everyday interactions that can be subtle or overt verbal or behavioral acts denigrating, insulting, and marginalizing minoritized groups (Holter et al., 2022).

Summary

Chapter One overviews the proposed study and includes the problem and purpose statements. The research seeks to explore the lived experiences of teachers of color concerning the influence of Herzberg's two-factor theory of motivation on their decision to teach at predominantly White K–12 public schools in Pennsylvania. The theoretical framework for the research will be grounded in Herzberg's two-factor motivation-hygiene theory. Overall, the chapter establishes a clear rationale for further research into the topic and underscores its

relevance to real-world educational contexts. The chapter asserts that increasing teacher diversity could significantly improve student achievement, cultural awareness, and aspirations among students of color.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview

A systematic literature review was conducted to explore the shortage of teachers of color in K–12 public schools. Chapter Two explores the current literature related to the topic. First, the study examines the experiences of teachers of color by applying Herzberg's two-factor motivation-hygiene theory. Next, the section synthesizes recent literature regarding the impact of inequitable funding on education, the changing demographics of the K–12 student population and school segregation, the historical roots of shortages of teachers of color, the influence of teachers of color on education, barriers faced by teachers of color, the underrepresentation of male educators of color, the whiteness of teacher education programs, and obstacles faced by students of color. Finally, programs and initiatives are reviewed to recruit, train, and retain teachers of color. A literature gap concerning the motivations of teachers of color to persist in the field and practical solutions for recruiting and retaining teachers of color are also identified.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework employed in the study is Herzberg's two-factor motivation-hygiene theory, which has been extensively researched and documented (Herzberg et al., 1993/2017). The theory provides a comprehensive understanding of the multifaceted nature of teaching motivations among teachers from diverse backgrounds. By delving into the intricacies of this framework, more profound insights into the various factors that influence the motivation levels of teachers belonging to marginalized communities can be gained. According to Herzberg et al.'s (1993/2017) two-factor theory, intrinsic and extrinsic factors significantly affect an individual's level of motivation. Intrinsic factors refer to internal rewards such as personal

growth, fulfillment, and a sense of purpose derived from the work. In contrast, extrinsic factors encompass external incentives such as salary, job security, and recognition.

The study aims to identify specific motivational drivers unique to teachers belonging to marginalized groups and evaluate strategies for enhancing their overall motivation levels within educational settings. Applying Herzberg et al. (1993/2017) two-factor theory to the study of teacher diversity and its influence on motivating educators from different backgrounds effectively shapes the investigation. With a more nuanced understanding provided by Herzberg's two-factor theory aligned with pertinent research findings explicitly related to marginalized educators of color, the shortage of teachers from diverse backgrounds in K–12 public schools can be addressed more effectively.

Furthermore, the shortage of teachers of color in K–12 public schools is a significant issue with deep historical roots and far-reaching implications. Research has shown that students benefit from having teachers who are demographically similar to their students and can serve as role models and increase their academic motivation (Benson et al., 2021; Darwich, 2021). However, attrition and high mobility challenge the retention of new teachers of color, highlighting the need for quality induction support and mentorship programs (Elfers et al., 2022; Hernández-Johnson et al., 2021; Williams et al., 2021). It is crucial to explore the factors influencing the motivation levels of teachers from diverse backgrounds using theoretical frameworks such as Herzberg's two-factor theory.

Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory of Motivation-Hygiene

The theory of motivation presented in *The Motivation to Work* (Herzberg et al., 1993/2017) challenged the assumptions of the time, as traditional views of motivation focused on external factors such as rewards and punishments; Herzberg et al. (1993/2017) found such

theories inadequate since they failed to account for the complexity of human behavior. A proposed two-factor theory of motivation distinguishes between hygiene factors and motivators. Hygiene factors are basic needs that must be met to prevent dissatisfaction, such as salary, working conditions, and job security. Conversely, motivators stimulate growth and development, such as recognition, achievement, and the opportunity for advancement (Herzberg et al., 1993/2017).

In addition, the two-factor theory highlights the importance of job enrichment in increasing employee motivation and job satisfaction (Herzberg et al., 1993/2017). Job enrichment involves redesigning jobs to make them more challenging and satisfying for employees. The approach is based on the belief that employees are motivated by more than monetary rewards; they also seek personal growth and development opportunities. Job enrichment can help meet these needs by allowing employees to accept additional responsibilities, learn new skills, and assume greater autonomy. These hygiene and motivation factors can increase employee engagement, productivity, and satisfaction.

Herzberg et al. (1993/2017) two-factor theory is crucial for understanding how to effectively manage employees and enhance organizational behavior within educational institutions. By acknowledging motivation as a multifaceted process influenced by internal and external factors, the theory enables organizations to address educators' hygiene needs and consider their growth and development aspirations. Consequently, the method promotes a more engaged and dedicated workforce, and, in turn, the heightened commitment improves organizational performance. Applying the two-factor theory can positively influence educational organizations and their employees.

Multiple researchers have acknowledged the validity of Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory. In the area's current scholarly work, Herzberg's two-factor motivation-hygiene theory emerges as a salient framework. The theory considers intrinsic and extrinsic factors in determining an individual's motivation levels (Herzberg et al., 1993/2017). The theory has been applied in various texts but is particularly well-suited to investigating the motivations of teachers of color in predominantly white schools. Pratson et al. (2021) explored the organizational factors that drive environmental educators to excel in their roles. Utilizing self-determination theory and Herzberg's motivation-hygiene theory, the researchers investigated how organizational behaviors impact the motivations of environment education teachers in the classroom. The researchers employed a qualitative research design, conducting detailed interviews with a population of professional environmental educators. The study's findings revealed that supportive leadership, adequate resources, and conducive work environments significantly enhance the performance of environmental educators. Relating these findings to the shortage of teachers of color, it becomes evident that focusing on these organizational factors could increase retention and performance among educators of color. By providing inclusive leadership, sufficient resources, and comfortable work environments, educational institutions may attract and retain more teachers of color.

Research applying the theory has uncovered key motivators for teachers of color. These motivators include a desire for cultural representation and the opportunity to serve as role models for students of color (Darwich, 2021). However, research has predominantly focused on urban school settings, and the experiences and motivations of teachers of color in predominantly White suburban schools have not been studied. The current research seeks to explore the gap by applying Herzberg's theory to a new context to potentially reveal unique motivators specific to

this demographic. The outcomes of the investigation may improve researchers' understanding of teacher motivation, specifically among teachers of color in predominantly White schools, and inform efforts to increase diversity among teaching staff.

Hygiene Factors

The shortage of teachers of color can be analyzed through one dimension of Herzberg et al. (1993/2017) two-factor theory: hygiene factors, such as salary, working conditions, and job security. These hygiene factors are essential for preventing dissatisfaction among teachers of color. However, these factors alone may not lead to long-term job satisfaction and retention. The lack of diversity and representation in schools can lead to feelings of isolation and alienation among teachers of color, ultimately resulting in poor job satisfaction and significant turnover (Plachowski, 2019; Williams et al., 2021). Therefore, schools should address the basic needs of teachers of color and provide opportunities for personal growth and development motivators that can lead to long-term satisfaction and retention (Ardley et al., 2020). For example, schools can offer professional development opportunities tailored to the needs and interests of teachers of color. These opportunities can include workshops on cultural competency, diversity, inclusion training, and mentoring programs to support career advancement (D. J. Childs, 2019). Additionally, schools can strive to create more inclusive and welcoming environments for teachers of color by promoting diversity in hiring practices, providing opportunities for leadership roles within the school system, and creating supportive networks of colleagues (Ardley et al., 2020; Goings et al., 2019).

Motivation Factors

In the context of Herzberg et al. (1993/2017) two-factor theory, motivation factors are pivotal in shaping positive organizational behavior and employee motivation. These intrinsic

drivers, including recognition, challenging work, responsibility, and opportunities for advancement, foster professional growth and self-actualization. By leveraging these factors, educational leaders can bolster teacher morale by providing sufficient resources and updated instructional materials. When applied effectively, the principles of the theory lead to a highly engaged and committed workforce, driving significant improvements in organizational performance (Herzberg et al., 1993/2017).

Related Literature

The related literature begins with an overview of public education, the impact of inequitable funding on education, the changing demographics of the K–12 student population and school segregation, and the historical roots of shortages of teachers of color. Next, the associated literature for the study will explore the influence of teachers of color on education, barriers faced by teachers of color, the underrepresentation of male educators of color, the whiteness of teacher education programs, and obstacles faced by students of color. Finally, the conclusion of the related literature section reviews efforts to recruit and retain teachers of color.

Overview of Public Education in the U.S.

The complex funding mechanisms and decentralized governance structures contributing to significant disparities in educational opportunities in the U.S. educational system are not federal; educational governance and policymaking operate at the state level as independent state systems (Kang, 2021; Perry et al., 2021; U.S. Department of Education, 2021; Williams et al., 2021). State-level management is substantially delegated to local educational authorities known as school districts (Kang, 2021). In addition, taxes are collected at the federal, state, and local levels of government, with the latter typically providing more than 90% of the funding for public education (Perry et al., 2021). While most funding comes from state and municipal revenue

sources, the allocation of these monies is controlled solely by state legislation (Morgan & Amerikaner, 2018). Furthermore, inequities in real estate property values at the local level have led to fiscal disparities within states and school districts (Ylimaki et al., 2022). These funding challenges have enabled and maintained educational inequality in the U.S. (Kang, 2021; Perry et al., 2021; U.S. Department of Education, 2021; Williams et al., 2021).

The Impact of Inequitable Funding on Education

Inequitable school funding has long plagued public education in the U.S., contributing to the shortage of teachers of color. Although considerable attention has been paid to inequitable school funding and court rulings that assert that states are defrauding school districts with higher proportions of low-income students, many states maintain this unfair practice (Baker et al., 2018; Samuels, 2020). Furthermore, the issue of inequitable school funding significantly restricts access to quality education for students who are Black, Hispanic, or from low-income families (Samuels, 2020). Morgan and Amerikaner (2018) analyzed the profound disparities in education funding across the U.S., particularly concerning the highest and lowest poverty districts and districts serving the most students of color. Their goal was to add to the existing research by thoroughly exploring the differences in school funding from state to state. They used a quantitative approach and gathered data from the NCES to examine how funds were allocated; they focused on all public schools across the U.S. Their results clarified the deep-rooted issue of educational inequality by exploring the funding differences between schools attended by students from low-income families and those from wealthier backgrounds. Morgan and Amerikaner revealed that schools with more students of color faced a significant funding gap. As a result, the researchers suggested that future research should look into how policy changes could help fix the unequal funding situation and explore ways to bridge the gap in teacher diversity (Morgan &

Amerikaner, 2018). These findings, in turn, could inform policy changes to make the education system more equitable for all students.

Addressing funding disparities is crucial for fostering a more equitable educational landscape (Berriochoa, 2022; Morgan & Amerikaner, 2018; Samuels, 2020) provided a unique perspective on the intricate relationship between racial and ethnic diversity and school funding, focusing on public bond passage rates in Texas. The quantitative research uncovered that diversity's influence is not uniform across urban and rural areas, indicating that rural regions encounter more substantial obstacles in acquiring additional funding amidst rising diversity. The policy implications of these findings are significant, pointing to the necessity of tackling funding disparities to promote educational equity. However, given the study's sample size limitations and regional focus, Berriochoa encourages further expansion of the research. By incorporating a broader and more varied sample, future investigations can provide a more comprehensive understanding of how diversity shapes public goods provision in educational settings. Addressing funding disparities and understanding their impact on diversity in academic settings is vital for creating more equitable and inclusive learning environments (Berriochoa, 2022; Morgan & Amerikaner, 2018; Samuels, 2020).

The complex relationship between societal structures and school segregation has long been debated. Perry et al. (2021) studied the intricate dynamics of school segregation, focusing on the interplay of context, policy, and structure. The authors analyzed complexities like school choice, curricular programs, and spatial inequality by applying multi-level quantitative analysis and detailed case studies across various countries. Their research has revealed the complexities of school segregation and highlighted a network of structural and systemic factors. However, limitations include the focus on academically selective public schools, which may not fully

represent the diversity of the educational landscape. Nonetheless, Perry et al. have advised a comprehensive, system-wide approach, emphasizing the need for education authorities to monitor the entire educational ecosystem and proactively regulate program offerings to mitigate segregation. In synthesizing these insights, it becomes clear that addressing school segregation necessitates a multifaceted, systemic approach that scrutinizes the entanglement of societal structures and educational policies and emphasizes the equitable distribution of educational resources and opportunities (Ainscow, 2020; Kelly, 2021; Perry et al., 2021).

Research building upon Perry et al. (2021) findings explore the implications of these funding disparities on the recruitment and retention of teachers of color and develop possible solutions. Alvord and Rauscher (2021) have studied the relationship between school district demographics and support for funding election measures. The researchers addressed how minority communities' needs are represented in educational funding decisions. Using a quantitative approach and data from school district funding measures in California, the researchers considered various school districts with diverse demographic compositions. The study incorporated multiple districts, and the results provide a comprehensive view of the relationship between district demographics and funding support. The findings indicate that increased minority representation in a school district correlated with decreased support for funding election measures. Moreover, the study's results suggest that minority communities face additional challenges in obtaining adequate school funding. The low tax base in communities with high poverty rates exacerbates the issue, as it decreases funding for schools in these marginalized areas, further perpetuating the shortage of teachers of color (Alvord & Rauscher, 2021; Perry et al., 2021).

Unequal school funding has also significantly affected minoritized communities, including Latinx students. Baker et al. (2020) have examined the issue of unequal school funding disproportionately affecting Latinx children. By concentrating on this specific group, the research has explored how these disparities impact Latinx students and the potential consequences for their educational outcomes. Using a quantitative approach, the researchers analyzed school funding data, the extent of these disparities, and how they related to student outcomes. The findings point to significant funding inequalities, which are detrimental to the educational success of Latinx students. However, the researchers acknowledged the study's limitations, such as potential methodological issues and the need for further explorations of the causal connections between funding and student performance. Moreover, it would be valuable to explore the long-term consequences of these funding gaps on the academic achievements and post-secondary opportunities of Latinx students. By exploring these avenues, researchers can improve the development of effective policy interventions to reduce disparities in school funding (Baker et al., 2020; Rogers-Ard et al., 2019).

As in other states in the U.S., Pennsylvania students are subject to racial disparities in school district funding. Kelly (2021) has addressed the persistent racial disparities in school district funding and explored the impact of Pennsylvania's "fair" funding formula on these discrepancies. The research investigated how funding formulas affect school districts with different racial compositions. Kelly used a quantitative research design and analyzed data from various Pennsylvania school districts to explore the relationship between district racial composition and funding disparities. The results suggest that the current funding formula fails to sufficiently address the issue of racial imbalances in allocating resources for school districts.

Moreover, a significant shortfall of \$1.1 billion in state equalization aid to these districts led to an 18.53% increase in Black and Latinx student enrollment in districts adversely affected by the policy. Therefore, it is crucial to reevaluate and modify the existing funding formula to effectively address racial disparities and ensure equal access to educational resources for all students. Policymakers and educational stakeholders in Pennsylvania must recognize the limitations of the current funding formula and collaborate to create a more equitable system that accounts for racial disparities (Kelly, 2021).

Disparities in resources and opportunities are persistent, with socioeconomic factors crucial in shaping students' academic performance. Furthermore, students from low-income and minority families are more frequently exposed to violence, poverty, insufficient healthcare, and inadequate housing, affecting their learning ability (Chen, 2019). Therefore, already underfunded schools are tasked with implementing costly interventions without adequate or supplementary funding to meet the needs of at-risk students (Samuels, 2020). These inadequacies exacerbate longstanding inequities in educational institutions, and academic success disparities are primarily attributed to inequalities in school funding (Rogers-Ard et al., 2019).

Research has shown that minority students in the U.S. education system frequently encounter many obstacles, primarily due to disparities in financial support and distribution of resources (Baker et al., 2020). These disparities perpetuate the achievement gap between White students and students of color, limiting their academic success opportunities (Rogers-Ard et al., 2019). The persistent racial imbalance in school district funding further exacerbates these barriers and contributes to the educational inequalities experienced by students of color (Samuels, 2020). In addition to funding disparities, students of color in U.S. schools also face challenges related to accessing qualified educators and rigorous curricula (Kelly, 2021).

Policymakers must prioritize equitable funding distributions that consider the specific needs of diverse student populations to achieve equitable educational opportunities for all students (Chen, 2019).

Changing Demographics in American Education

In recent decades, there has been a noticeable change in the student population in public schools across the United States (Ylimaki et al., 2022). According to Benson et al. (2021), from 2003 to 2013, there was a decrease of almost 10% in White students attending K–12 public schools. In contrast, the enrollment of Black students remained stable during that time, while Latinx student enrollment experienced a significant increase of nearly 10%. According to data from the NCES (2023), between 2009 and 2020, there was a considerable shift in the number of students of color enrolled in public elementary and secondary schools nationwide. While White student enrollment decreased from about 26.7 million to around 22.6 million, Hispanic enrollment rose from approximately 11 million to about 13.8 million. As a result, the overall percentage of White and Black students decreased from 54% to about 46% and about 17% to around 15%, respectively.

Meanwhile, Hispanic student enrollment increased from approximately 22% to 28%. The proportion of Asian, American Indian/Alaska Native, and Pacific Islander students remained relatively consistent (NCES, 2023). Additionally, in 2020, the enrollment of students with two or more races accounted for about 5% of the total student population (Anderson, 2020). These statistics indicate a notable shift in public school demographics throughout the twenty-first century (Ylimaki et al., 2022).

The shortage of teachers of color is especially prominent in public schools, where there is an evident disproportionality between the numbers of multicultural students and teachers with

diverse backgrounds in classrooms. Schaeffer (2021) reported that during the 2017–2018 school year, nearly 80% of U.S. public school teachers identified as non-Hispanic White, while fewer than one in 10 educators were Black (7%), Hispanic (9%), or Asian American (2%). Less than 2% of educators were American Indian, Alaska Native, Pacific Islander, or multiracial. In contrast, Schaeffer (2021) noted that 47% of all U.S. public elementary and secondary school students in 2018–2019 were White. Given these statistics, addressing the underrepresentation of teachers of color within the education system is crucial to better serve the diverse needs of an increasingly multicultural student population.

Addressing the lack of diversity in the teaching profession is imperative for creating a more inclusive and representative educational environment for the ever-evolving student population. Despite the growing diversity within the student population, the teaching profession remains predominantly occupied by White females (Benson et al., 2021). Only about 20% of the teaching workforce consists of teachers of color, according to the NCES (2023) data. The disparity is even more noticeable in special education, as highlighted by Billingsley et al. (2019). Their analysis of the Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS) data revealed a considerably low representation of special education teachers of color compared to their white counterparts and the students they serve. The findings also indicate a connection between the school's poverty level and the racial distribution of teachers, with more teachers of color in high-poverty schools. However, the study's limitations restrict a more detailed analysis, such as disability categories, service delivery models, or specific Asian ethnic groups. The need for a substantial increase in special education teachers of color is clear, urging school leaders, policymakers, and teacher educators to develop strategic initiatives and foster a diverse teacher workforce.

Further research is necessary to identify practical measures to attract potential special education teachers of color. Educational stakeholders must make deliberate and strategic efforts to create an educational environment that reflects students' diverse backgrounds (Billingsley et al., 2019). These efforts are essential in attracting and retaining special education teachers of color.

In the U.S. education system, there is a chronic disparity between the racial and ethnic backgrounds of teachers and students, as highlighted by Schaeffer (2021) and Samuels (2020). While students of color form most of the public school population, teachers from diverse backgrounds remain significantly underrepresented, creating an imbalance in representation. The discrepancy is further compounded by inequities in educational resources, with privileged students enjoying greater access to fully certified teachers and challenging coursework. Conversely, for Black, Hispanic, and low-income students, as suggested by the 2015-2016 federal data from Research for Action and reports from The Education Trust, they often face challenges accessing these resources, reducing their chances of participating in rigorous courses (Samuels, 2020; Schaeffer, 2021). The gathered data emphasizes the pressing need for educational reform to ensure equitable access to quality education for all students.

Achieving racial representation among educators remains an important and complex task. Promoting racial and ethnic diversity among educators is crucial for fostering all-embracing educational environments (Darwich, 2021). The shortage of teachers of color limits students' exposure to diverse perspectives and restricts their access to role models who share their cultural backgrounds (Benson et al., 2021). Freidus (2022) has indicated that teachers of color can positively affect student outcomes, especially for students from marginalized backgrounds. Therefore, it is central to prioritize recruiting and retaining teachers of color to ensure equitable

educational opportunities for all students. Additionally, efforts must be made to challenge colorblind interpretations of diversity (Petts, 2020) and promote cultural sensitivity among educators through teacher training programs and school policies (Darwich, 2021). By doing so, the representation disparities may potentially be addressed to create a more inclusive education system that values and celebrates diversity.

The challenges arising from the lack of racial diversity among teachers in the U.S. are intricately linked to a broader pattern of inequality in education (Benson et al., 2021; Billingsley et al., 2019). Inequitable funding and policy decisions over the years have contributed to this problem, particularly impacting marginalized communities such as Black and Latinx students (Darwich, 2021; Petts, 2020). The research accentuates the necessity for a fair distribution of resources and policy changes to mitigate these differences. Revisiting and modifying the existing funding formulas could address racial imbalances in resource allocation and ensure equal educational opportunities for all students (Benson et al., 2021; Billingsley et al., 2019),

A Historical Perspective of the Shortage of Teachers of Color

By examining the history of the American education system, it is clear that the lack of diversity among teachers is deeply rooted in the ingrained systems of White supremacy, segregation, and discrimination that have been present since European colonization (Urban et al., 2019). These systems have continually favored White individuals, leading to the unequal distribution of power and resources and, consequently, an overwhelmingly white teaching profession (Kokka & Chao, 2020). The landmark Supreme Court ruling, *Plessy v. Ferguson* 1896, further entrenched these disparities by upholding the notion of "separate but equal," legally justifying segregation (Golub, 2005). Subsequent policies, such as Jim Crow laws, maintained these educational inequalities, preventing non-white individuals from joining the teaching

profession. These findings underscore the deeply embedded systemic barriers that have contributed to the continued lack of diversity among teachers today (Golub, 2005).

A historical view of the shortage of teachers of color in K–12 public schools reveal a persistent issue that has far-reaching implications for educational equity and student outcomes (Carter Andrews et al., 2018; Freidus, 2022; Honey & Smrekar, 2020). In 1954, the Supreme Court's *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* decision ended state-sanctioned segregation of schools, as the Supreme Court ruled that the practice was unconstitutional (Honey & Smrekar, 2020). Additionally, the Supreme Court asserted that segregation harms Black children academically and psychologically in ways that cannot be repaired (Freidus, 2022). However, the 82,000 Black teachers working in segregated schools in the U.S. were not protected when *Brown* was ordered (Benson et al., 2021). As a result, these teachers were dismissed from their positions, as they were deemed unqualified to instruct White students (Carter Andrews et al., 2018). Consequently, the cultural imprint of teachers of color on the curriculum, pedagogy, and school community was erased because of the dismissal of Black teachers, which has continuously harmed Black children's educational outcomes and experiences (Carter Andrews et al., 2018; Honey & Smrekar, 2020).

The dismantling of segregated schools failed to recognize the integral role of teachers of color in educating Black children (Goings et al., 2019; Honey & Smrekar, 2020). These educators provided valuable support systems for their students and were critical in connecting curricula with cultural relevance to allow Black students to feel seen and heard in their studies (Vasquez, 2019). However, the dismissal of teachers of color is only one example of systemic racism that continues to influence Black children's educational opportunities disproportionately.

As a result, disparities between Black and White student achievement have persisted since the Supreme Court ordered *Brown v. Board of Education* (D. J. Childs, 2019).

Many White people resisted the *Brown* decision, which received inadequate state enforcement (Honey & Smrekar, 2020). It was not until the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which prohibited discrimination in any school system receiving federal dollars, that civil rights organizations and community leaders were empowered to desegregate schools across the nation (Carter Andrews et al., 2018). From the mid-1960s until the late 1980s, many of the country's educational systems underwent desegregation; however, most of these districts have since resumed racial and socioeconomic segregation (Honey & Smrekar, 2020). Similarly, no laws have been enacted regarding the retention of instructors of color in schools (Carter Andrews et al., 2018).

The U.S.'s shortage of teachers of color is an unrelenting issue that has garnered attention and concern from policymakers, educators, and researchers. In the absence of a mandate for the retention of teachers of color, many districts have experienced dramatic decreases in the number of instructors of color following desegregation (Carter Andrews et al., 2018). Furthermore, school systems have had difficulty recruiting and retaining quality educators from all racial backgrounds due to salary disparities between White and non-White teachers (Taylor et al., 2019), resulting in increasingly segregated teaching forces with few Black instructors. These factors further damaged under-resourced schools serving predominantly Black students (Mickelson et al., 2021).

Additionally, resegregation emerged as academic tracking and ability grouping, which placed minority students disproportionately into lower tracks with smaller class sizes and less access to resources (Candipan, 2020). The unequal distribution has further increased disparities

in access to educational opportunities and quality instruction. School segregation continues to shape education systems today (Candipan, 2020; Carter Andrews et al., 2018).

The shortage of teachers of color is a pressing issue that influences the education system and society. The longstanding underrepresentation of teachers of color in K–12 public schools can be traced back to the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision that led to the dismissal of Black educators (Honey & Smrekar, 2020). The consequences of this underrepresentation have been significant, especially for Black students who benefit from the cultural relevance and support provided by teachers of color (Vasquez, 2019). Addressing the problem necessitates recognizing the pervasive systemic racism that limits educational opportunities for Black children (D. J. Childs, 2019). By promoting greater representation and inclusivity of teachers of color within the educational system, more equitable learning environments can be fostered for all students to narrow the persistent achievement gap since the pivotal Supreme Court decision (Honey & Smrekar, 2020). In summary, increasing diversity among educators is necessary for eliminating deep-seated racial imbalances in academic achievement so students of all races can thrive in settings characterized by understanding, respect, and mutual enrichment (D. J. Childs, 2019; Vasquez, 2019).

The Influence of Teachers of Color on Education

Recognizing the historical roots of the shortage of teachers of color and its consequences and implications is essential. Undoubtedly, historical desegregation has significantly contributed to the U.S.'s need for educators of color (Goings et al., 2019). However, students of color taught by educators from backgrounds similar to the students demonstrate higher academic performance, improved school attendance, and stronger self-esteem (Benson et al., 2021). Additionally, teachers from diverse backgrounds can bring many different perspectives into the

classroom, which allows for more meaningful learning experiences for all students, regardless of race or ethnicity (D. J. Childs, 2019). Therefore, cultivating a diverse teaching staff promotes fairness in society and an integrated approach to improving educational results and increasing comprehension and acceptance among students from different backgrounds.

A higher number of Black teachers in schools predominantly consisting of students of color can foster a more robust cultural connection, enhancing the student's overall educational experience (Benson et al., 2021; Grissom et al., 2020). Encounters with racial discrimination significantly impact Black American adolescents' mental health and general well-being (English et al., 2020), underscoring the need for diverse role models in schools. The current diversity gap between teachers and students poses a concern, pointing to the necessity of investing in teacher training and recruitment endeavors, particularly for minoritized groups (Marrun et al., 2021).

The wide-ranging consequences of the shortage of teachers from diverse backgrounds profoundly affect communal bonds and personal identity development among students from marginalized communities (Benson et al., 2021; Grissom et al., 2020). Al-Bahrani (2022) and D. J. Childs (2019) highlight the detrimental effects of a lack of teachers of color, linking it to reduced feelings of belonging among students from marginalized backgrounds. Duncan's (2020) work further emphasizes the role of Black educators in preparing students of color to confront White supremacy within educational settings. Despite the study's limitations, its findings illuminate the importance of fostering a sense of belonging and positive identity among Black students. Moreover, subsequent studies could focus on Black students' perspectives to offer insight into how they view the efforts of Black teachers in helping them navigate the complexities of White supremacist structures in education.

In today's diverse and multicultural society, it is crucial to have culturally competent teachers support students from different backgrounds so diverse learners progress academically (Cadenas et al., 2021; Kondo, 2022). Marrun et al. (2021) and Graham (2022) both emphasize the significance of culturally competent teachers. Through their research, they illustrate how these teachers better understand their students' unique backgrounds, leading to improved assessment of student progress. Graham's (2022) findings also suggest a positive influence of Black and Hispanic teachers on the perceptions of Black and Hispanic students, thereby underlining the importance of teacher-student racial congruence in shaping school climate perceptions and fostering a positive academic environment.

Although racial and ethnic differences in school discipline are well-documented, the influence of school makeup and instructor diversity on these differences has been understudied. Hughes et al. (2020), in their quantitative study drawing upon data from the Florida Department of Education, demonstrated that schools employing a diverse teaching staff exhibited fewer discrepancies in suspension rates among Black, Latino, and White students. The data suggests that fostering teacher diversity is a fairness issue and a strategic means to address imbalances in school discipline. However, some limitations exist, such as the lack of clear definitions for 'diversity' and 'threat' and the fact that teacher diversity data was collected only at the district level. In light of these limitations and considering the distinct sociocultural contexts and demographic composition of various states, it is advocated that future research should extend beyond Florida to capture a more comprehensive view of the interplay among these variables.

The lack of racial and ethnic diversity among educators dramatically impacts how discipline is administered in classrooms and ultimately shapes students' learning experiences. Having more teachers of color in schools can reduce racial disparities in disciplinary actions,

such as suspensions and expulsions (Benson et al., 2021), because teachers of color tend to understand better the cultural and social factors that contribute to student misbehavior and are better equipped to address these issues in culturally responsive manners (Hughes et al., 2020). Despite the benefits of racial congruence between students and teachers of color, the teacher and student demographic diversity gap remains a problem in public schools in the U.S. (Kim & Calzada, 2019; Marrun et al., 2019) partly due to the systemic barriers that prevent people of color from entering the teaching profession, such as bias in hiring and recruitment practices and inadequate support for aspiring teachers of color (McCardle & Bliss, 2019). Addressing these barriers requires a concerted effort from policymakers, educators, and the wider community to promote and support diversity in the teaching profession.

Barriers Faced by Teachers of Color

To promote a more inclusive and equitable education system, the barriers teachers of color face as students and teachers in public schools and teacher education programs must be better understood. Marrun et al. (2021), The Teacher of Color Collective and Souto-Manning (2022) highlighted systemic barriers, such as unconscious biases and racial dominance, contributing to the lack of diversity in the teaching workforce. Their research underscored the need for reforms, including accessible, high-quality teacher education, compensation for historical injustices, and active efforts to address racial disparities. These efforts will help ensure that all teachers of color receive the education and respect they deserve.

The unequal distribution of social assets among educators significantly affects the quality of education and professional development in schools. Mason-Williams et al. (2022) explored the issue of social asset disparities among teachers, especially those of color, and its impact on their professional development and the quality of education. Their work revealed that teachers of

color, particularly those in special education roles and high-poverty schools, had limited access to their school's social resources and were more likely to leave the profession. These findings point to systemic rather than individual-level issues and underscore the need for policy and practice reforms to reduce these disparities. Furthermore, the study highlights the importance of understanding the intersection of sociocultural identity and professional vulnerability in education.

Increased diversity within public schools has been encouraged to improve cultural understanding and social unity. McCardle and Bliss (2019) suggest that school segregation is not an isolated incident but rather a manifestation of unconscious racism deeply embedded within the system. The researchers recommended investigating the effects of systemic racism on educational outcomes and examining potential interventions that could minimize the impact of unconscious racism and encourage inclusive practices in schools in future research. Such efforts would help establish a link between school segregation and unconscious racism, ultimately leading to more effective strategies for addressing racial disparities in education (Marrun et al., 2021; McCardle & Bliss, 2019).

Teachers of color often grapple with unique challenges related to their race in their professional environments. Burns Thomas (2020) exposed another layer of entrenched racial bias within the education system. The study reveals that the superficial 'good enough' mentality that permeates attempts at diversifying the teaching workforce perpetuates systemic discrimination and white privilege. The researcher emphasizes shifting from merely meeting diversity quotas to actively pursuing equity. The pursuit would entail transformative strategies for recruiting, retaining, and professional development of teachers of color.

The challenges faced by educators of color are not limited to the four walls of their classroom. Despite their commitment to the profession, they often experience a lack of administrative support and limited access to professional development opportunities (Mason-Williams et al., 2022). Racism and racial microaggressions in schools affect their emotional health and sense of efficacy (Walker et al., 2019). Lisle-Johnson and Kohli (2020) illuminate the often-overlooked experiences of Black female educators. Their study revealed that these professionals grapple with racialized, gendered, and ideological challenges that significantly affect their career progression and emotional well-being. Despite these challenges, the educators demonstrated remarkable resilience and commitment to their profession. However, these significant findings were drawn from a relatively small sample size and may not fully capture the experiences of the broader population of Black women educators. Through this proactive approach of recognizing diversity, tackling obstacles, and promoting inclusivity, an education system that serves all educators, regardless of their racial or gender identities, can be formed.

Addressing the absence of Black educators in rural environments and their high attrition rates is a critical step toward fostering a diverse, inclusive, and effective educational landscape. According to the NCES (2023), Black educators comprise a lower proportion of all K–12 teachers and experience higher turnover rates, a testament to the systemic issues at play. The study's results suggest that increasing teacher salaries and improving school climate can reduce teacher turnover rates. However, teacher mobility is uniquely influenced by the racial composition of rural schools, with higher turnover rates observed in schools with larger Black student bodies.

Williams et al. (2021) also revealed challenges teachers of color face, including racial injustices, trauma, and higher turnover rates, particularly within rural school settings.

Experiences of racial discrimination and a hostile work environment have been identified as critical factors leading to the departure of these educators from the teaching profession (Hernández-Johnson et al., 2021). These findings underscore the urgency for systemic change in the education sector, including shifts in school culture toward recognizing and valuing diverse communities. Such transformations can foster a more inclusive educational environment integral to addressing the teacher diversity gap. Furthermore, the studies also highlight the need for continuous research to delve deeper into these issues and for policymakers to take decisive action, such as improving school climates and addressing wage disparities (Hernández-Johnson et al., 2021; Williams et al., 2021).

Likewise, Marrun et al. (2021) used CRT to investigate the correlation between the school experiences of students of color and their views on the teaching profession. They discovered that students of color perceive teaching as a predominantly White profession, often characterized as boring and undervalued. These perceptions stem from their lack of racially matched role models in the teaching profession, inadequate information about college, and perceived microaggressions. The study's limitations include not specifying the ethnic backgrounds of the participants, which limits its applicability to all students of color. The study concludes with a call for a more diverse, inclusive teacher workforce to encourage a higher representation of teachers of color, suggesting that future research should focus on implementing and monitoring the effectiveness of such initiatives. The study highlights teachers' obstacles and the persistent racism that students of color face throughout their academic lives. Furthermore, the influence of these experiences dissuades students of color from pursuing a career in teaching (D. J. Childs, 2019; Marrun et al., 2021).

Recognizing diversity, tackling obstacles, and promoting inclusivity is crucial for creating an education system that serves all educators, regardless of their racial identities. The literature underscored the numerous challenges faced by Black teachers and teachers of color in predominantly White educational institutions and rural environments, which have contributed to high attrition rates (Hernández-Johnson et al., 2021; NCES, 2023; Williams et al., 2021). Persistent experiences of racial injustices and trauma and hostile work environments led to their departure from the teaching profession (Hernández-Johnson et al., 2021). Moreover, students of color perceived teaching as a predominantly White profession, viewed as unexciting and undervalued, which dissuaded them from pursuing a career in teaching (Marrun et al., 2021).

The findings are significant as they highlight the pressing need for systemic reform in educational institutions. The recurring theme is fostering supportive networks, implementing culturally responsive teaching practices (Cadenas et al., 2021; Kondo, 2022), raising teacher salaries, improving the school climate, and addressing racial disparities to enhance teacher retention and encourage a diverse teaching workforce (Williams et al., 2021). Future studies are needed to build upon these recommendations and address the identified limitations, including potential bias in self-reporting and the study's limited scope. Ultimately, these efforts can promote inclusivity, equity, and effectiveness in the educational landscape, benefiting teachers and students.

The Underrepresentation of Black Male Educators

The underrepresentation of teachers of color, particularly Black male educators, can be attributed to various barriers they face within the education system. The literature has shed light on Black male educators' systemic educational barriers, highlighting the underrepresentation and unique challenges these teachers encounter (Salas et al., 2021; Woodson & Bristol, 2020). Black

male teachers constitute just 2% of U.S. teachers, underscoring the need for focused attention on this demographic (Salas et al., 2021). Dismantling systemic barriers and fostering an environment that encourages the participation and longevity of Black male educators in the teaching workforce is not just a matter of equity but a step toward enriching the educational landscape for the benefit of all students (Salas et al., 2021; Woodson & Bristol, 2020; Young & Young, 2020).

There has been a growing interest in exploring the experiences of male educators and their unique paths within the teaching field. Salas et al. (2021) presented an in-depth case study of one Black man's journey into Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL), highlighting the underrepresentation of Black and Brown male teachers in the field. The research emphasized the pivotal role that various social communities, namely family, education institutions, and religious groups, play in shaping the professional decisions of these educators. The results underscore the critical influence of familial, educational, and religious communities in directing career paths. Being a case study of a single individual, the limitations of the research might not fully capture the diverse experiences of all Black male teachers in TESOL. However, researchers must continue to illuminate and amplify the voices and experiences of Black male educators, as their unique perspectives and contributions are vital to building a truly inclusive, diverse, and equitable education field (Salas et al., 2021).

There has been a growing recognition of the need to understand and support teachers of color, particularly Black male teachers. The literature reveals a significant underrepresentation of Black male educators, which is a serious concern given their positive impacts on Black students' academic and social outcomes (Young & Young, 2020). Research also highlights systemic challenges such as racism and lack of support, often leading to their premature exit from the

education system. Crucial to the discussion, Brooms (2020) underscored the role of Black male teachers as change agents for Black boys' overall development and suggested the need for teacher education programs to focus on training for diverse communities. Similarly, Robinson (2020) emphasized the importance of the presence of Black male teachers and their ability to validate the experiences of Black students and positively shape their lives.

Additionally, Young and Young (2020) suggested that Black male teachers believe more in Black students' abilities than their White female counterparts. However, they are often mistakenly perceived as disciplinarians. Collectively, these studies underscore the urgent need to enhance the recruitment and retention of Black male educators to foster an inclusive educational environment and enable all students to realize their full potential (Brooms, 2020; Robinson, 2020; Young & Young, 2020).

The skewed perception of Black male educators perpetuates racial stereotypes and places undue pressure on them, hindering their professional growth and the ability to educate their students effectively. Given their frequently unfavorable encounters in schools as K–12 students, including low expectations, racial profiling, microaggressions, and disproportionate discipline and punishment, Black males often struggle with the notion of becoming teachers (Woodson & Bristol, 2020). Black men who choose to become teachers are frequently motivated by the desire to influence the lives of their students and change their communities but ultimately make an early exit from the profession (Salas et al., 2021). Moreover, Black male educators are frequently hired as role models and father figures for Black male students, with the expectation that they will police first and teach second (Woodson & Bristol, 2020). The underrepresentation of teachers of color fails to reflect classroom diversity and perpetuates systemic inequities in education.

The literature reveals a pressing need for increased representation of Black male teachers in the American K–12 education system. Brooms (2020) underscored the significance of Black male teachers as critical agents of change, particularly in Black boys' academic, social, and personal development. Robinson (2020) bolsters the claim by highlighting the profound influence of Black male teachers on their students' lives, often validating their experiences and positively shaping their life trajectories. Additionally, Young and Young (2020) point out the notable gap in the teaching workforce's diversity despite evidence of the positive influence of Black male teachers on Black students' outcomes. The underrepresentation is further complicated by adverse perceptions and systemic challenges, including being viewed primarily as disciplinarians and experiencing undue pressures tied to racial stereotypes (Woodson & Bristol, 2020). The implications of these findings underline the urgency of promoting diversity within the teaching workforce, comprehensively understanding the experiences of Black male teachers, and dismantling systemic inequities in education (Brooms, 2020; Woodson & Bristol, 2020; Young & Young, 2020).

The Whiteness of Teacher Education

The dominance of whiteness in teacher education programs discourages a diverse range of applicants and creates an environment that unintentionally pushes away students of color. Discrimination deters individuals from pursuing careers in education (D. J. Childs, 2019), identifying the need to tackle these deeply rooted inequalities head-on. In addition, teacher preparation programs often do not address inequalities or equip teachers to handle diverse backgrounds (Anderson, 2020). Likewise, it has been found that the climates and cultures of teacher preparation programs are racist and continue to reinforce the racial isolation and marginalization of students of color (Marrun et al., 2021).

Furthermore, many preservice teachers of color had negative K–12 experiences that could have led to racial marginalization within teacher preparation programs (D. J. Childs, 2019). Nevertheless, these experiences may motivate some individuals to pursue such a career (Plachowski, 2019). Thus, the literature highlights the importance of recognizing and addressing existing inequalities to prevent further marginalization of students of color.

The pervasive impact of whiteness in teacher education programs has significant implications for students of color, as it shapes their experiences in ways that often go unaddressed in mainstream discussions. Aronson et al. (2020) explored the complex perceptions of preservice teachers of color, revealing a range of attitudes from challenging systemic racism to deflecting blame onto external factors. These perceptions signal a critical need to interrogate these attitudes through future research to disrupt normalized notions of whiteness and ensure institutions foster an anti-oppressive learning environment for students of color (Aronson et al., 2020). Conversely, Kawasaki (2023) pointed to financial inequalities as a significant obstacle for teachers of color. This inequality demonstrates that students of color are more likely to face economic hardship during their student-teaching year. The reality suggests the need for in-depth exploration into how racial capitalism impacts these students and teachers (Kawasaki, 2023). The findings of both studies underscore the importance of addressing these issues to counter racial imbalances in the education system.

The literature highlights several significant challenges and offers potential solutions to improve the inclusivity of predominantly White education colleges. Archer et al. (2021) emphasized the necessity of cultural competence among educators to reduce cultural dissonance and foster a better learning environment, particularly for preservice teachers of color. They advocate for an institutional shift towards a culture-centered approach and anti-racist policies,

suggesting that equity audits could reveal and address hidden inequities, thereby leading to systemic change. Further, Vasquez (2019) highlights the underrepresentation and marginalization of men of color within teacher education programs. His findings expose the pervasive influence of whiteness and the token phenomenon, which contribute to the alienation of men of color, especially in contexts where faculty are predominantly White women. The researcher points out the limitations of current multicultural approaches that do not effectively integrate students and call for institutional changes that challenge existing power structures.

A complex interaction of institutional, socioeconomic, and cultural issues has contributed to the shortage of teachers of color, especially among male teachers of color. There is no shortage of difficulties for minority students who wish to enter the teaching profession; for instance, Archer et al. (2021) investigated the cultural costs facing Black preservice teachers in predominantly White institutions, and Kawasaki (2023) analyzed the financial difficulties caused by racism in the capitalist system. Vasquez (2019) has also studied the challenges faced by men of color enrolled in teacher preparation programs and has drawn particular attention to their experiences of isolation and exposure to harmful racial norms and expectations. These results point to the critical need to change how teachers are trained. Teacher diversity and effectiveness would improve if structural injustices were addressed, colorblind attitudes were eradicated, and more welcoming and inclusive atmospheres were created for educators of color (Archer et al., 2021; Kawasaki, 2023). Building on the foundation of the imbalances in teacher education, the next section will explore hurdles students of color face. The exploration aims to extend understanding and facilitate the development of more comprehensive solutions.

Barriers Faced by Students of Color

The literature reviewed has consistently revealed the obstacles, disadvantages, and discrimination faced by students of color in their K–12 school experiences. These deficits deepen longstanding disparities in institutions that educate children from minority and low-income families (Rogers-Ard et al., 2019). The path to overcoming the teacher of color shortage is improving educational equity for K–12 students of color (D. J. Childs, 2019). Furthermore, factors such as White-centric programming and microaggressions maintain a shortage of teachers of color (Rogers-Ard et al., 2019). Milner (2020b) analyzed the impact of educators' racial identity and curriculum practices on Black students in segregated schools. Through in-depth interviews with Mr. Williams, a former student during segregation and later an educator, the findings uncover distinct implications of race and curriculum in schools. The study's limited scope, based solely on one person's experiences, constitutes a limitation, suggesting the need for further research involving a more extensive and diverse sample of participants. The findings underscore the importance of Black teachers in Black students' success, the crucial role of discipline, and the harmful effects of curriculum punishment. The results highlight the need for future studies to explore these themes further, particularly the concept of curriculum punishment and the implications of racially unjust learning opportunities on the educational journey of Black students. Milner (2020b) concluded that students of color are disproportionately affected by disciplinary practices and policies, leading to a noticeable achievement gap in education.

Additionally, the problem is worsened by the insufficient preparation of teachers to address these issues. Milner (2020b) advised that teacher training programs and policy initiatives should prioritize addressing racial issues and dismantling disciplinary practices within the educational system. The author also recommended that future studies consider the connections

between race, teacher preparation, and policy to create more effective solutions for addressing these challenges.

Researchers have unraveled the complicated elements of educational inequity to explore new factors that could influence academic performance among diverse populations. Kim and Calzada (2019) explored the intricate relationships between skin color, academic readiness, and academic achievement in young Latino students of Mexican and Dominican roots. The researchers found a significant correlation between darker skin color ratings and lower academic performance, with this trend being especially pronounced among boys of Dominican heritage. The key finding emphasized the intricate and complex relationship between race and academic attainment, shedding light on the biases that might be at play in educational settings. However, the study did have shortcomings, such as the absence of longitudinal data, which could provide a more comprehensive understanding of how race influences achievement over time. The researchers suggested future research to explore these complex dynamics and their long-term impacts. They propose that educational policies and practices consider these findings to mitigate potential biases and enhance equitable learning opportunities for all students. (Kim & Calzada, 2019).

The interplay between student and teacher racial or ethnic dynamics and students' academic choices is multifaceted. Grissom et al. (2020) studied the impact of teacher-student racial or ethnic congruency on students' academic achievement and course-taking patterns, particularly in mathematics. Utilizing administrative data from Miami-Dade County Public Schools, the researchers found that students taught by racially or ethnically congruent teachers are likely to achieve higher levels and are more likely to pursue advanced math courses. However, these results are specific to the particular demographic context of the district studied

and might not be universal. Additional limitations include an inability to probe deeply into mechanisms driving the observed patterns. While Grissom et al. have provided compelling evidence for the potential influence of student and teacher racial or ethnic dynamics on academic choices, further research should examine the impact of race or ethnicity congruence on long-term outcomes such as high school graduation and college-going rates.

The educational environment's profound influence on students' academic success continues to be a research focus. Like Grissom et al. (2020), Jackson et al. (2021) highlights the significant influence of school climate on academic outcomes, particularly among 11th-grade Black males. Their findings underscored that a negative school environment could detrimentally affect these students' math identity and academic performance. Fundamentally, a nurturing school environment fosters positive self-perceptions and enhances academic performance among African American male students (Grissom et al., 2020). Despite the research limitations, the researchers forward a critical argument for the necessity of educational reforms targeting a safer, more inclusive environment for Black males, addressing systemic issues such as teacher bias, racial discrimination, and stereotypes (Jackson et al., 2021).

Comprehensive research has explored the dynamics of educational success and the intersection of racial diversity among school staff and its potential impact on student achievement. Bartanen (2023) studied the effect of principal race on teacher employment and student outcomes. Using a quantitative research method, Bartanen found that principals of color are more likely to hire and retain teachers of color, improving racial diversity among educators without adversely affecting teacher quality metrics. The study also indicates that these teachers and their students are more likely to rate school leadership, school climate, and personal satisfaction higher in years with a race-congruent principal. The study's limitations include

focusing on only two demographically similar states, which may limit its generalizability, particularly to states with significant non-white, non-Black teacher populations. Bartanen advocates for additional studies to understand better the mechanisms driving their findings, such as teacher job-seeking behaviors, principals' evaluation practices, and job opportunities provided to teachers of the same racial and ethnic background. Understanding the complexities of racial diversity in educational settings is essential for fully comprehending the dynamic relationship (Bartanen, 2023; Grissom et al., 2020; Jackson et al., 2021).

The nexus between race, poverty, and academic achievement profoundly impacts educational outcomes for students of color. Gordon and Cui (2018) studied the dynamic issue of racial disparities in adolescents' academic achievement and the role community poverty plays. The researchers examined the connections between racial inequality, economic hardship, and student performance in school. They examined young people across racial and economic lines by collecting and analyzing quantitative and qualitative data. The authors' findings highlight that Black adolescents consistently report lower academic achievement, regardless of the community's poverty level.

Interestingly, the racial disparity in academic achievement is more pronounced in low-poverty communities. Gordon and Cui (2018) advocated for policies and interventions that target racism and poverty together to enhance students' academic performances, and they encouraged future studies to examine these crucial relationships better. For this reason, educational policies and interventions must be crafted using comprehensive knowledge of the complex relationship between race and poverty to achieve equal academic achievements for all students. It is crucial to understand the interconnected nature of racism and economic disadvantage to develop educational policies and interventions to level the academic playing field.

The literature reviewed shows that race, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status significantly influence students' academic choices and performances. The racial or ethnic dynamics between students and teachers, as shown by Grissom et al. (2020), can significantly affect a student's inclination to engage in advanced coursework. Moreover, the nurturing environment of a school, as highlighted by Jackson et al. (2021), can foster positive self-concepts among minority students to improve their academic performances. Bartanen (2023) demonstrated a slight positive correlation between racial diversity among school staff and student success. Finally, as explored by Gordon and Cui (2018), the complex interaction between racial inequality and economic hardship underscores the compelling need for policy interventions to mitigate racism and poverty to enhance students' academic outcomes. These findings emphasize the profound influence of race, teacher and student dynamics, school environment, and socioeconomic status on students' academic outcomes; they accentuate the need for more inclusive, supportive, and diverse educational backgrounds and targeted policy interventions to address systemic racial and economic disparities (Bartanen, 2023; Gordon & Cui, 2018; Grissom et al., 2020; Jackson et al., 2021).

Recruitment and Retention

Many districts are actively diversifying their teaching forces using initiatives to recruit and retain teachers of color (Carothers et al., 2019; Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2019; Duncan, 2020). Diversity is accomplished by creating more equitable hiring practices, increasing salary incentives for educators of color, promoting programs within minority communities, and creating partnerships between universities and school systems (Carothers et al., 2019; Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2019). Moreover, Duncan (2020) noted that the lack of teachers of color was not due to a lack of recruitment but rather to a culture of White supremacy in public

schools that continues to marginalize students of color. Consequently, addressing the underrepresentation of teachers of color necessitates dismantling systemic barriers and fostering inclusive educational environments that acknowledge and appreciate diversity.

University and district collaborations have shown promise as strategic interventions for teacher recruitment and the diversification of the teaching workforce. Carothers et al. (2019) addressed the effectiveness of recruitment programs in attracting diverse populations to teaching professions. The researchers examined a collaboration between a mid-sized university and regional school districts, aiming to increase student enrollment in teacher preparation programs, resulting in a diverse pool of potential teachers. Through quantitative and qualitative methods with 66 prospective teachers over two years, the researchers found that participants' perception of teaching improved, and they developed an increased interest in careers after the program, gaining insights into the profession's demands and skills. Carothers et al. (2019) recommend that future research replicate the study in different settings and with larger participant groups to validate the results and explore contextual implications. Forging collaborative relationships between universities and school districts has significant potential as a proactive approach to addressing teacher scarcity and a lack of diversity in the educational workforce (Carothers et al., 2019; Rogers-Ard et al., 2019).

Recruiting and retaining teachers of color has been central in education research and policymaking when seeking to create more diverse and representative education workforces. Carter Andrews et al. (2018) focused on the underrepresentation of teachers of color utilizing a multi-institutional research design to examine and compare practices across different educational sectors in the U.S. and Canada. As a result of their research, they stressed the significance of recruitment, anti-oppression training, supportive communities, and equitable hiring practices in

retaining teachers of color. Despite its comprehensive findings, the study is limited by its lack of quantified data. However, their analysis may oversimplify the issue by focusing only on the barriers faced rather than the teachers' lived experiences. They suggested that future research should focus on successful programs that attract and retain minority teachers, analyze their key features, and investigate the correlation between effective implementation and outcomes such as job satisfaction and retention rates. Policies should aim to create supportive and inclusive environments to recruit and retain teachers of color. Therefore, achieving a diversified education workforce requires strategic recruitment efforts and the establishment of nurturing environments that respect and respond to the unique intersectional experiences of teachers of color.

American educational institutions demonstrate a significant lack of Black female instructors. Farinde-Wu et al. (2020) investigated the absence of African American female educators in the United States. Their study utilized a cultural-ecological conceptual framework to describe and understand the various levels of factors that influence the career progression of Black female educators. The study's findings revealed the enormous challenges faced by Black female educators due to the overlapping and interacting factors of micro-level (classroom), meso-level (institutional), and macro-level (societal racism and sexism) influences. The researchers recommended future research to explore strategies addressing Black women's unique experiences in the teaching profession, such as implementing intervention programs, improving working conditions, and offering professional development opportunities to counter oppressive environments. To create more representative and equitable learning environments, educational institutions and policymakers should address the underlying causes of these systemic problems (Ainscow, 2020; Farinde-Wu et al., 2020).

Furthermore, research on initiatives to recruit and retain teachers of color has indicated that culturally responsive approaches to teacher education (Cadenas et al., 2021), tailored instruction, and collective models are essential aspects of successful programs to recruit and retain teachers of color (Rogers-Ard et al., 2019). These initiatives help participants understand their students' cultures through authentic voices (Kondo, 2022) while allowing them to pursue teaching as a career. Moreover, culturally relevant pedagogy (CRP) has been used to increase the number of teachers of color through Grow Your Own Collective programs (Rogers-Ard et al., 2019). CRP and tailored programs foster environments that respect and acknowledge the diverse cultural identities of aspiring teachers of color and empower them to pursue careers in teaching (D. J. Childs, 2019).

The exploration of CRP within teacher education is a burgeoning field of investigation that presents new challenges and opportunities for enriching educational experiences. Kondo (2022) focused on the importance of culturally relevant pedagogy in a multicultural education setting. To prepare teachers of color for diverse classrooms, educators must build the capacity to enact CRP across sociocultural backgrounds rather than unconsciously replicating the unjust experiences they faced in their K–12 schooling. As per the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP, 2021), multicultural education content and pedagogy are vital elements of teacher education curriculums. Although Kondo (2022) provides an intricate understanding of CRP incorporation into teacher education, the study may be limited due to potential research bias and a lack of corroborating quantitative evidence. With a recommendation for a broader application of CRP in teacher education and a call to increase research efforts to assess its effects on student performance, Kondo (2022) effectively highlights the transformative potential of CRP within teacher education.

Addressing diversity within teacher education faculty has emerged as a significant issue, with current recruitment strategies failing to meet the needs of this challenge. Endo (2022) explored the critical need for effective diversity, equity, and inclusion practices in faculty recruitment. The study employed a case study design, examining faculty recruitment practices across various institutional settings. The findings reveal that systemic biases and cognitive errors hinder the recruitment and selection of BIPOC faculty, particularly in teacher preparation program contexts. Endo recommends engaging in direct outreach to Minority-Serving Institutions (MSIs) and exploring untapped markets as potential avenues for enhancing diversity within faculty ranks. Future research should establish and execute recruitment strategies that are mindful of diverse faculty's distinct difficulties and experiences to advance equity in teacher education. It is imperative to reevaluate and reform current recruitment strategies to recognize diverse faculty members' unique experiences and challenges.

Higher attrition rates and mobility among teachers of color should be resolved. Elfers et al. (2022) looked into the pressing need to understand the evolution of teacher diversity in education regarding the stark differences in the retention and mobility rates for teachers of different racial backgrounds. The study examined a population of novice teachers using decade-long longitudinal data. The findings reveal that diversity within the teacher workforce has increased, but significant disparities exist among racial and ethnic groups. Black novice teachers, for instance, are less likely to stay in the same school than their Latinx counterparts. However, their research might not have captured all variables influencing these rates. They recommended more in-depth, qualitative research to understand better the challenges that teachers of color face, which could then inform strategies to improve retention. (Elfers et al., 2022) In essence,

transforming the teaching workforce to mirror the diversity of student populations is not merely an ideal to aspire to but a pressing necessity for equitable and representative education.

The literature underlines the challenges and systemic issues teachers of color face in education. Farinde-Wu et al. (2020) highlighted the influence of systemic biases, the lack of mentorship, and limited career advancement opportunities on the underrepresentation of African American female educators. The literature has also identified successful initiatives, such as culturally responsive approaches to teacher education, tailored instruction, and collective models, that recruit and retain teachers of color (Cadenas et al., 2021; Rogers-Ard et al., 2019). Kondo (2022) and Endo (2022) highlighted the importance of integrating CRP into teacher education programs and the need to diversify faculty in these programs to foster inclusive, equitable learning environments. Elfers et al. (2022) emphasized the high attrition and mobility rates among teachers of color. They recommended conducting more qualitative research to comprehend these challenges better and inform retention strategies. Addressing these issues is paramount; achieving a diverse, representative teaching workforce is not simply a theoretical ideal but a practical necessity for creating an equitable, inclusive education sector (Endo, 2022; Farinde-Wu et al., 2020; Kondo, 2022).

Summary

The literature reveals a significant shortage of teachers of color in K–12 public schools, which is concerning due to the rapidly changing demographics of the student population. The underrepresentation of minorities has roots in historical segregation and adversely affects teaching and learning; for instance, students of color lack role models, and there are few culturally responsive teaching practices. However, the literature also identifies barriers teachers of color face, such as discrimination and a lack of support, contributing to the difficulties in

recruiting and retaining these educators. Despite these challenges, some promising programs and initiatives have emerged to increase teacher diversity. These findings underscore the need for practical solutions to this disparity to foster more inclusive and representative educational environments.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODS

Overview

The qualitative, phenomenological study explored how teachers of color described their lived experiences by applying Herzberg's two-factor theory of motivation to their decisions to teach at predominantly White K–12 public schools in South-Central Pennsylvania. This chapter discussed the research type and research design. The research questions that guide the study were then outlined. Next, the setting and participants were described. Furthermore, the role of the researcher, the research procedures, and a data collection and analysis plan were explained. Finally, trustworthiness and ethical considerations were discussed. The chapter concluded with a concise summary of the methods utilized in the study.

Research Design

The choice of a qualitative study was appropriate for the research because it allowed for a deep exploration of the lived experiences of teachers of color and their motivation to teach in predominantly White schools (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Qualitative research contributed to understanding the complex interplay of factors shaping individual behaviors, perspectives, and experiences (Holloway, 1997). Additionally, it permitted the researcher to study the subjective experiences and perceptions of the individuals experiencing the phenomena by observing the emerging patterns or themes from the data collected in the natural setting (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Therefore, a qualitative study was ideal for the research, ensuring a level of depth and detail of the lived experiences of teachers of color not obtained through other research methods.

The study employed a transcendental phenomenological approach to explore how teachers of color describe their lived experiences of their motivations to teach at predominantly White K–12 public schools in South-Central Pennsylvania. According to Moustakas (1994),

transcendental phenomenological research methods were a means to investigate human behavior and experiences. Moustakas asserted that humans' subjective experiences should be explored because they reveal the problematic phenomena of the human experience. The theoretical framework guiding the research was grounded in Herzberg's two-factor motivation-hygiene theory. Data analysis was inductive and deductive to generate underlying themes and patterns from interviews and observations (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The research aimed to provide practical methods for finding and retaining teachers of color that could be used by district leaders, principals, and teacher educators.

Transcendental phenomenology was an approach within qualitative research that focused on the collective experiences of a specific group (Moustakas, 1994). Edmund Husserl, the founder of phenomenology, developed this method, which Moustakas later refined. The design was chosen to deeply analyze the human experiences studied, exploring what the participants encountered and how they interpreted them (Moustakas, 1994). Transcendental phenomenology design was explicitly selected for the study to focus on the lived experiences of teachers of color within predominantly white school settings to discover their motivations and experiences.

Research Questions

The research was guided by one central question and supported by one sub-question. The central question that drove the research was vital to explore how teachers of color described their lived experiences of motivation to teach at predominantly White K–12 public schools. The motivation of teachers of color to continue teaching in K–12 public schools was an important area of study, particularly in predominantly White, suburban school districts where there might have been unique challenges for teachers of color. Overall, this research sought to build a deeper

understanding of the motivations and experiences of teachers of color in these environments to support their recruitment and retention.

Central Research Question

How did teachers of color describe their lived experiences of motivation to teach at predominantly White K–12 public schools?

Sub-Question One

How did teachers of color describe their lived experiences of motivation concerning Herzberg's two-factor motivation-hygiene theory to teach at predominantly White K–12 public schools?

Setting and Participants

South-Central Pennsylvania lacked teachers of color, which made this region suitable for investigating the factors that motivated these educators to teach in predominantly White educational settings (Fontana & Lapp, 2018; Pennsylvania Department of Education, 2023). In research by Fontana and Lapp (2018), 5.6% of teachers in Pennsylvania identified as people of color. Pennsylvania's 501 school districts were divided according to geographic location, and each district provided public education within its designated region. Each district was administrated by a local board of education and was headed by a superintendent who oversaw the direction of the district's policies and operation decisions (Pennsylvania Department of Education, 2023). Ten teachers of color were selected using criterion sampling techniques based on their experiences teaching in predominantly White K–12 public schools in South-Central Pennsylvania. Saturation was reached when additional data did not add relevant information to the phenomenon under investigation.

Ultimately, the data from teachers of color informed best practice recommendations to implement in similar school districts to create more equitable educational systems. With its lack of diversity among educators, South-Central Pennsylvania was a suitable environment for exploring the challenges and motivations of educators of color. Through criterion sampling techniques, this inquiry aimed to capture a comprehensive range of insights from 10 educators of color, and the data were collected until saturation was achieved. This research amplified the voices of educators of color to illuminate the factors that motivated these educators and the challenges they faced so that the recruitment and retention of teachers of color could be improved. The research aimed to reveal teachers' perspectives on their lived experiences and motivations for teaching at predominantly White, suburban school districts in South-Central Pennsylvania.

Setting

Pennsylvania's South-Central region comprised eight counties: Adams, Cumberland, Dauphin, Franklin, Lancaster, Lebanon, Perry, and York. South-Central Pennsylvania is mainly rural, but a few urban centers, such as Harrisburg, York, and Lancaster, serve as hubs for commerce and entertainment. The area is easily accessible by several major highways and is near cities such as Baltimore, Philadelphia, and Washington, D.C. (Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), 2023). The setting for the study was five school districts in South-Central Pennsylvania that served just under 25,000 students combined. The largest district included in the research served about 12,000 students, and the smallest served approximately 2,400 students. Five additional districts were identified to ensure a minimum of 10 participants; however, participants were procured from the five districts initially identified.

Pennsylvania's school districts were divided by geographic location; each provided public education within its distinct area. The structure and organization of school districts in Pennsylvania varied based on local needs, district size, and specific policies adopted by each district. Pennsylvania was divided into 501 school districts governed by locally elected boards of education, known as school boards. The district was headed by a Superintendent who supervised the overall administration and management in collaboration with the school board. Furthermore, each school within a district employed administrators, teachers, and support staff such as counselors, librarians, nurses, and secretarial personnel. Principals lead the daily operations of individual schools within these districts, working closely with assistant principals and other administrative staff (PDE, 2023).

Due to the area's rurality, South-Central Pennsylvania has a shortage of teachers of color. Thus, this location was appropriate for exploring the motivations of teachers of color to teach in predominantly White schools. The selection criteria for the study were as follows: (a) 55% or more of students enrolled in the district identify as White, (b) the school district is suburban, meaning outside of the city limits, and (c) the school district is a public school located in South-Central Pennsylvania. School districts were selected based on enrollment data and Pennsylvania Department of Education statistics.

According to the U.S. Department of Education et al. (2022), Pennsylvania public schools served roughly 1.7 million students during the 2021–2022 school year. The approximate breakdown by ethnicity of those students was as follows: 63% identified as Caucasian, 14.7% identified as Black, 13% identified as Hispanic, 4% identified as Asian, 4.6% identified as two or more races, and less than 1% identified as Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander, American Indian, Alaskan Native, or Other. Moreover, Pennsylvania's disparity between students of color (33.1%)

and teachers of color (5.6%) was one of the largest in the nation (Fontana & Lapp, 2018). Furthermore, Fontana and Lapp revealed that in 2016–2017, 55% of Pennsylvania's public schools and 38% of all school districts hired only White teachers.

Participants

The significance of diversity in the teaching profession and its effects are important, especially when it comes to improving the experience and results for students from diverse backgrounds. According to research by Fontana and Lapp (2018), having teachers from different backgrounds positively influenced students of color, leading to better academic and non-academic achievements. These positive influences include rates of absenteeism, increased participation in programs, and reduced dropout rates among students of color. Furthermore, the presence of teachers from backgrounds sets expectations for all students. Fontana and Lapp also noted that having teachers from different backgrounds helped reduce implicit biases and created a more inclusive school environment. It is worth noting that while 73% of all teachers are women, a statistic holds across groups in the United States. In Pennsylvania, black male teachers comprised over 1% of the teaching workforce (U.S. Department of Education et al., 2022). The presence and impact of teachers within the education system underscored their crucial role in creating inclusive learning environments that promoted academic success, minimized bias, and enhanced the overall school climate. The research highlighted a need for diversity within the teaching profession.

Participants for the transcendental phenomenological research were selected using criterion sampling, identifying classes that fulfilled the criteria and ensuring quality sampling. Furthermore, criterion sampling was appropriate because all participants experienced the phenomenon studied (Creswell & Poth, 2018). For the study, 10 participants were utilized, and

thematic saturation was achieved. The 10 participants were selected based on the following criteria: participants were (a) teachers of color and (b) teaching in predominantly White, suburban school districts in South-Central Pennsylvania. Saturation was achieved when no new data was collected to contribute to researchers' comprehension of the phenomenon (Creswell & Poth, 2018). In the investigation, a teacher of color was a non-White teacher.

Recruitment Plan

The recruitment plan for the study was conducted across five educational districts in the South-Central Pennsylvanian region. The researcher's teaching and supervisory experiences established rapport with many administrators and teachers in these districts. Participants were chosen through criterion sampling, a method endorsed by Patton (1990) to ensure all participants have a direct experience of the phenomenon under study, thereby enhancing the credibility of the findings. Recruitment continued until data saturation was reached, a point at which no new insights were being gained (Saunders et al., 2017). The eligibility criteria for the research included being a teacher of color and teaching in predominantly White, suburban school districts in South-Central Pennsylvania. See Appendix F for details on informed consent. Participants' privacy and confidentiality were guarded through the use of unique identifiers, ensuring their identities remained undisclosed in any related documents or discussions (Bryman, 2012). The recruitment plan aimed to gather a diverse and representative sample of teachers to accurately explore the experiences of minority educators in predominantly White schools.

Researcher's Positionality

The study followed a social constructivism paradigm to reveal the lived experiences of motivation for teachers of color teaching in White suburban K–12 schools. The researcher was a White educational administrator in a suburban area hoping to learn strategies to recruit better,

support, and retain teachers of color. Pfadenhauer and Knoblauch (2018) have stressed the holistic viewpoint of social constructivism, which was based on a three-fold structure that connected interpreting, legitimizing, and performing. The study revealed how school districts in predominantly White, suburban areas could attract and retain teachers of color.

Interpretive Framework

Social constructivism was an interpretive approach utilized to understand the world that emphasized studying how individuals develop subjective meanings of their experiences (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The framework permitted participants' views to be used to construct meaning. Furthermore, these subjective meanings were imprinted on individuals and formed through interactions with others and historical and cultural norms. Social constructivism was especially appropriate for the research since it enabled the exploration of how participants interpreted their own experiences and formed connections between their lived realities and the broader social, cultural, political, economic, and historical contexts in which they lived. This approach revealed why people act as they do in particular situations to illuminate the complexities of their experiences. The interpretive approach revealed more profound meanings and interpretations of participants' experiences (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Philosophical Assumptions

Philosophical assumptions served as guiding principles in this research endeavor. These assumptions were the beliefs we brought to our research and influenced the issues we believed needed to be studied, the research questions that should be asked, and the data collection methods. These beliefs are often formed by the academic literature we read, guidance from our mentors and advisors, and discussions with others in our field (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The three philosophical assumptions discussed in the qualitative study were ontological,

epistemological, and axiological. Exploration of these concepts uncovered profound importance and influence on the study.

Ontological Assumption

Qualitative research is intended to reveal many different realities. Various realities were accepted by other researchers, just as they are by the participants in a qualitative study and those who read the results (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The qualitative transcendental phenomenological research design was positioned on an ontological assumption and the belief that multiple realities are based on individual perspectives. The ontological assumption in the research design was that the researcher would seek to understand a participant's truth respectfully and honorably and recognize that each person's perspective of their reality is valid. The researcher accepted multiple viewpoints as accurate and used an interpretive approach to discover meaning from the collected data. An ontological assumption refers to the theoretical stance that there were various perspectives on reality and implies that reality could be seen and understood in many different ways. Furthermore, ontological assumptions value diverse perspectives and experiences that the researcher categorized into themes to report. Moreover, the ontological assumption provided a comprehensive data examination by scrutinizing the data to identify patterns, relationships, and themes and consider their implications for the more significant research context. (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The ontological assumption forms the foundation of the research design, acknowledging the existence of various realities and points of view. It enriched the study by providing a comprehensive and detailed interpretation of the data.

Epistemological Assumption

Epistemological assumptions are beliefs and views about what is known, how it is known, and how to acquire knowledge. Qualitative research largely depends on epistemological

assumptions to formulate the research topic and select the most effective procedures for data collection and analysis (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The study was embedded in social constructivism, and therefore, what is known is obtained from the participants' perspectives and was subjective by nature. Individuals create knowledge by interpreting their environments instead of being objective truths. The research revealed participants' experiences and meanings with specific topics and events. Ample time was spent interviewing participants to understand their perspectives and triangulating data to ensure accurate and meaningful results.

Axiological Assumption

The significance of the researcher's beliefs was considered when designing the study and exploring the data. Additionally, semi-structured interviews allowed the researcher to ask clarifying questions; these questions and responses were documented so the researcher could examine biases to ensure that they did not influence data interpretation. Furthermore, Moustakas's (1994) practice of epoché and bracketing was employed. Epoché was the practice of approaching topics objectively, which is necessary to abandon any preexisting biases, prejudgments, or preconceived notions (Moustakas, 1994). Bracketing was the exercise of acknowledging how the researcher's beliefs and ideals influenced each stage of the research process. Bracketing entailed ignoring preconceived assumptions and adopting an objective perspective while analyzing obtained facts (Creswell & Poth, 2018). In utilizing epoché and bracketing to be conscious of personal values and experiences, the results were more accurately assessed, and more precise inferences were drawn from the data to increase the credibility of the results.

Researcher's Role

In the qualitative transcendental phenomenological study, the researcher adopted the crucial role of a human instrument. The role involved observing, interacting with, and interviewing participants. By engaging directly with participants, the researcher profoundly understood their unique perspectives. The interview process provided a window into the participants' lived experiences, thereby providing a deeper grasp of their interpretations of their circumstances. Through this comprehensive approach, the researcher could identify recurring patterns and themes.

While participants shared their subjective experiences, the researcher remained objective and aware that personal biases and assumptions would influence data collection and interpretation. Additionally, the researcher created an open and comfortable environment for participants and ensured that all interviews were conducted respectfully. By creating an atmosphere of mutual respect and trust, participants fully shared their experiences without fear of judgment. Finally, it should be noted that the researcher had no authority over the participants. All data collected during the study was confidential to ensure the privacy and confidentiality of the participants. All electronic data was password protected, and alias names for people and organizations were utilized.

The phenomenological research methodologies developed by Moustakas (1994) guide the understanding of qualitative phenomenological research. By studying the meanings and associations individuals attach to their experiences, researchers can learn more about what motivates behavior and how people interact with their surroundings (Moustakas, 1994). As a result, these methodologies can be essential instruments for comprehending the complexities of human behavior and experience (Giorgi, 1997). The qualitative methods describe how this

approach is used to gather and evaluate data and draw conclusions that apply to real-world circumstances (Moustakas, 1994).

Procedures

Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval was secured to conduct the study. Next, the research was formally introduced to the superintendent's offices of the five local school districts. The introduction facilitated the recruitment of participants for the study. Then, participants were purposefully selected according to specific criteria. Finally, the interview schedule was created. Document analysis was used to assess the district's vision or mission statement and plans for diversity, equity, and inclusion; if a diversity, equity, and inclusion plan was in place, any correlations between the plan and the data collected from interviews were noted. This exploration included whether participants were aware of the plan and if they referenced any initiatives mentioned during the interview process.

Data Collection Plan

Qualitative data could be obtained through interviews, observations, documents, and audiovisual materials. While new types of qualitative data collection are constantly being reported in published literature, almost all types of qualitative data collection can fit into one of those four basic categories (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Three qualitative data collection methods were utilized to understand the emotions and lived experiences of teachers of color who teach in predominantly White, suburban schools in Pennsylvania: individual interviews, document analysis, and journal prompts. This comprehensive approach allowed the data to be clearly understood.

Individual Interviews

The transcendental phenomenological study intended to portray the lived experiences of teachers of color who teach in predominantly White, suburban schools in South-Central Pennsylvania. Therefore, the first data collection form involved semi-structured individual interviews with each participant. Moustakas (1994) described the phenomenological interview as a casual conversation with open-ended questions and remarks; the researcher prepared a series of questions to elicit a comprehensive account of the interviewee's experience of the phenomenon. These questions were modified or ignored as the participant shared a complete understanding of their experiences (Moustakas, 1994). Interviews could be conducted in various ways, and Creswell and Poth (2018) have noted that the interview mode must ensure the participants' comfort. Using the interview approach provided a richer, more nuanced understanding of what it's like for teachers of color working in predominantly white, suburban schools.

The interviews were completed using audio conferencing. Participants were prompted to describe their experiences as teachers of color in predominantly White schools. The interview questions explored the participants' feelings and perceptions, including their experiences with bias and other forms of unfairness in the workplace. Participants were asked about any challenges or obstacles they have encountered as teachers of color, their successes in their teaching roles, and any strategies they have used to navigate school environments. After each interview, transcripts and audio recordings were evaluated to identify recurring themes and inform the data analysis (Creswell & Poth, 2018). By exploring their narratives, the unique experiences of teachers of color in predominantly White schools were illuminated, thereby contributing valuable insight to the broader conversation about diversity and inclusion in education.

Individual Interview Questions

1. Please describe your educational background and career through your current position.
CRQ
2. Describe a time when you felt particularly satisfied with your job. What factors, according to you, contributed to this satisfaction? CRQ
3. Describe a time when you felt less than satisfied with your role. What factors contributed to these feelings of dissatisfaction? CRQ
4. How does recognition or lack thereof in your job affect your motivation? SQ1
5. How do you feel your interactions and relationships with colleagues, superiors, and students have influenced your feelings of satisfaction in your role? SQ1
6. How do you feel your interactions and relationships with colleagues, superiors, and students have influenced your feelings of dissatisfaction in your role? SQ1
7. How do you feel the opportunities for self-growth and career advancement in your job influence your satisfaction levels? SQ1
8. Describe how your personal achievement in your work affects your motivation and job satisfaction. SQ1
9. Explain how you perceive the role of responsibilities and tasks in shaping your job satisfaction or dissatisfaction. SQ1
10. Describe the nature of your working conditions. How do you feel they impact your level of satisfaction in your job? SQ1
11. Describe the impact of pay and benefits on your sense of satisfaction with your job. SQ1
12. Describe the impact of pay and benefits on your sense of dissatisfaction with your job.
SQ1

13. Describe how the school's administration and its policies impact your job satisfaction.

SQ1

14. Tell me about some of your experiences and reflections on being a teacher of color at a predominantly White suburban school. CRQ

The interview questions explored what motivated teachers of color to teach in predominantly White, suburban schools in South-Central Pennsylvania. Moustakas (1994) noted the importance of establishing trust and rapport at the beginning of fieldwork. Furthermore, Moustakas advised researchers to consider that they are likewise being observed and assessed by the participants. Therefore, before beginning the interview, the researcher shared information related to the study and the researcher's intent to conduct the research as an ally seeking to amplify the voices of people of color. Questions one through three were directly connected to the central research question and were intended to allow the participants to get comfortable and have them begin thinking about the satisfying and dissatisfying aspects of their careers. Moreover, the participants were asked to identify potential contributors to satisfaction and dissatisfaction. These three questions explicitly related to positive and negative experiences and why teachers of color teach in predominantly White, suburban schools in South-Central Pennsylvania.

Considering Herzberg's two-factor motivation-hygiene theory, the following questions dig into the motivational aspects that influenced teachers of color to persist in predominantly White, suburban schools. Guest et al. (2013) noted that phenomenological research should concentrate on the most significant parts of a person's experience. Questions four through eight were related to sub-question one, which focused on factor two, motivation factors, of Herzberg's two-factor motivation-hygiene theory. Questions nine through thirteen sought to identify the impact of hygiene factors that teachers of color attributed to their persistence in predominantly

White, suburban schools. Finally, question fourteen allowed the participant to share additional information about their experiences. By answering the questions, participants identified supports and struggles related to their experiences while contributing to the central research question. Lastly, the research questions amplified the voices of teachers of color by empowering them to share their thoughts on their teaching experiences.

Individual Interview Data Analysis Plan

After the final interview, the data analysis began; the researcher used transcendental phenomenology, which emphasized the essence of an experience and offered a systematic approach to extracting knowledge (Moustakas, 1994). The process started with open coding to explore the sociocultural contexts of the participants' experiences. Data was analyzed multiple times throughout this step to identify patterns and themes. These themes were then grouped into categories and subcategories that reflected the most significant aspects of each participant's experiences. The process allowed the essential elements of each participant's experiences to be identified and analyzed, and the final comprehensive results were concisely presented so the findings were accessible and understandable (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Moustakas, 1994).

Document Analysis

The study employed document analysis to understand the role and impact of diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives within educational districts. Guest et al. (2013) noted that document analysis involved selecting textual and visual documents to assess their contents relative to the study. Identifying the data sources most pertinent to the study objectives was essential to document analysis. The two main disadvantages of document analysis were that it is impossible to follow up with a document's creator and that the documents used for data analysis have not been explicitly generated to inform the research study (Guest et al., 2013). The study

used document analysis to review the district's vision or mission statement and plan for diversity, equity, and inclusion. While not all districts had procedures for diversity, equity, and inclusion, when a plan was present, the researcher explored if a correlation existed between the plan and the data collected during the interview process. For example, the researcher assessed whether a participant was aware of the district's diversity, equity, and inclusion plan and whether the participant referenced the initiatives identified in the plan.

Document Analysis Data Analysis Plan

The district's vision, mission statement, and plan for diversity, equity, and inclusion were explored using document analysis. First, the materials were reviewed to investigate whether there was a link to the interview data. Next, evidence of the district's commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion and any gaps between stated commitments and actual implementation were documented. Next, any conflicts or disparities between the district's diversity, equity, and inclusion plans and the associated interview data are reported. Finally, the interview data and the documents were evaluated to investigate any links between them. The analysis thoroughly assessed the district's commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Journal Prompts

Journaling as a data collection method has long been accepted as a valid method of accessing rich qualitative data to help develop a theory (Creswell & Poth, 2018). According to Hayman et al. (2012), journaling involves participants expressing their sentiments, beliefs, ideas, and experiences in written form or other mediums. This method is employed in phenomenological research to capture participants' experiences within their real-world settings (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Hayman et al., 2012). This strategy was well-suited for the study as it

allowed teachers of color to reflect on their experiences in their own time and space to uncover deep-seated views and feelings.

Following the individual interview, the participant was given a journal prompt and asked to elaborate. The prompt revealed the participant's views and thoughts about strategies for retaining teachers of color in predominantly White, suburban schools. In addition, information obtained from the participants addressed the central research question: How did teachers of color describe their lived experiences of motivation to teach at predominantly White K–12 public schools? The journal prompt used for the study was:

- Reflect on your past experiences in your teaching career that have significantly impacted your determination to continue teaching in predominantly White, suburban schools. If all school districts in South-Central Pennsylvania could achieve these three things, more teachers of color would persist in predominantly White suburban schools. What are those three things? Please describe these three things and discuss their importance to your role as a teacher of color in a predominantly White, suburban school:

Journal Prompts Data Analysis Plan

The data collected from the journal prompt responses was analyzed using open coding to categorize the data. Then, axial coding was utilized to establish relationships between these categories. The responses were coded based on emerging themes, including, but not limited to, experiences with lack of support, resources, respect, and recognition, and suggestions for retaining teachers of color. Similar to the individual interview data analysis, the coded replies, overarching trends in thinking and experiences, and frequent participant themes were established. The investigation revealed how teachers of color described their lived experiences and their motivations to teach at predominantly White K–12 public schools and how these

experiences can be used to create more inclusive environments. A narrative followed the data analysis, summarizing the findings and recommending further research.

Data Analysis

Data analysis was crucial in understanding and interpreting information to make informed decisions. The phenomenological research approach proposed by Moustakas (1994) was utilized to synthesize the data into a cohesive body of evidence. The approach revealed themes and answered the central research question. Moustakas (1994) argued that synthesizing acquired data is an appropriate method for developing the structural and textural descriptions of the investigated phenomenon. Synthesis required gathering different forms of data, including interviews, documents, and journal prompt data, and then integrating them into a cohesive whole. Finally, combining the data and findings yielded insights into the central research questions by identifying areas of agreement across several sources (Moustakas, 1994). The synthesis of various data forms holistically addressed the research questions and uncovered subtle insights, enhancing the understanding of the phenomenon.

The researcher followed the processes of phenomenological data analysis defined by Moustakas to organize the collected data. According to Moustakas (1994), the method of analysis based on the ideas presented by Stevick, Colaizzi, and Keen was utilized to synthesize phenomenological data. The process was used to delve deeper into an experience by closely studying the verbatim transcript of the experience. This method involved considering each statement's significance and noting all relevant statements before isolating the non-repetitive, nonoverlapping elements as invariant meaning units, which were then clustered into themes. Repeating the process for each participant's experiences supported the researcher to synthesize collected data (Moustakas, 1994).

Building on the phenomenological approach outlined by Moustakas (1994), these themes were then synthesized into a description of the textures of the experience. Further, they reflected variations used to construct a textural–structural narrative of the meanings and essences within the experience. The subsequent analysis phase involved a deeper exploration of the data derived from the research. Primarily, the researcher conducted a textual analysis of the transcriptions, which involved extracting significant phrases and sentences that directly understood the participants' experiences. Understanding that these experiences were inherently subjective and unique is crucial, so this in-depth analysis is necessary to generate authentic insights (Moustakas, 1994).

Following the textual analysis, the researcher proceeded with a structural analysis. The structural analysis aimed to understand how the context or setting of the experiences influenced the perception of the phenomena under investigation (Moustakas, 1994). According to Moustakas, this step involved looking at how the experience happened, providing a holistic perspective. Once the textual and structural analysis was complete, the researcher integrated the findings into a comprehensive description of the essence of the experience. The essence of the experience refers to the underlying and intangible aspects that made the experience what it is (Moustakas, 1994). The synthesis of data was instrumental in answering the central research question.

Lastly, the researcher validated the findings by returning to the participants for feedback. According to Moustakas (1994), this process is known as member checking and ensures that the researcher interprets their experiences accurately. This iterative analysis, synthesis, and validation process offered a complete and authentic narrative of the phenomena. This data analysis approach provided a systematic framework for deepening the understanding of

individual experiences by identifying core themes and crafting a comprehensive narrative that captured the essence of participants' experiences.

Trustworthiness

Following established methodologies was imperative to maintain the integrity and trustworthiness of this qualitative research. Lincoln and Guba (1985) found the formative concepts of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability to ensure the trustworthiness of qualitative studies. These four criteria were essential components of valid qualitative studies, and the methods used to attain them offered an organized approach to data gathering and synthesis. Each criterion played a vital role in enhancing the validity of qualitative research, and the methodologies utilized to achieve them provided a systematic approach to data collection and analysis. This section describes the steps taken to ensure the study followed these standards. While some of these concepts were synonymous with those used in quantitative research, they have distinct meanings and implications when applied to the quality and rigor of qualitative studies.

Credibility

The present study employed strategies to enhance credibility. Lincoln and Guba (1985) proposed multiple activities that ensure qualitative studies achieve credible findings and interpretations. To ensure the study's credibility, prolonged engagement, triangulation, and member checking were applied. Prolonged engagement required investigators to spend ample time building trust and becoming familiar with the norms of their participants. According to Denzin (1988), triangulation combines several research methods to investigate the same phenomenon. Furthermore, member checking involved allowing participants to review interview transcripts for correctness and validate the interpretations of the data (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

The strategies of prolonged engagement, triangulation, and member checking aimed to ensure the credibility and integrity of the research findings.

Data Triangulation

Data triangulation was used in the study to provide an in-depth analysis of the experiences and perspectives of teachers of color in predominantly White suburban schools. According to Denzin (1988), the strategic use of multiple data sources enhanced the research validity, a method commonly recognized in qualitative research. In this study, data collection through interviews, document analysis, and journal prompts from teachers of color revealed patterns and relationships that could be missed if only a single source were used. This approach allowed for a deeper understanding of patterns and relationships and shed light on underlying factors contributing to the shortage of teachers from diverse backgrounds. This methodological strategy gave the researcher a holistic view of the issues and valuable insights into addressing teacher diversity gaps.

Prolonged Engagement and Member Checking

Furthermore, prolonged engagement and member checking improved the credibility of the research. Prolonged engagement for the study occurred during the thorough interview process, with ample time spent clarifying themes from journal prompts and exhaustive document analysis. Finally, interview transcripts and interpretations underwent member checking (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). As Lincoln and Guba discussed, member checking is a validation practice that involves participants reviewing collected data. In other words, participants checked interview transcripts to verify their accuracy and confirm the interpretations of the transcript data.

Transferability

The concept of transferability played a significant role in shaping our understanding of

research ethics and methods. Transferability points to research findings' potential applicability and validity in contexts beyond the original study environment. In essence, transferability signifies the potential relatability of research outcomes to diverse contexts (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The primary mechanism for establishing transferability was providing thick descriptions when delineating research findings (Geertz, 2008). It is the capacity through which research findings derived from a specific context can find relevance in a different context or within an identical context at a separate timeframe (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). It is essential to acknowledge that the researcher can only create the conditions for transferability but cannot assure transferability: the research reader can only make this judgment.

Dependability

Dependability was a crucial concept in qualitative research that ensured the research process maintained consistency, accuracy, and traceability. Creswell and Poth (2018) asserted that a systematic audit trail in the research process establishes dependability and confirmability. According to Nowell et al. (2017), dependability ensures that the research method is rational, traceable, and well-documented. Research is deemed dependable when it demonstrates the ability for analysis and evaluation and consistency and accuracy in its methods and results. The methodology must continually display rationality, traceability, and meticulous documentation. For research to be dependable, Lincoln and Guba (1985) defined confirmability as the measure of neutrality by which the conclusions are not influenced by researcher bias but instead represent the data presented by the participants.

Implementing an audit trail was a crucial aspect of ensuring the dependability of a research study, as it recorded all aspects and alterations of the research methodology. Lincoln and Guba (1985) stated that dependability was achieved by producing a research audit trail that logs

all the phases and activities of the research process. The audit trail included each process step, such as acquiring sources, choosing participants, collecting data, and assessing outcomes. Additionally, the audit trail incorporated any modifications or difficulties encountered during the study process. Therefore, the study's dependability was ensured by accurately describing the steps related to the research process.

Confirmability

A core principle in qualitative research was confirmability. As Lincoln and Guba (1985) outlined, confirmability emphasized researchers' need to distance themselves objectively from the data under analysis. Achieving this objective detachment included triangulation, peer debriefing, or member checks. This principle ensured that personal values, thoughts, or interpretations did not influence the study's results. Transparency became pivotal during data analysis and was established through comprehensive documentation of every step in the research process. It facilitates reproducibility of the research by other professionals, thereby lending credibility to the study. Failing to ensure confirmability may run the risk of research outcomes being discredited against. As such, meticulous attention was paid to developing and disclosing the research methodology throughout the investigation.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations confirmed that this research respects the participants and their rights, the standards of research integrity outlined by the institutional research board (IRB), and the ethical standards established by Liberty University. When conducting the qualitative study, ethical factors were considered at every stage of the research (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Thus, site access, participant access, and participants' informed consent were obtained. The informed consent letter stated the purpose of the study, the voluntary nature of the research, the

participant's right to withdraw at any time, the procedures to protect the confidentiality of the collected data, and the data storage methods. These measures maintained trust between researchers and participants and ensured the findings were meaningful and relevant to their intended purpose (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

All responses were anonymized using pseudonyms to ensure the confidentiality of participants. Interviews occurred where others could not easily overhear the conversations. Additionally, all data obtained from the research was stored on a password-locked computer or locked cabinet and securely destroyed after three years. Interview recordings were also stored on a password-locked computer, and only the researcher had access to them. After three years, these recordings will be deleted.

Permissions

Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval was secured to conduct the study. Next, the research was formally introduced to the superintendent's offices of the five local school districts. The introduction facilitated the recruitment of participants for the study. Then, participants were purposefully selected according to specific criteria. Finally, an interview schedule was created.

Other Participant Protections

The procedures for the study adhered to the ethical standards outlined by the IRB at Liberty University. The research did not begin until the IRB approved the study. Next, the superintendent's offices of the five local school districts where participants are intended to be recruited were contacted and formally introduced to the research. The introduction letter included a written request for faculty contact information (see Appendix B), preferably email addresses, for teachers in the district. Then, a recruitment letter (see Appendix C) was sent to potential participants using the procured contact information. Next, interested participants

completed a screening questionnaire (see Appendix D) to ensure that they met the criteria for the study. All interested participants received an email (see Appendix E) after completing the screening questionnaire to agree or decline to participate in the study. Then, interested participants were asked to sign a participation consent form (see Appendix F). Once the consent form was completed, the participant was individually interviewed (see Appendix G). After the interview, the participants received a writing prompt about their experience as a teacher of color (see Appendix F) via email. They were asked to spend 15 minutes responding to it.

Summary

The chapter outlined the methodology of the qualitative research study, which focused on how teachers of color described their lived experiences and their motivations to teach at predominantly White K–12 public schools. This study involved interviewing participants, analyzing documents, and examining responses to a journal prompt. In addition, study participants engaged in member checking to ensure credibility. Dependability and confirmability were achieved through systematic auditing and transparent reporting. Issues such as gaining access to the site and participants, procuring informed consent, and addressing various ethical considerations were considered. The chapter outlined the necessary steps to ensure the qualitative research study's reliability, validity, and ethical implications.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

Overview

The qualitative, phenomenological study aims to explore the lived experiences of teachers of color who teach at predominantly White K–12 public schools in South-Central Pennsylvania. The central phenomenon of the study, which used Herzberg’s two-factor theory of motivation to guide it, focused on the teaching motivations of teachers of color who persist in predominantly White schools. Chapter Four begins with a description of the 10 participants in the study who identified themselves as teachers of color. Each participant has been assigned a pseudonym and teaches in a predominately White K–12 public school in South-Central Pennsylvania. Data was collected from the participants using individual semi-structured interviews, document analysis, and journal prompt responses. Utilizing NVivo data analysis software to assist with thematic data analysis, several themes emerged regarding the research questions: diversity and representation, personal growth and achievement, relationships, and work environments. Additionally, nine sub-themes emerged, and one outlier was found. The subsequent parts of chapter four conclude with answers to the research questions drawn from the examined and interpreted data.

Participants

After the researcher sent a recruitment letter calling for participants, 12 people came forward to volunteer for the study. Two participants failed to respond to repeated follow-up attempts, resulting in 10 total participants for the study. The 10 participants each followed a unique path to becoming an educator and varied in age and experience. The firsthand accounts of teachers of color working in predominantly White institutions were conveyed through quotations, highlighting their reasons for continuing their roles (Moustakas, 1994). For

recruitment purposes, criterion sampling was utilized, yielding three female participants and seven male participants. Due to concept repetition and saturation, the recruitment process was concluded with 10 participants, at which point further data ceased to yield new insights into the phenomenon. Table 1 outlines the pseudonyms and additional details regarding the participants. All participants confirmed their status as teachers of color during the recruitment process.

Table 1

Teacher Participants

Teacher Participant	Gender	Content Area	Grade Level
Alexis	Female	All content areas	Elementary (K-5)
Tyler	Male	In-school suspension - All content areas	Middle (6-8)
Carlos	Male	Social Studies	High (9-12)
Jerome	Male	Business	Middle (6-8)
Jalen	Male	Information Technology	Middle (6-8)
James	Male	Social Studies	Middle (6-8)
Noelle	Female	Social Studies	High (9-12)
Wesley	Male	Social Studies	High (9-12)
Samir	Male	English Language Arts	Middle (6-8)
Lucia	Female	Spanish	High (9-12)

Alexis

Alexis is a female educator teaching fifth grade. The students she serves are diagnosed with social and emotional disturbances. Although Alexis initially graduated college with a degree in psychology, working with students with emotional disorders bridged the gap between her love of psychology and her love of children. During the individual interview, Alexis

discussed the emotional toll of serving the students in her classroom. She commented on the importance of relationships with colleagues and superiors, stating, “I can't even imagine going to work and being in an environment not feeling supported or not liking who I'm working with because we work so closely together.” Further, she shared about the physical demands of safely restraining students when necessary, remarking, “There are times when you're right on top of each other, and I can't picture having to try to keep the child safe with someone that I don't trust.” Her words and actions show Alexis's dedication and passion for her work.

Tyler

Teaching is Tyler's second career. After earning a degree in communications, Tyler worked in sales and served as a fitness director before becoming a full-time teacher. Tyler was a special education teacher before becoming an in-school suspension teacher at a middle school. His earlier experiences significantly influenced Tyler's transition into teaching and coaching. Tyler continues to coach in addition to his teaching responsibilities. While Tyler enjoys the opportunity to care for and impact students' lives, he mentioned multiple times the low salary associated with teaching is frustrating. When asked to discuss pay during the individual interview, Tyler asserted, “You don't get good people to work in jobs like this because of the pay.” Later in the conversation, when asked to reflect on his experiences as a teacher of color, he stressed, “There's a reason why we're not getting all different types of ethnicities at school districts in Central PA, and again, it's definitely pay.” Tyler's reflections emphasize the critical need for better pay in education.

Carlos

Carlos started college wanting to enter the medical profession but graduated with an American studies degree. After several years working for the highway department, he returned to

school to become a teacher. Carlos teaches social studies to high school juniors and seniors. His decision to pursue teaching was greatly influenced by the teachers and coaches surrounding him during his academic and athletic experiences. In his response to the journal prompt, Carlos shared, “When I was a student, I had teachers that took an interest and supported me to be the best I could be. This helped guide me toward education.”

Additionally, Carlos shared in his journal response, “We need to get teachers of color here, then work to retain them. They need to see not only the value in education but the value in being employed in education.” Carlos's journey demonstrates the profound impact educators can have on their students, emphasizing the importance of growing diversity and representation within the teaching profession.

Jerome

Jerome worked in the business field for 10 years before becoming emergency certified to work in education. He teaches middle school students business classes related to computers and media. Jerome has coached youth sports for the last thirty years, tremendously influencing his decision to transition to teaching. Throughout the individual interview, many of Jerome's responses circled back to his love of supporting, mentoring, and caring for students. When asked about job satisfaction, Jerome replied, “When you're happy at your job and with what you're doing, you are satisfied.” He further shared that the rewards of teaching come later when you see and talk to your students as adults. He said, “The satisfaction comes from the kids, and I've been, I've been doing this long enough, now that I see some of these kids as adults.” Jerome's passion for his students is evident in his reflections on the long-term impact and fulfillment he finds in teaching.

Jalen

Jalen graduated from college with a degree in special education and secured a long-term teaching position as an information technology teacher. He then became certified to teach the subject, currently educating middle school students while also serving as a coach for his district. Teaching in the school district he grew up in deepens his commitment to his students and the community. Jalen is passionate about connecting the curriculum to real-world examples and experiences, believing his position as a teacher of color allows him to address topics that might be more challenging for his White colleagues. Jalen mentioned, “I have a greater opportunity to explain what the world looks like now.” When designing his curriculum, he told district administrators, “My goal is to make it as realistic to the workforce and make as many connections as I can.” Jalen strives to prepare his students for the real world and equip them with practical skills that will serve them beyond the classroom.

James

James is a middle school social studies teacher and coach from a low socioeconomic background. He is committed to empowering underserved students of color, and his unique personal experiences and upbringing heavily inform his teaching approach. He entered the teaching profession inspired by educators’ impact on him, aiming to be a positive role model for his students. During the individual interview, James revealed, “I’m contributing to something bigger than myself, and that keeps me motivated.” Additionally, James serves as a high school coach.

Noelle

In her second year, Noelle, a newer educator, teaches 10th-grade U.S. history. In addition to teaching history, she spearheaded a growing Spanish club initiative within the school

community. She did so to cater to a significant Spanish student population and serve as a relatable adult role model for Hispanics. Noelle serves as the club's advisor in addition to her teaching responsibilities. During her interview, Noelle shared the unique dynamic of white-passing; she said, "I consider myself white-passing. I'm often mistaken for Italian, and I know that I have that privilege. I think often people don't realize that I'm Hispanic." Noelle acknowledges the responsibility to use her position to foster inclusivity and encourage the broader school community to appreciate cultural diversity.

Wesley

Wesley is a high school U.S. history teacher who began his career in higher education. Following seven years in higher education, he spent seven years in sales and four years at home raising his children. Wesley became a teacher to serve as an example for young people, much like the mentors who steered him towards the right path during his challenging upbringing. He acknowledged, "Every time that I was about to do something not good, there was a teacher or coach or somebody that kept me on the right path." Additionally, Wesley has served as a coach.

Samir

Samir's career in education began with coaching a seventh-grade basketball team, which unexpectedly led to a substitute teaching position that he found deeply fulfilling. His experience led to a full-time teaching role, aligning with his desire to impact the educational field significantly. Samir coaches and teaches English language arts to middle school students. Samir acknowledged he was nervous at first being one of the few teachers of color on staff but shared, "It's been lovely. They encouraged me and made me feel wanted." Regarding his colleagues, he finished by stating, "They make the job a whole lot easier."

Lucia

Lucia's path to becoming a teacher was profoundly shaped by her determination to overcome the socioeconomic challenges faced by her immigrant family. She discussed her family, expressing, "My parents came from very limited backgrounds; my mom went to third grade, my dad went to sixth. They immigrated to the United States, and even though they didn't have much education, education is highly valued within the Latino community." Lucia excelled as a high school student, which enabled her to fund her education and secure scholarships. Her passion for preserving and sharing her cultural identity led her to specialize in Spanish education. Additionally, Lucia served as a coach, leaving the position to accommodate the needs of her young family.

Results

The findings and themes of the study were derived from three data collection methods: interviews, document analysis, and journal prompts. Each participant was asked the same set of 14 open-ended questions during the interview. One central research question: how do teachers of color describe their lived experiences of motivation to teach at predominantly White K–12 public schools, and one sub-question: how do teachers of color describe their lived experiences of motivation concerning Herzberg's two-factor motivation-hygiene theory to teach at predominantly White K–12 public schools, guided the study. Utilizing the guiding theory, Herzberg's two-factor motivation-hygiene theory (Herzberg et al., 1993/2017), a thorough examination of collected data identified four central themes and nine sub-themes (see Table 2). The themes and sub-themes include diversity and representation, personal growth and achievements, interpersonal connections, and professional settings. Additionally, the data

revealed one outlier finding related to the significant number of participants who have taken on extracurricular roles in addition to their duties as teachers.

Table 2

Research Themes and Sub-themes

Themes	Sub-theme
Diversity and Representation	Dialogue and Understanding Making a Difference
Personal Growth and Achievement	Professional Development
Relationships	Collegial Relationships Recognition Student Rapport and Support
Work Environment	Administrative Support Responsibilities and Tasks Salary and Benefits

Theme Development

The qualitative data were collected using semi-structured interviews, document analysis, and journal prompt responses. After participants had completed the individual interview, an email was sent, which included the journal prompt for response. Additionally, each participant was sent a transcription of their interview for member checking to ensure accuracy (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The phenomenological research approach proposed by Moustakas (1994) was used to synthesize data into a cohesive body of evidence. After each interview, the researcher manually coded the transcription and journal prompt response and conducted the document analysis, identifying consistent themes and patterns using codes (Saldaña, 2016).

Through individual interviews, the researcher captured in-depth and personal stories, shedding light on the internal and external factors that motivate teachers of color to persist in predominately White schools. Additionally, the journal prompt reflections allowed the teachers to express their ideas on how schools might improve in fostering equitable environments for teachers of color. The data collection methods enabled the extraction of direct quotes to analyze recurring themes. Following the epoché approach outlined by Moustakas (1994), the researcher utilized a reflection journal to set aside biases and experiences to ensure objectivity during analysis. The initial interview transcript yielded 19 codes, the second interview transcript yielded three additional codes, and the fourth transcript yielded one new code. The subsequent data did not generate new codes; therefore, data saturation was achieved by the fourth participant.

Once all 10 participants had completed the three phases of data collection, the researcher printed the data and manually coded the data for a second time to confirm the 23 identified codes. Next, NVivo qualitative data analysis software was utilized to organize and facilitate further data analysis. While NVivo software offers highly advanced features for qualitative data analysis, it was used primarily to organize coded data to assist with theme development. The manually coded interview transcripts, journal prompt responses, and data collected from the document analysis were uploaded to the NVivo software. After considering each statement's relevance to the research questions, all data was again coded within the software, and consistent themes that did not change across different contexts were grouped, developing themes and subthemes. The initial gathering of 23 codes from the data was clustered with corresponding sentiments, and data irrelevant to the research was discarded (Saldaña, 2016). Four research themes and nine sub-themes were identified.

Document analysis was utilized to review the district's vision or mission statement and plan for diversity, equity, and inclusion, alongside interview transcripts and participant journal responses. During the document analysis, the researcher observed that two of the five districts had a statement related to diversity, equity, and inclusion. The statements were found on the school's websites embedded in the mission statement. The two statements found were vague, stating the schools strive to ensure fair treatment, access, opportunity, and advancement for all students and staff. The remaining three districts had no explicit statements or plans addressing diversity, equity, and inclusion on their websites. During the interviews and examination of journal responses, it was observed that none of the participants connected their experiences as teachers of color to the district's vision or mission statement and plan for diversity, equity, and inclusion, suggesting a disconnect between the district-level targets and the lived experiences of teachers of color.

Diversity and Representation

The central theme of diversity and representation emerges as paramount through the narratives of teachers of color working in predominantly White schools across South-Central Pennsylvania. During the individual interviews, all 10 participants mentioned the importance of diversity and representation at least once regarding their work in predominately White schools. Diversity and representation were mentioned 21 times throughout individual interviews and journal prompt responses. The lived experiences reveal a clear contrast between the growing diverse student population and the homogeneity encountered within the faculty. Some participants indicated the discrepancy challenges their sense of belonging while at the same time offering representation for minority students. This representation fosters a critical connection that affirms the students' cultural identities and enriches the educational environment.

During the individual interview, when asked to share some of their experiences and reflections on being a teacher of color at a predominantly White suburban school, Alexis shared, “I didn’t have a black teacher, my first black teacher, I was a senior in college.” She continued, “So I’m able to be a black teacher for my students and make sure that they feel represented.” Likewise, as she shared what led her to become a teacher, Lucia stated, “I never really saw someone that looked like me. So that was motivation factor number one.” Equally, while interacting with students, Samir revealed, “There’s been plenty of times where I’ve been told that I was the only black teacher that they have they’ve ever had.” Additionally, Samir disclosed, “Not only am I black, but I grew up the same way they grew up, and they can tell, and they look at that as inspiration. Like, if he can do it, if I can do it.”

Regarding her school’s claims to be diverse, Noelle discussed how few teachers of color there are in her school. She said, “I think that being a person of color, the biggest thing at my school I noticed was how few people of color there are.” She went on to share there were four teachers of color in the school and about 15 to 20 people of color across all 200 to 250 positions. Additionally, Noelle discussed the growing Hispanic population and shared, “I want these children to know that there is an adult in the school who looks like them and is like them.” Comparably, Tyler stated, “I’m the only minority here in this entire building. So, the students that are coming from different environments or just different ethnic backgrounds might be able to relate a little bit more to me.” A lack of diversity can impact students' sense of belonging and ability to see themselves in leadership roles within the educational system.

When discussing his current school district, Jalen shared that he grew up in it and knew many students' circumstances because he faced them. Jalen stated, “Knowing some of these kids, I know that they have bigger issues than being able to come here and worry about sitting through

a math class.” Comparably, Wesley revealed he is a “magnet for a lot of kids who are different.” He said, “My background is different; I didn’t grow up in suburbia. I have a lot of different ways that I reach kids that other people can’t, so that’s cool to me.” James disclosed, “A student of mine, who rarely spoke up, approached me after class. He told me that for the first time, he saw himself in what we were discussing and felt that he had a voice and could make a difference.” During the individual interview, James also shared, “Being one of the few teachers of color is a different position. There’s this sense of responsibility that comes with it. I mean, for many of these kids, white kids too, I might be the only person of color they interact with daily.”

After discussing the importance of recognizing the needs of students of color, Carlos shared that as a first-generation college student, he might not have applied to college if it were not for a teacher who recognized he needed more help than other students. He stated, “I had a teacher that did that for me. Otherwise, I don’t even know if I would have applied because my parents had no clue.” As a teacher, Carlos recognizes the needs of his students and consistently supports first-generation students in their academic journey. Jerome shared, while discussing the differences in cultures, “A lot of the teachers here, I feel like I’m a resource for them.” The participants’ descriptions highlight the disparities within our school system and emphasize the essential role diversity and representation play in promoting a more inclusive, understanding, and culturally rich educational setting for all students.

Dialogue and Understanding

The essence of the sub-theme dialogue and understanding is positioned around the unique position teachers of color find themselves in, facilitating meaningful conversations within the classroom and school community that might be challenging for their White counterparts. When discussing the home dynamics of some of the students of color and low-income students he

serves, Jalen shared, “I’m here to support them, to try to make connections, and to allow them to understand that I know their lifestyle.” Furthermore, when discussing how students are sometimes misunderstood by other teachers due to cultural differences, Jerome can bridge that divide. Jerome stated, “I think sometimes there’s a fear of aggression when, really, it’s just some of our kids are loud. A lot of us come from loud families, and I don’t think anything of it.” When discussing how he can support his staff by helping them understand their students better, Jerome revealed, “They’ll come and get advice. Some people may take offense to that, but I take it the exact opposite. I see that as they’re trying to understand the kids.” Jalen and Jerome are essential in fostering more profound empathy and understanding within the school community.

Making a Difference

The essence of the sub-theme, making a difference, points to the power of individual efforts and how they can create positive student experiences and influence lives beyond the curriculum. There is an emphasis on the significant role of educators in diffusing potentially volatile situations and mentoring students toward achieving their future goals. Empathy, patience, and listening are teaching tools that create a safe and supportive environment for students to find refuge. Tyler shared accounts of situations in which he was able to intervene with feuding students before the situation escalated, noting that in his environment, these types of situations can lead to dangerous, potentially life-threatening conditions outside of school. He expressed his sense of fulfillment in being able to do this work for his students, stating, “It takes awareness and patience and just trying to understand them, and both sides of the story, and so I think that was my first liking to the profession.” Tyler’s experiences show the importance of his work beyond the curriculum to make a difference for his students. His ability to intervene and

understand his students' needs allows him to make a significant difference in their lives and communities.

Personal Growth and Achievement

The essence of the key theme of personal growth and achievement focuses on the relationship between personal fulfillment, professional development, and the pursuit of achievement. The theme suggests a commitment to continuous learning and growth and showcases a dedication to strive toward improvement and success. All ten participants deliberated on the importance of personal growth and achievement. While discussing the impact of personal achievement on Wesley's motivation and job satisfaction, he commented, "Ultimately, I am a very competitive human being, and if there is an opportunity for me to grow personally, I take full advantage of it." Likewise, while discussing personal achievement, Noelle shared that she felt accomplished when she could advocate for and start a Spanish club. As a newer teacher committed to establishing a solid reputation for herself, Noelle stated,

I'm a young teacher in a mostly veteran teacher school. I am also a woman of color, and you're not going to trample me. This year, for me, my personal achievement has been finding my voice to do that and to advocate for myself.

Similarly, as it relates to personal growth, Carlos commented, "I do think there's a lot of opportunity to learn and to grow. As I said, I have multiple master's degrees at this point." Lucia stated she is happy because she loves the classroom too much to leave, but she also shared, "There is always an opportunity for advancement." Alexis disclosed, "They do provide opportunities to better me, whether that's professional development, earning my teaching certification, or a master's degree; there are always those opportunities that definitely make me want to stay longer." Finally, James identified, "Even if we're not climbing some ladder like

other jobs, getting smarter and being better at teaching is rewarding. It's not about just going higher; it's about being better for your kids, your students." The participants' narratives highlight how personal growth and achievement can influence an individual's self-worth and professional identity.

Professional Development

The professional development sub-theme emphasizes the power of educational and career growth opportunities on job satisfaction. Participants expressed a strong correlation between their ability to learn and acquire new skills, certifications, or advanced degrees and their self-satisfaction and career satisfaction. Carlos noted that when discussing professional development opportunities, "I can take classes anywhere I want, on anything I want, and it's supported; I really like that because I like learning." Similarly, when his current school presented the opportunity to pursue a master's, Samir affirmed, "And just the opportunity to be able to gain that experience and knowledge will be great for me, and I think it would help me feel more confident as a person." When participants are provided with resources and opportunities to further their education and skills, it bolsters their confidence and enhances their contributions to the workplace.

Relationships

The theme's core is the importance of generating an environment where mutual respect and care between students and faculty is prioritized. Each of the 10 participants emphasized the value of relationships as a motivator to persist in predominantly White schools. It emphasizes how strong relationships among colleagues and with students increase job satisfaction. When everyone's efforts are recognized and valued, it results in a positive and supportive educational

atmosphere. Tyler noted, “I’ve always been a team-emphasis kind of guy. I feel like you need all staff members to play a role in teamwork.”

Regarding relationships, James revealed, “For me, this work is about nurturing and caring for the students, no matter where they come from.” When discussing her relationships with students, Alexis said, “I think if we didn’t humanize each other, then it would be ten times harder.” The theme of relationships reaffirms that meaningful connections that encourage, motivate, and sustain educators and learners are at the heart of teaching.

Collegial Relationships

The sub-theme of collegial relationships shows the meaningful impact interpersonal connections can have on teacher’s job satisfaction and professional efficacy. Support and understanding from colleagues can play a pivotal role in shaping positive work experiences, while a lack thereof can lead to feelings of isolation and dissatisfaction. Carlos stated, “People ask for advice on a lot of different professional types of things, and people outside of the department ask for advice as well. That’s given me a lot of satisfaction because I feel respected for what I do.” Contrarily, when talking about times he felt less than satisfied in his role, Wesley communicated, “In these schools and these places, it is very hard for teachers of color to feel it, at least for me, because for two years, I was the only black teacher, male or female, in this entire building of 120 teachers.” A supportive school environment that values one another and teamwork elevates personal and professional satisfaction.

Recognition

The essence of the sub-theme, recognition, points to the impact of acknowledgment on motivation within the education field. While recognition is not the primary driver behind teachers’ commitment to teaching, it plays a role in reinforcing their dedication and enhancing

their job satisfaction. James noted, “It’s nice to be recognized at the moment, but I don’t do things for recognition.” Lucia shared, “Teaching is a selfless job. I’m not in it for the recognition; I recognize my accomplishments when I have returning students or see them out in public.” Recognition emerges as a motivator but comes in many forms. It serves as validation and feedback to teachers on the influence of their work.

Student Rapport and Support

The essence of the sub-theme, student rapport and support, encompasses the dual nature of satisfaction and dissatisfaction in the teaching profession, centered on student rapport, academic engagement, and classroom dynamics. Teachers expressed a deep sense of fulfillment in building connections with their students and witnessing their educational and personal achievements. However, satisfaction is occasionally strained by student disengagement and disrespect. During these times, teachers remain unwavering in their commitment to supporting their students and continue to value their relationships with them. Lucia shared, “There comes a time in the year when the students are apathetic and unmotivated, and that’s when we have to help them look at the bigger picture of the educational process.” Similarly, Carlos confirmed, “Like I said before, that stuff, reaching kids, teaching kids, mentoring kids, that kind of stuff, is number one to me.” The balance between building meaningful student connections and navigating classroom challenges accentuates the impact of teacher and student rapport in shaping the academic experience.

Work Environment

The theme’s essence involves acknowledging the impact of the work environment on job satisfaction. The theme emphasizes the significance of Herzberg’s hygiene factors by exploring various components, such as the influence of professional relationships with supervisors,

responsibilities and tasks, and compensation. Alexis said, “I am lucky enough to have great camaraderie with my staff and superiors, and it just makes everything so much lighter.”

Moreover, the theme highlights how a favorable work environment acts as a central base for preventing job dissatisfaction while touching upon the challenges posed by the multifaceted roles teachers assume. When discussing his role while working at his previous school, Jerome communicated, “I was doing the counselor role, the principal type of role, and the itinerant type of role, and I wasn’t supposed to be doing that. I was kind of taken advantage of, so that got a little heavy for me.” The theme suggests addressing hygiene factors can lead to more motivated and satisfied educators. It also highlights the importance of effectively establishing strategies and approaches to handle these challenges.

Administrative Support

The essence of the sub-theme, administrative support, concentrates on how school administration’s effectiveness and attitudes influence teacher satisfaction and overall motivation. It draws attention to a dichotomy where supportive administrators can significantly enhance job satisfaction by creating a positive work environment. In contrast, ineffective or unsupportive administrators can lead to dissatisfaction and demotivation among teachers of color working in predominately White schools. Wesley recalled an email interaction with an upset parent when discussing administrative support. He indicated the email to him was far more vile than previous emails sent by that parent to other staff members. Wesley commented, “The administrators see, they have access to see with their eyes, that the parent’s email to me is way different than the other email and that it is not being addressed in any form or fashion.” Conversely, Samir stated, “They make the job a whole lot easier,” and Lucia declared, “The current admin team that we have is phenomenal. They have a very open door” regarding the support they receive from the

administration. The participant accounts confirm the critical role of administrative support in navigating interpersonal challenges and building an environment where everyone is valued and supported.

Responsibilities and Tasks

The sub-theme, responsibilities and tasks document educators' evolving and complex role. Today's teachers function as instructors, counselors, motivators, disciplinarians, advocates, and other roles beyond traditional teaching. The demanding role requires educators to be flexible, creative, and adaptable to address diverse student needs. A veteran teacher, Wesley, said, "In 2024, we have to do everything. We are psychologists, psychiatrists, and all of those things. Did I foresee that coming, maybe? But I also thought that it would be appreciated." Wesley's reflection captures the reality of today's teachers, where the responsibilities are continually expanding. Despite the demands, educators demonstrate continued commitment and resilience.

Salary and Benefits

The essence of the discussions surrounding salary and benefits reveals a complex landscape of satisfaction and dissatisfaction among participants. The variation in individual circumstances, perspectives on life, and career aspirations all shape the participant's feelings towards their compensation. Jalen, a younger teacher in the early stages of his career, shared, "I can pay the bills that I need to, and I love my job every day, so the pay hasn't been anything that is a deterring factor." In contrast, Alexis, who works primarily with students with emotional disturbances, shared,

I feel as though we deal with so much, not with our work, but emotionally, and it's so hard not to take all that home with you. I feel that we should be getting paid so much

more for the things that we do every single day.

Likewise, Wesley shared, “We’re being tasked to do all of these things, and we still get ridiculed and not compensated. It’s hard, and nobody makes it easier.” The statements highlight the emotional and psychological challenges that accompany the professional duties of teaching, underlining a common desire for compensation that aligns more closely with teachers’ contributions and sacrifices.

Outlier Data and Findings

According to Creswell and Poth (2018), outliers are data points that deviate from the central themes and findings throughout the research and analysis stages. The outlier in the study’s finding is the high incidence of participants holding cocurricular positions beyond their teaching responsibilities. By considering outliers concerning the overall findings, researchers can gain a more comprehensive understanding of their subject and potentially uncover valuable insights (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Involvement Outside of the Classroom

The collected data revealed a trend of educators in the study being highly committed to student activities outside of the school day. During the semi-structured interviews, participants indicated that nine out of 10 had held a coaching or advisor position at one point, with seven out of the 10 actively involved in coaching and advising positions. Although a specific question was not asked to elicit this information, only one teacher did not mention any involvement in roles outside of their direct teaching duties. The finding denotes significant engagement in cocurricular activities among the teachers studied, which may influence their professional identity and job satisfaction. It may also be suggested that teachers who go above and beyond within their teaching roles are similarly inclined to engage in research studies exploring their

professional experiences.

Research Question Responses

One central research question and related sub-question define the research structure. Participants included teachers of color recruited for a semi-structured interview. They responded to a journal prompt reflecting on their experiences working as educators of color in predominantly White schools in South-Central Pennsylvania. Subsequent sections detail the questions explored, the resulting responses, and the analysis of the gathered data. Furthermore, the section will explain the connection of identified themes with the research questions while emphasizing the participants' perspectives concerning the research investigation.

Central Research Question

How do teachers of color describe their lived experiences of motivation to teach at predominantly White K–12 public schools? The motivations of teachers of color to teach at predominantly White K–12 public schools are complex and driven by a desire to make a difference through representation, impact student development, nurture meaningful relationships, and thrive in a supportive educational setting. They view their role as educators as vital for creating an academic space where cultural diversity is recognized and celebrated and as influential in helping students succeed academically and personally. Alexis shared a story about a student struggling to identify with his culture, expressing, “I’m also thinking of one student in particular who grew up around White people and felt really disconnected from his blackness, and he would always ask me questions about music, food, and culture.” She shared, “That was last year, and to see where he’s at now and how comfortable he is with himself is really rewarding.” Alexis’s narrative focuses on the influence educators of color have in nurturing identity and belonging among their students.

In addition to serving as models of diversity and representation for their students, teachers of color seek to be role models, stressing the need for diverse teaching staff to create an inclusive environment that appreciates cultural differences. James shared in his journal prompt response, “We need to attract more teachers of color to these schools to support students who understand the world from the perspective of a person of color, and it is good for White kids, too.” Their lived experiences contribute to a desire to make impactful differences, foster student development, establish strong relationships, and work in supportive environments that support their professional and all student’s needs.

Sub-Question One

How do teachers of color describe their lived experiences of motivation concerning Herzberg’s two-factor motivation-hygiene theory to teach at predominantly White K–12 public schools? The research participants described their lived experiences of motivation to teach at predominantly White K–12 public schools in terms consistent with Herzberg et al. (1993/2017) two-factor motivation-hygiene theory, where factors contributing to job satisfaction, motivators, and job dissatisfaction, hygiene factors, are apparent. There was a deep emphasis on intrinsic motivators such as feeling valued, cultural representation, and the ability to impact the educational system significantly. When asked about a time he felt particularly satisfied as a teacher, Carlos commented, “I feel the most satisfaction when I’m helping kids get out of a bind, whether it be an emotional bind or a personal bind.” James made the following statement regarding hygiene factors when asked about his satisfaction with the salary: “It’s clear that teaching isn’t a path to be rich, and it’s about more than just the paycheck.” He discussed the benefits of healthcare and retirement, adding, “It is a balance where returns from students are more than the money, and for now, I’m okay with that; I can pay my bills.” The participants’

assertions emphasize the complexity of motivation for teachers of color, where intrinsic and extrinsic factors play a role in their decision to teach at predominantly White K–12 public schools.

Summary

The research study explored the complex motivations of teachers of color working in predominantly White K–12 public schools, guided by the central research question and accompanied by an additional sub-question. Through a detailed analysis of educators' accounts, intrinsic motivators such as the desire for cultural representation and making a meaningful impact emerge as essential to their dedication to teaching. The research findings further confirm Herzberg et al. (1993/2017) two-factor motivation-hygiene theory, demonstrating that job satisfaction in this environment results from factors related to the work itself and the teachers' ability to contribute to an inclusive and culturally diverse educational environment. The research revealed an outlier finding that the participants are highly committed to cocurricular activities, demonstrating a significant level of engagement with student development beyond the confines of the classroom.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

Overview

The purpose of the qualitative, phenomenological study is to explore the lived experiences of teachers of color who teach at predominantly White K–12 public schools in Pennsylvania. Chapter Five opens with a summary of the thematic findings introduced in Chapter Four, followed by an interpretation and a review of the implications for policy and practice. Next, the theoretical and empirical implications are reviewed, then the study's limitations and delimitations are assessed. The chapter concludes with recommendations for future investigations and a research study summary.

Discussion

The findings of this transcendental study incorporate data collected on the lived experiences of 10 teachers of color who teach at predominantly White K–12 public schools in Pennsylvania. This section analyzes the research outcomes and critically discusses the collected data. It focuses on the central themes and sub-themes concerning the applied theoretical framework, Herzberg et al. (1993/2017) motivation-hygiene theory; Herzberg's theory differentiates motivators that increase job satisfaction from hygiene factors that reduce dissatisfaction. Next, this section considers the implications of the findings to inform policy and practice. Then, the empirical and theoretical implications consistent with the literature review are discussed. The last section acknowledges the study's limitations and recommendations for subsequent research efforts.

The data presented in this study offers valuable insights into the motivations of teachers of color teaching in predominantly White K–12 public schools. The research explores the intricate motivations and obstacles the educators encounter beyond their superficial experiences.

Through a transcendental phenomenological approach, the findings reveal that the teachers possess goals beyond teaching, including the responsibility of being representatives of culture and inclusivity. The study corroborates previous research by demonstrating a significant alignment with Herzberg's motivation-hygiene theory, emphasizing the interconnectedness of intrinsic motivation and external factors, particularly in diverse educational settings, highlighting the role of teachers of color. Teachers of color are dedicated to promoting diversity and serving as role models to inspire students within the system.

The analysis of educators' accounts reveals intrinsic motivation and dedication to transforming their students' lives, corroborating previous research in Chapter Two. The findings suggest that passion and commitment drive teachers more than external rewards. This observation challenges the widespread belief that external rewards such as salary and incentives are the main drivers. Instead, the ambition to influence student development, create a culturally rich learning space, and support and inspire students from all backgrounds drives these teachers. Their purpose goes beyond traditional teaching roles, serving as mentors, advocates, and bridges between diverse cultures.

The study's findings reveal that being a teacher of color in predominantly white schools can be emotionally and professionally demanding. This observation is consistent with earlier research highlighting the emotional labor involved in such environments. Balancing impact with emotional labor in rewarding environments requires leveraging impact and overcoming challenges like isolation, low pay, and inconsistent administrative support. Despite not being the primary motivators, hygiene factors significantly contribute to employee job satisfaction. The study suggests that while intrinsic rewards are crucial, neglecting extrinsic factors could potentially challenge the stability and sustainability of teachers in these roles.

The results indicate a shift towards teaching methods prioritizing empathy and cultural awareness among educators, aiming to promote student growth beyond academic achievement. The findings extend previous research presented in Chapter Two by emphasizing the evolving role of educators in fostering inclusive environments. The inclusive approach benefits students from diverse backgrounds and enhances the learning environment by promoting a deeper appreciation of diversity. The study's findings emphasize the significance of school policies and environments that acknowledge and address the challenges educators of color face, consistent with earlier studies. Highlighting the need for a diverse and supportive faculty confirms previous research while proposing actionable measures for school and community leaders.

The critical examination of the lived experiences of teachers of color in predominantly White K–12 public schools unmask the need for systemic transformation. The finding confirms past research that stresses the importance of fostering a school culture that values diversity among students and faculty. Ensuring employees' well-being and professional satisfaction is crucial to educational equity, promoting a more inclusive and representative educational system. Creating an inclusive academic environment that values and elevates students and faculty, regardless of race, can significantly influence young people's decision to pursue teaching careers.

This study's insights into the motivations that keep teachers of color engaged in predominantly White schools suggest that school and community leaders should consider providing support beyond mere recognition of diversity and inclusion. This proposal extends previous findings by proposing a more holistic and systemic approach. The discussion underscores the significance of addressing educators' needs by creating supportive, adaptable, and equitable educational environments.

Summary of Thematic Findings

The thematic findings reviewed in Chapter Four reveal a variety of reasons that teachers of color persist in predominately White K–12 public schools. These educators are dedicated to positively impacting students' lives, serving as role models, and providing representation within the community. Their motivation goes beyond job satisfaction, aiming to advance student development and create an inclusive school environment that values diversity. Additionally, Herzberg et al. (1993/2017) motivation-hygiene theory principles are noticeable, with key motivators centered around investment in making a difference and opportunities for professional growth and development. While salary and working conditions are acknowledged, they do not diminish their sense of purpose and achievement. This complex blend of factors emphasizes the educators' perspectives and contributions to predominately White educational settings.

Implications for Policy or Practice

This research extends beyond academic discourse to offer practical recommendations for educational stakeholders. The following section categorizes the implications into two groups: implications for policy and implications for practice. The goal is to guide policymakers, educational leaders, teachers, parents, and community representatives in fostering a more inclusive, supportive, and equitable academic environment.

Implications for Policy

The study suggests that policy changes are needed in the educational system to attract, support, and retain teachers of color in predominantly White K–12 public schools. Implementing these suggestions could lead to more equitable, inclusive, and diverse learning environments, benefiting all students. Ultimately, these changes could lead to a teaching profession that is more inviting and supportive of people of color.

The study suggests that educational policymakers should increase the number of teachers of color and ensure their retention and success in diverse academic environments to tackle systemic challenges. The strategies may include targeted recruitment strategies that include partnerships with historically Black colleges and universities and other targeted outreach efforts with diverse serving institutions. Likewise, school districts can establish clear accountability measures, including measurable goals for increasing diversity among their teaching staff. These goals should be audited regularly for public progress reporting to create transparency and motivate continuous improvement in diversity efforts. Schools could also offer a compensation model that provides financial incentives to attract teachers of color and incremental bonuses to retain them.

Additionally, school districts and teacher preparation programs should prioritize allocating resources necessary for acquiring, developing, and implementing culturally responsive pedagogies and materials, such as textbooks, lesson plans, and instructional resources that reflect diverse cultures. These initiatives can create more inclusive learning environments by integrating multicultural approaches into education and offering training on cultural responsiveness within teacher education and induction programs. The policy implications suggest the need for systemic changes to foster a supportive environment for educators of color in predominantly White K12 public schools to feel valued, supported, and empowered to thrive. Policymakers have the opportunity to enact meaningful change that can positively impact teachers of color and their students by addressing recruitment, retention, diversity, compensation, accountability, and teacher education.

Implications for Practice

Several implications for practice can be drawn from the research findings. The recommendations aim to foster a more inclusive and adaptable educational environment, potentially benefiting teachers of color and their students. The recommendations include establishing mentorship programs and support networks to support and guide teachers of color in their professional growth and retention. Additionally, facilitating professional development for all staff members to engage in continuous cultural competency training enhances understanding and appreciation of diverse backgrounds. Furthermore, school leadership can try to recognize and address the unique challenges teachers of color face through open dialogue and support systems. School systems can foster a progressive and inclusive environment by prioritizing mentorship, professional development in cultural competency, and recognizing unique challenges.

Empirical and Theoretical Implications

The following section discusses the theoretical and empirical implications of the research outcomes. From an empirical perspective, the findings suggest that educational policymakers and leaders should prioritize creating equitable, inclusive, and diverse learning environments that support teachers of color to enhance the educational experiences of all students. From a theoretical perspective, the study's findings align with Herzberg et al. (1993/2017) motivation-hygiene theory, which emphasizes intrinsic motivators over hygiene factors in the retention and satisfaction levels among teachers of color who teach in predominantly White schools. Further, the section compares the findings with the theoretical framework and previously reviewed empirical studies presented in Chapter Two, aiming to identify points of agreement, areas of difference, and the unique contributions the study offers to the field.

Empirical Implications

The empirical findings demonstrate significant alignment with the existing literature on the importance of intrinsic motivators in enhancing the job satisfaction and retention rates of teachers of color in predominantly White educational settings. Inadequate diversity and representation in schools can cause teachers of color to feel isolated, leading to low job satisfaction and significant turnover (Plachowski, 2019; Williams et al., 2021). Based on the literature review's identified themes, the study confirms that external incentives like salaries and benefits are insufficient to ensure long-term commitment and satisfaction. Teachers of color often feel excluded from decision-making due to their race and lack access to necessary administrative support and professional development opportunities for further growth (Burns Thomas, 2020; Salas et al., 2021). The study's findings further emphasize the significance of cultural proficiency, inclusive practices, and a supportive school environment in enhancing the well-being and professional satisfaction of teachers from diverse backgrounds.

Additionally, teacher education programs must integrate multicultural approaches and provide training on cultural responsiveness. Teacher preparation programs often fail to address inequalities and equip teachers to handle diverse backgrounds, perpetuating racial isolation and marginalization of students of color. Additionally, the climates and cultures of the programs are racist (Anderson, 2020; Marrun et al., 2021).

Furthermore, schools should prioritize recruiting and retaining teachers of color by providing targeted support and resources. Burns Thomas (2020) highlights the persistent racial bias in the education system, highlighting the superficial 'good enough' mentality in diversity efforts. The study calls for a shift from simply meeting diversity quotas to actively pursuing equity, involving transformative strategies for recruiting, retaining, and professional

development of teachers of color. The findings highlight the urgent need for significant policy changes to create a more equitable and nurturing environment for teaching professionals and enhance the educational experiences of diverse students. D. J. Childs (2019) suggests addressing the teacher of color shortage involves enhancing educational equity for K–12 students of color. Through this approach, the study bridges the gap between theory and practice by demonstrating the effectiveness of strategies to improve diversity and satisfaction in the teaching workforce, thereby strengthening the foundation for future educational policies.

Theoretical Implications

The theoretical implications of the study significantly contribute to the understanding of Herzberg et al. (1993/2017) motivation-hygiene theory within the context of education, specifically regarding the retention and satisfaction of teachers of color in predominantly White schools. The results reinforce the importance of intrinsic motivators like representation, recognition, and professional growth opportunities for job satisfaction and retention among educators of color. Ardley et al. (2020) suggest that schools should meet the basic needs of teachers of color, offering opportunities for personal growth and development. Unlike hygiene factors, which Herzberg identifies as external to the job itself, salary, school policies, and work conditions, the intrinsic or motivational factors profoundly impact teachers' professional experiences. Regardless of their satisfaction or dissatisfaction with salary and administrative support, the research participants in the study displayed a solid commitment to the profession. Their dedication was such that they did not express any inclination towards leaving due to feelings of dissatisfaction. Herzberg's theory emphasizes the need to transcend superficial incentives and tackle systemic issues affecting teachers of color. The findings from the study are in agreement with the existing scholarship, which emphasizes supporting collaborative networks,

incorporating culturally responsive teaching methods (Cadenas et al., 2021; Kondo, 2022), increasing teacher pay, enhancing the school environment, and tackling racial inequalities to promote educator retention and advocate for greater diversity in the teaching profession (Williams et al., 2021). The empirical data gathered in the study supports Herzberg's theory of hygiene factors and motivators, highlighting the unique challenges and needs of teachers of color in the educational system. Lisle-Johnson and Kohli (2020) focused on the challenges faced by Black female educators, including racial, gender, and ideological barriers, but highlighted their resilience and commitment to their profession. Integrating cultural competency training, mentorship programs, and inclusive school policies can enhance intrinsic motivators among these educators.

Moreover, the results enhance theoretical conversations by demonstrating that the motivation-hygiene theory, typically used in corporate and industrial contexts, can provide valuable insights in educational settings. Educational leaders and policymakers can make significant progress in fostering more equitable, inclusive, and diverse learning communities by identifying and implementing measures to enhance intrinsic motivation among teachers of color. The outcomes from the study offer empirical evidence that strengthens and enriches Herzberg's theoretical framework, opening up new opportunities for theoretical exploration and practical application in education.

Limitations and Delimitations

Clearly defining the study's limitations and delimitations is crucial when conducting research. While the research study has provided insights into the motivations of teachers of color in predominantly White schools, it is essential to acknowledge the limitations and delimitations. According to Creswell and Poth (2018), limitations refer to potential weaknesses in the study

that may impact the results or generalizability, while delimitations outline what specific aspects of the research will be included and excluded. Identifying these aspects helps contextualize the study's scope and ensures transparency in reporting its outcomes. Creswell and Poth (2018) specify that by clearly stating limitations and delimitations, researchers can provide a more transparent and honest assessment of their study's scope and potential impact, thereby enhancing the credibility and utility of their findings.

Limitations

The research study faced several limitations that could impact the interpretation of the findings. The narrow geographical scope was a significant limitation, as the research was conducted within suburban schools in South-Central Pennsylvania. The narrow scope limits the conclusions and applicability to rural or urban contexts, where teachers of color's experiences might differ significantly due to various demographic and socioeconomic factors. Another limitation is the reliance on self-reported data, which carries an inherent risk of bias because participants might provide socially desirable responses, or their perceptions might not accurately reflect reality. Before the audio recording of the interviews, several research participants clarified that they wished to remain anonymous. One participant joked before the recording that with few teachers of color in Pennsylvania, it would not be difficult to figure out who participated. Although the participant indicated they were joking, the banter may have indicated nervousness about revealing their identity and potentially impacting their responses.

Delimitations

The study set specific boundaries to narrow the scope and focus. One fundamental limitation was the decision to examine teachers of color in predominantly White schools exclusively. The decision to focus on this group aimed to explore the unique challenges and

opportunities of teachers of color in these environments, including racial isolation and cultural competency requirements. The choice of theoretical framework, centered on Herzberg's motivation-hygiene theory, delimits the study as it focuses its analysis through a specific lens and omits other potentially relevant theories.

Recommendations for Future Research

Given the research findings, limitations, and specific focus of the study, there are various opportunities for future research. One key recommendation is to broaden the geographical scope beyond South-Central Pennsylvania to encompass other suburban and rural settings. Studying different contexts can reveal diverse challenges and opportunities for teachers of color, providing a comprehensive understanding of their school experiences. The studies could employ a comparative analysis design to investigate the influence of geographical locations on teacher satisfaction and retention. Additionally, utilizing a mixed-methods research design can enhance the understanding of teachers of color by combining quantitative and qualitative data, capturing systemic challenges, personal motivations, and professional commitments, and providing rich contextual narratives.

Future research should explore the implementation and effectiveness of initiatives to enhance the professional experiences of teachers of color in schools. The process may involve evaluating mentorship programs, implementing culturally sensitive teaching methods, and implementing organizational reforms within educational institutions to foster diversity, equity, and inclusion. Experimental research could provide valuable insights into strategies to enhance retention rates and job satisfaction among teachers from underrepresented groups. Additionally, gaining insight into students' and family's perspectives can provide a deeper understanding of how teachers from diverse backgrounds influence the learning environment and promote

inclusive educational practices.

Finally, future research could explore how teachers of color navigate institutional barriers in schools, providing valuable insights into their resilience and action in challenging situations. Building upon the research study's results can help create a fairer and more encompassing education system for teachers of color and their students. Therefore, continued exploration of the subject is vital for promoting positive change.

Conclusion

The research study explored how teachers of color describe their lived experiences of motivation to teach at predominantly White K–12 public schools, aligning with the broader conversation about diversity and inclusivity in education. Utilizing Herzberg's motivation-hygiene theory as a framework, the study revealed intrinsic and extrinsic motivators that impact job satisfaction and staff retention among this group within suburban schools in South-Central Pennsylvania. The study underscores the intricate interplay between institutional support, racial dynamics, and personal commitment to educational equity, highlighting the challenges faced by teachers of color, including isolation and increased representation. Institutional support mechanisms like mentorship and professional development opportunities are vital for teachers of color to reduce feelings of isolation and enhance professional engagement. Developing an inclusive school culture that values diversity and promotes equity is crucial, necessitating systemic changes to address biases in educational environments.

The study's limitations, such as its geographical scope and self-reported data, suggest the need for future research that expands investigation and employs mixed-methods approaches. The effectiveness of diversity-focused initiatives and policies in schools is crucial for creating a more inclusive environment. The research study highlights the challenges teachers of color face in

predominantly white schools, emphasizing the significance of inclusive school cultures and supportive institutional frameworks. Addressing these challenges will lead to a fairer, more inclusive educational system.

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Appendix A

IRB Application

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

January 25, 2024

Jennifer McConnell
Denise Nixon

Re: IRB Exemption - IRB-FY23-24-1037 A Phenomenological Study of the Teaching Motivations for Teachers of Color in Predominantly White Schools

Dear Jennifer McConnell, Denise Nixon,

The Liberty University Institutional Review Board (IRB) has reviewed your application in accordance with the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP) and Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulations and finds your study to be exempt from further IRB review. This means you may begin your research with the data safeguarding methods mentioned in your approved application, and no further IRB oversight is required.

Your study falls under the following exemption category, which identifies specific situations in which human participants research is exempt from the policy set forth in 45 CFR 46:104(d):

Category 2.(iii). Research that only includes interactions involving educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior (including visual or auditory recording) if at least one of the following criteria is met:

The information obtained is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that the identity of the human subjects can readily be ascertained, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects, and an IRB conducts a limited IRB review to make the determination required by §46.111(a)(7).

For a PDF of your exemption letter, click on your study number in the My Studies card on your Cayuse dashboard. Next, click the Submissions bar beside the Study Details bar on the Study details page. Finally, click Initial under Submission Type and choose the Letters tab toward the bottom of the Submission Details page. Your information sheet and final versions of your study documents can also be found on the same page under the Attachments tab.

Please note that this exemption only applies to your current research application, and any modifications to your protocol must be reported to the Liberty University IRB for verification of continued exemption status. You may report these changes by completing a modification submission through your Cayuse IRB account.

If you have any questions about this exemption or need assistance in determining whether possible modifications to your protocol would change your exemption status, please email us at irb@liberty.edu.

Sincerely,

G. Michele Baker, PhD, CIP
Administrative Chair
Research Ethics Office

Appendix B

Superintendent Recruitment Letter

[Date]

[Recipient Name]

[Recipient Address]

[City, State ZIP Code]

Dear Superintendent,

As a Ph.D. candidate at Liberty University, I kindly request your approval to conduct research in your school district. The study aims to understand better the teaching motivations for teachers of color at K–12 public schools in South-Central Pennsylvania. As you may be aware, there is a growing need to understand better the experiences of teachers of color in predominantly White, suburban school districts in South-Central Pennsylvania. Through this study, we hope to shed light on the challenges and opportunities faced by teachers of color in these contexts and to identify strategies that may help to promote teacher retention and well-being.

To participate in the study, teachers must meet the following criteria: (a) be a teacher of color, and (b) be teaching in a predominantly White, suburban school district in South-Central Pennsylvania.

To identify eligible participants, I kindly request contact information for all teachers in your district, preferably email addresses. I will use this information to contact the staff and invite them to participate if they meet the study requirements.

I assure you that all responses will be kept confidential and that participants will be informed of their rights and protections as research participants. Additionally, we will adhere to all ethical guidelines and protocols for research involving human subjects.

Should you have any questions or concerns about this study, please do not hesitate to contact me. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Jennifer McConnell

Ph.D. Candidate | School of Education | Liberty University

Appendix C

Participant Recruitment Letter

[Date]

[Recipient Name]

[Recipient Address]

[City, State ZIP Code]

Dear Educator,

I hope this letter finds you well. I am writing to invite you to participate in a research study that seeks to gain insights into the motivations of teachers of color teaching in K–12 public schools in South-Central Pennsylvania. If you are a teacher of color, you bring a unique perspective to your role as an educator. Your experiences and insights are invaluable, and I would be honored if you would consider participating in my study.

To be eligible for participation, you must meet the following criteria:

- Be a teacher of color
- Be teaching in predominantly White, suburban school districts in South-Central Pennsylvania

My study aims to understand the teaching motivations of teachers of color in predominantly White, suburban school districts. By participating in this study, you will contribute to a greater understanding of the challenges and opportunities faced by teachers of color in these contexts and identify strategies that may help to promote teacher retention and well-being.

If you choose to participate, you will be asked to participate in a semi-structured, audio-recorded interview, complete a member-checking step whereby I will provide you with the transcription of the recorded interview to check for accuracy and respond to a short journal prompt via Google Forms. The total investment of your time will be approximately one and a half hours. Your participation will be entirely voluntary, and you may withdraw from the study at any time. Names and other identifying information will be requested as part of this study, but participant identities will not be disclosed.

If you want to participate in my study, please sign up by completing this Google Form. I am happy to answer any questions you may have about the study at any time.

A consent document will be sent to you in a separate email if you qualify for my research. The consent form contains additional information about my research. If you choose to participate, you will need to provide your signature digitally before participating.

Thank you for considering this invitation to participate in my study. I believe your contributions will help me gain important insights into the motivations of teachers of color teaching in K–12 public schools in South-Central Pennsylvania.

Sincerely,

Jennifer McConnell

Ph.D. Candidate | School of Education | Liberty University

Appendix D

Google Form Questionnaire

Thank you for your willingness to participate in my study. I know your time is valuable, and I am committed to making this process as simple and seamless as possible. Please provide the information below to confirm that you are eligible for participation.

This form is automatically collecting emails from all respondents.

Please enter your first and last name:

Please confirm you are in a teaching role (Individuals who are not in teaching positions are excluded from the study, this includes administrative personnel, school counselors, paraprofessionals, and other non-teaching school staff.):

Yes/No

Please confirm you are a teacher of color (a non-White teacher):

Yes/No

Please enter the name of the school district where you are currently teaching:

What is your preferred method of communication to schedule an interview? (Email, phone, text, etc.)

I am genuinely appreciative of your willingness to participate in my study. You will receive an email shortly confirming your participation. Please contact me if you have any questions, email:

Thank you again for your time,
Jen McConnell

Appendix E

Email Follow-up to Screening Questionnaire

Email to Selected Participants

Dear Teacher,

Thank you for your willingness to participate in my research study! You've met the criteria for participation. Your participation will contribute to a greater understanding of the challenges and opportunities faced by teachers of color in predominantly White, suburban school districts to help identify strategies that may promote teacher retention and well-being. When you are able, please take time to review and complete the Consent Form found [HERE](#). I look forward to working with you and learning about your experiences.

Sincerely,

Jennifer McConnell
Ph.D. Candidate | School of Education | Liberty University

Email to Participants Not Selected

Dear Teacher,

Thank you for your willingness to participate in my research study. Unfortunately, the information provided on the screening questionnaire indicates that you do not meet the criteria for participation. Best wishes for a great school year!

Sincerely,

Jennifer McConnell
Ph.D. Candidate | School of Education | Liberty University

Appendix F

Consent Form for Participants

Title of the Project: A Phenomenological Study of the Teaching Motivation for Teachers of Color in Predominantly White Schools

Principal Investigator: Jennifer McConnell, Doctoral Candidate, Liberty University, School of Education

Invitation to Participate in a Research Study

You are invited to participate in a research study seeking to understand the teaching motivation for teachers of color teaching in K–12 public schools in South-Central Pennsylvania. To participate in the study, you must be a teacher of color who is currently teaching.

You will be selected for the study based on the following criterion: (a) teacher of color, and (b) teaching in predominantly White, suburban school districts in South-Central Pennsylvania. For this study, a teacher of color is a non-White teacher.

Taking part in this research project is voluntary. Please take time to read this entire form and ask questions before deciding whether to take part in this research.

What is the study about and why is it being done?

The purpose of the study is to describe the teaching motivation for teachers of color at K–12 public schools in South-Central Pennsylvania. The goal of the research is to identify factors that can increase the recruitment and retention of teachers of color to diversify the teacher population and match the changing student demographics in public schools.

What will happen if you take part in this study?

If you agree to be in this study, I will ask you to do the following:

1. First, participate in a virtual, audio-recorded interview that will take no longer than 1 hour. The interview will be transcribed.
2. Second, participate in a “member check,” which allows you to review the interview transcripts and validate the accuracy of the information. The member check should take less than 10 minutes.
3. Finally, spend approximately 15 minutes responding to a writing prompt about your experience as a teacher of color. This will be completed via Google Forms.

How could you or others benefit from this study?

Benefits: Participants should not expect a direct benefit from participating in this study. However, benefits to society include discovering methods to share with district leaders, principals, and teacher educators about creating equitable spaces in predominantly White schools to attract and retain teachers of color.

What risks might you experience from being in this study?

Risks: The expected risks from participating in this study are minimal, which means they are equal to the risks you would encounter in everyday life.

How will personal information be protected?

Confidentiality: The records of this study will be kept private. To protect district and participant confidentiality and privacy, all districts and participants will be given a unique identifier that will not indicate their actual identity in any documents presented or discussed within the research. Published reports will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a subject. Research records will be stored securely, and only the researcher will have access to the records.

- Participant responses will be kept confidential by replacing names with pseudonyms.
- Interviews will be conducted in a location where others will not easily overhear the conversation.
- Data will be stored on a password-locked computer. After three years, all electronic records will be deleted, and any hardcopy records will be shredded.
- Recordings will be stored on a password-locked computer for three years and then deleted. Only the researcher will have access to these recordings.

Is study participation voluntary?

Voluntary Study: Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision on whether to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

What should you do if you decide to withdraw from the study?

Withdrawal from the Study: If you choose to withdraw from the study, please contact the researcher at the email address or phone number included in the next paragraph. Should you decide to withdraw, data collected from you will be destroyed immediately and will not be included in this study.

Whom do you contact if you have questions or concerns about the study?

The researcher conducting this study is Jennifer McConnell. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact her by phone. You may also contact the researcher's faculty sponsor.

Whom do you contact if you have questions about your rights as a research participant?

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, **you are encouraged** to contact the IRB. Our physical address is Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd., Green Hall Ste. 2845, Lynchburg, VA, 24515; our phone number is 434-592-5530, and our email address is irb@liberty.edu.

Disclaimer: The Institutional Review Board (IRB) is tasked with ensuring that human subjects research will be conducted in an ethical manner as defined and required by federal regulations. The topics covered and viewpoints expressed or alluded to by student and faculty researchers are those of the researchers and do not necessarily reflect the official policies or positions of Liberty University.

Your Consent

Consent: By signing this document, you are agreeing to be in this study. Make sure you understand what the study is about before you sign. You will be given a copy of this document for your records. The researcher will keep a copy with the study records. If you have any questions about the study after you sign this document, you can contact the study team using the information provided above.

I have read and understood the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to participate in the study.

The researcher has my permission to audio-record me as part of my participation in this study.

Printed Subject Name

Signature & Date

Appendix G

Interview Questions

1. Please describe your educational background and career through your current position.
CRQ
2. Describe a time when you felt particularly satisfied with your job. What factors, according to you, contributed to this satisfaction? CRQ
3. Describe a time when you felt less than satisfied with your role. What factors contributed to these feelings of dissatisfaction? CRQ
4. How does recognition or lack thereof in your job affect your motivation? SQ1
5. How do you feel your interactions and relationships with colleagues, superiors, and students have influenced your feelings of satisfaction in your role? SQ1
6. How do you feel your interactions and relationships with colleagues, superiors, and students have influenced your feelings of dissatisfaction in your role? SQ1
7. How do you feel the opportunities for self-growth and career advancement in your job influence your satisfaction levels? SQ1
8. Describe how your personal achievement in your work affects your motivation and job satisfaction. SQ1
9. Explain how you perceive the role of responsibilities and tasks in shaping your job satisfaction or dissatisfaction. SQ1
10. Describe the nature of your working conditions. How do you feel they impact your level of satisfaction in your job? SQ1
11. Describe the impact of pay and benefits on your sense of satisfaction with your job. SQ1

12. Describe the impact of pay and benefits on your sense of dissatisfaction with your job.

SQ1

13. Describe how the school's administration and its policies impact your job satisfaction.

SQ1

14. Tell me about some of your experiences and reflections on being a teacher of color at a predominantly White suburban school. CRQ

Appendix H

Journal Prompt

The prompt and directions for the participant journal are shown below.

Please take approximately 15 minutes to respond to the following prompt and return the response to me via email within one week. If you prefer, the answer can be written using bullet points.

- Reflect on your past experiences in your teaching career that have significantly impacted your determination to continue teaching in predominantly White, suburban schools. If all school districts in South-Central Pennsylvania could achieve these three things, more teachers of color would persist in predominantly White suburban schools. What are those three things? Please describe these three things and discuss their importance to your role as a teacher of color in a predominantly White, suburban school: