

SCHOOL ETHNIC-RACIAL SOCIALIZATION AND EDUCATOR PRACTICES: A  
HERMENEUTIC PHENOMENOLOGY QUALITATIVE STUDY

by

Cyntrenna C. Palmer

Liberty University

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Philosophy

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APPROVED BY:

Darren Howland, Ph.D., Committee Chair

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### **Abstract**

The purpose of this hermeneutical phenomenological study was aimed to discover and interpret the educator's experience as ethnic-racial socialization (ERS) agents of adolescent youth in schools in the United States. The theory guiding this study was Saleem and Byrd's school ethnic-racial socialization conceptual model, as it highlights the importance of the school context in shaping adolescent youth ethnic-racial identity and the examination of educators as school ethnic-racial socialization agents. The central question is, what are the lived experiences of educators of adolescent youth as ethnic-racial socialization agents in public schools in the United States? There were 13 educators of adolescent youth in schools within the United States of America recruited for this hermeneutical phenomenological qualitative study. Data was collected and triangulated through interviews, focus groups, and protocol writings. All collected data was analyzed using the hermeneutical framework posited by van Manen (2016). The thematic findings for this study were addressing feelings of discomfort and exclusion, addressing race and ethnicity, commitment to equity and inclusion, challenges in educating about Black issues, desire for awareness and change, racial profiling and social challenges, educators' approach, facilitating learning and understanding, parental engagement, importance of cultural education, impact on mental health, teacher perceptions, and resistance and pushback.

*Keywords:* ethnic-racial socialization, ethnic-racial identity, school socialization

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### **Dedication**

Father God, I will be an instrument, for your word is good! Like "Footprints in the Sand," you have never left my side. When the times appeared overwhelming, you carried me. Thank you for being the lamp when times were darkest. I give you all the praise!

To my late grandparents, James and Versie Mae Palmer, and my late aunt, Barbara Ann Palmer, you all have profoundly impacted my existence. The dream is no longer deferred but conferred. I could not be without you three. Please continue to watch over me.

To my parents, Carolyn Faulks Trotter and Willie James Palmer, who gave me life and purpose. Daddy, because of you, I knew my history contained persons who looked like me before the school curricula included such. Thank you for guiding me to academic excellence without fail as my academic authority to this very day. Mother Dearest, thank you for naming me and giving me a permanent crown.

To my children and my grandest gifts, who supported me and always believed I could do this! May this doctorate prove what is possible when you keep going, even when it *Hurts Like Brand New Shoes*. I love you all very much! May you forever be encouraged to do the things you think you cannot.

To South Korea with love. I completed several degrees in your beautiful country and experienced a freedom I had never known stateside. Thank you for the kindness extended throughout the entire peninsula. Gomawo chingu ya (Thank you, friend).

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*“It is easier to build strong children than to repair broken men.” – Frederick Douglass*

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**List of Abbreviations**

Black Racial Identity (BRI)

Culturally Relevant Pedagogy (CRP)

Ethnic-Racial Identity (ERI)

Ethnic-Racial Socialization (ERS)

International Review Board (IRB)

Kappa Delta Pi (KDP)

Liberty University Doctoral Cohort Group (LUDCG)

Racial Ethnic Identity (REI)



## **CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION**

### **Overview**

The initial research into ethnic-racial socialization (ERS) focused primarily on the parental context and not beyond the home until recently (Hughes et al., 2016; Priest et al., 2014). Schools are expected to be important in socializing children into adulthood (Wentzel & Looney, 2007). Youth now look to teachers and peers in the school context for socioemotional support and identity exploration opportunities (Saleem & Byrd, 2021). This hermeneutical phenomenology study aspires to discover and interpret educator experiences within the school environment as ERS agents in the United States of America. Chapter One provides a historical background concerning the ongoing problem of colorblind socialization approaches in schools by educators, how and what messages are conveyed to youth in schools, and the impact of educators as ERS agents. The chapter explains the researcher's role, the research's purpose, and the significance of this study.

### **Background**

Ethnic-racial socialization (ERS) messages must be understood within the historical context of racism across ERS transmitters within the United States (Saleem & Byrd, 2021). Dynamics related to ethnicity and race form the developmental pathways of adolescent youth and have vast implications on academic, emotional, physical, and social well-being (Benner et al., 2018; Rivas-Drake et al., 2014; Ruck et al., 2021; Trent et al., 2019). Adolescent youth are socialized regarding race across various settings through deliberate, explicit, implicit, unintended, verbal, and non-verbal socialization processes by which agents of socialization engage (Hughes, 2003; Hughes & Chen, 1999; Ruck et al., 2021; Tang et al., 2016).

## **Historical Context**

Schools are highly influential in shaping the students' understanding and conceptualization of race (Aldana & Byrd, 2015; Byrd & Legette, 2022; Tyson, 2011). The ethnic and racial realities of United States schools today merit that a notable shift has occurred in terms of the makeup of youth that schools are serving (Howard & Navarro, 2016; Rivas-Drake et al., 2014), where the White student population will drop precipitously over the next several decades to as low as 35% of the total student population by the year 2060 (U.S. Department of Education, 2014). Race plays a critical role in Black American families, given that family has historically been used as a defense against Black Americans' poverty and not systematic and institutional racism or state-sanctioned segregation (Minniear & Soliz, 2019). Black American families exist in a uniquely different sociohistorical context than Whites in the United States (Minniear & Soliz, 2019). Laws and beliefs regulating slave marriages still impact public perception today of Black American families (Hunter, 2017). While racial socialization research has found commonalities in all ethnic-racial groups, Black American families face some unique differences (Minniear & Soliz, 2019; Wantchekon & Umaña-Taylor, 2021). The legacy of slavery affects Black American families in a way that is salient and distinct from other ethnic minority groups, and this historical trauma becomes intergenerational transmission (Sotero, 2009)—in essence, making slavery a dominant theme in Black American families' discussion about race and identity (Minniear & Soliz, 2019).

Beyond slavery, race has been a component of American history through Jim Crow laws, the Klu Klux Klan, and, most recently, tensions regarding politics and social justice (Minniear & Soliz, 2019). Black Americans have experienced civic estrangement due to being marginalized or underrepresented in narratives, icons, past images, and curricula that promote an American

national identity (Bennett, 2013; Kinloch et al., 2020). One cannot ignore that race has played a constant factor in the granting and recognizing of citizenship rights to individuals (Akos & Ellis, 2008; Del Toro & Way, 2021; Kinloch et al., 2020). Race matters not just for Black Americans but for every citizen of the United States (Guinier, 2004). The increasing ethnic, cultural, and racial diversity warrants educational practitioners and scholars to think innovatively about how educators meet a diverse student body's academic, cultural, and social needs (Howard & Navarro, 2016; Warikoo & Carter, 2009). Examining and understanding the racial complexities in the United States is more prevalent and appropriate than ever in the nation's history (Banales et al., 2020; Howard & Navarro, 2016; Rivas-Drake & Umana-Taylor, 2019).

Measures have been created, like the *No Child Left Behind Act* (NCLB), to address the racial achievement gap between White and underrepresented minorities and demand accountability of teachers and schools as primary change agents (DeCuir-Gunby et al., 2010). The history of public-school curricula needs to analyze how education in the United States continues to operate as a weaponized education curriculum (Justice, 2023). The influential persons control the historical narrative and decide how marginalized populations are presented or excluded in history and curriculums (Kinloch et al., 2020; Thelen, 1989). Black Americans are especially vulnerable to civic estrangement, which describes how they possess full legal citizenship yet experience marginalization in their representation in the American citizenship narrative promoting an American identity (Bennett, 2013; Kinloch et al., 2020).

### **Social Context**

A sense of belonging and pride is significant for adolescents' healthy development and academic motivation (El Zaatari & Maalouf, 2022; Harper, 2007; King et al., 2022; Longaretti, 2020). Black Americans have found this difficult due to the school context's history of racial

discrimination (DeCuir-Gunby et al., 2012; Del Toro & Way, 2021). There is a long history of racial-ethnic discrimination in educational institutions between the school staff and the perceptions of Black American families and students (Del Toro & Way, 2021). Within this racialized terrain of the K-12 education system, race influences school practices to legitimize, reward, and validate the cultural and social capital students bring to school (Diamond & Lewis, 2019; Yosso, 2005). The growing diversity of the American populace has not been integrated into teaching and learning practices, leaving underrepresented minoritized students without the ethnic-racial socialization development required for positive academic outcomes, peer and teacher, and long-term well-being (Byrd & Legette, 2022; Cardwell et al., 2020; Howard, 2021; Rivas-Drake & Umana-Taylor, 2019; Yishan et al., 2022). The school context is essential to build a culture of inclusion for the underrepresented minorities who often feel alienated and lacking (Bakir-Aygar & Kaya, 2017). To be effective with diverse students, teachers must recognize and understand their racism and biases, learn about their students' cultures, and perceive the world through various cultural lenses (McAllister & Irvine, 2000; Umana-Taylor & Rivas-Drake, 2021; Utt & Tochluk, 2020).

The examination of how an individual negotiates different social systems that interact and influence them across the developmental span was done by Bronfenbrenner (1979, 2005). Based on this perspective, the social systems in the lives of developing youth range from immediate contexts (family and schools) to less proximal influences (state and federal laws) (DeCuir-Gunby et al., 2012; Shelton, 2019). Each environment may shape an adolescent's cognitive, social, and psychosocial development and contribute to an optimistic or pessimistic view (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, 2005; DeCuir-Gunby et al., 2012; Harper, 2007; Yishan et al., 2022). Academic and familial contexts represent sources that inform adolescents regarding membership in different

social interactions (race/ethnicity, class, and gender) (Allen et al., 2021; DeCuir-Gunby et al., 2012). A feeling of belonging strongly predicted adolescent life satisfaction, well-being, self-esteem, and school engagement (Ammar, 2022; Arslan et al., 2020; Korpershoek et al., 2020; Porter et al., 2021).

Socialization messages may be positive or have adverse adolescent developmental outcomes (DeCuir-Gunby et al., 2010; Harper, 2007; Porter et al., 2021; Walsemann et al., 2011). Findings from several studies showed that a sense of belonging could indirectly enhance student achievement and motivation to work harder (Allen et al., 2018; El Zatari & Maalouf, 2022; Goodenow, 1993). Some students are not able to use proper coping mechanisms to control their thoughts and feelings during stressful situations and a lack of inclusion (Abdollahi et al., 2020; El Zatari & Maalouf, 2022) Schools are vital for socializing, with school climate affecting students' social and emotional lives (DeCuir-Gunby et al., 2010; Fong Lam et al., 2015; Walsemann et al., 2011), school engagement (Korpershoek et al., 2020), and less truancy, violence, and dropouts (Henry et al., 2021; Koyuncu, 2021). Due to the marginalization of minoritized adolescent youth represented in curricula, the lack of multiculturalism and racial identity impedes underrepresented minorities from having a balanced view of the world and academic achievement (Allen et al., 2018, 2021; Chavous et al., 2003; El Zaatari & Ibrahim, 2021; El Zaatari & Maalouf, 2022). In the school setting, administrators, peers, and teachers may influence and nurture an adolescent's identity (Allen et al., 2018, 2021; DeCuir-Gunby, 2009; Ibrahim & El Zaatari, 2020; Walsemann et al., 2011).

### **Theoretical Context**

Identity development has been acknowledged as a central task of adolescence (Erikson, 1968; Marcia, 1994). Based on Erickson's (1994) and Marcia's (1994) theories and evaluation of

identity formation, exploration, and commitment are two components that were the focus. Most research has focused on this essential developmental phase of life as identity as an ongoing transactional process (Stone, 1962). The complexity of racial identity research and that Black identity development is influenced by environmental factors such as racism and discrimination (Helms, 1984, 1990). Since 2000, studies published on ethnic-racial socialization (ERS) have focused mainly on messages parents of color utilize with their children. The literature suggests that ERS has essential implications for adolescents' academic performance, behaviors, and mental health (Huguley et al., 2019).

Since 2000, studies published on ERS have focused mainly on messages parents of color utilize with their children. The literature suggests that ERS has essential implications for adolescents' academic performance, behaviors, and mental health (Huguley et al., 2019). Studies have shown that identity development evolves beyond adolescence and factors in the interactions with the social environment and background (Cramer, 2004; Fadjukoff, Pulkkinen, & Kokko, 2016; Kroger, 2006; Umana-Taylor, 2011). Recent studies by Byrd (2015, 2017) integrated parental socialization and multicultural education literature to identify five dimensions of school ERS. Ecological models suggest the importance of the school context on student perceptions and understanding of race, especially during adolescence (Byrd & Legette, 2022).

Due to limited research on school socialization literature, parental socialization literature has been the foundational framework to build. Parental and school socialization operate similarly in many ways, and additional theoretical work is being conducted to articulate the differences in method and content (Aldana & Byrd, 2015; Saleem & Byrd, 2021). Although scholars have begun understanding the dimensions, no frameworks have outlined the school ERS's process, content, and effects. This research will add to the literature qualitatively by examining the lived

experiences of educators of adolescent youth as ERS agents in schools in the United States of America.

### **Problem Statement**

The problem is that ethnic-racial socialization messages impact youth positionality in school and society (Byrd & Legette, 2021; Osborne et al., 2023; Saleem & Byrd, 2021). Policies and procedures must be found that benefit children from traditionally underserved racial and ethnic groups and narrow racial and ethnic opportunity and academic gaps (Redding, 2019; Saleem et al., 2022). Individuals who have not yet grappled with the meaning of ethnicity/race may not be equipped to cope with the stress of discrimination, and this is especially true for individuals who live in a context such as the United States, where issues of ethnicity and race are highly salient in everyday life (Bañales et al., 2020; Yip, 2018). Discrimination experiences negatively affect Black American youths' school engagement, perceived competence, and educational performance (Kyerere et al., 2020; Ogbu, 2004; Patterson, 2015; Steele, 1997; Superville, 2019). Marginalized groups have had an ongoing quest for educational inclusion, whether Black American, Asian American, Native American, Latinx, people with low incomes, women, and persons with special needs, have sought education as a pathway for economic mobility, economic empowerment, political voice, and social transformation (Donnor, 2011; Howard & Navarro, 2016; Leonardo, 2013; Spring, 2006).

### **Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this hermeneutical phenomenological study is to discover and interpret the educator's experience as an ethnic-racial socialization (ERS) agent with adolescent youth in public schools in the United States. At this stage in the research, an ethnic-racial socialization (ERS) agent will generally be defined as an educator of practices, knowledge, and values about

race and culture that are communicated to adolescent youth (Hughes, 2016). The theory guiding this study is the ethnic-racial socialization conceptual model by Saleem and Byrd (2021), which will assist in identifying and interpreting the experience of educators as ERS agents in the school context.

### **Significance of the Study**

This section provides an opportunity to explain the theoretical, empirical, and practical applications underpinning this hermeneutical phenomenology study. The theoretical, empirical, and practical significance will be discussed. The contribution of this study aims to ensure that school contexts throughout the United States in private and public capacities recognize the experiences of educators as ethnic-racial socialization (ERS) agents of adolescent youth.

### **Theoretical**

Schools are essential for understanding the transmission, content, and effects of ethnic-racial socialization (ERS) on adolescent youth (Saleem & Byrd, 2021). Like parental socialization messages, ERS within the school context can influence how youth manage and cope with racial stressors and consequentially impact academic and psychosocial outcomes, including ethnic-racial attitudes (Saleem & Byrd, 2021). Implicit bias and the hidden curriculum in United States schools show that teachers are just as biased as the general population (Henry, 1994; Starck et al., 2020; Umana-Taylor & Rivas-Drake, 2021). White teachers are naturally socialized into systemic oppression from birth and may unintentionally and unknowingly play a role in the systemic oppression of minoritized people (Bryan, 2017; Boutte, 2015; Matias & Zembylas, 2014; Utt & Tochluk, 2020). This research study will contribute to the ERS conceptual model by understanding the lived experiences of educators of adolescent youth as ERS agents within the school context in the United States.



## **Empirical**

Through exploring the lived experiences of educators of adolescent youth as ethnic-racial socialization (ERS) agents, teachers of all races and educational administrators may strategically educate and enculturate ethnic-racial identity socialization messages into pedagogy and practice to provide a more inclusive school context for all adolescents. The absence of multicultural curricula denies marginalized communities' representation and identification—collectively and individually (Ladson-Billings, 1998; Nieto, 2017; Redding, 2019). Racial and ethnic identity is based on two conflicting influences: cultural and social (Burrell-Craft, 2020; DeCuir-Gumby et al., 2012). The cultural influences are based on parents as racial socialization agents and Black American youth's lived experiences (Burrell-Craft, 2020; DeCuir-Gumby et al., 2012). In contrast, social influence may counter the cultural messages from parents due to adverse societal treatment and messages conveyed by those who are not African American (Burrell-Craft, 2020; Hughes & Kwok, 2006; Ladson-Billings, 1998). Racial identity development is needed to counter the consistent message that minorities are undesirable in society and education (Burrell-Craft, 2020; DeCuir-Gunby et al., 2012; Nieto, 2017). Every teacher's personal experience, perception of the experience, and thoughts regarding ERS practices will provide an understanding of the importance within the school context.

## **Practical**

This research study will provide evidence of the lived experiences of educators as ethnic-racial socialization agents of adolescent youth. The social unrest during 2020 sparked global attention to race and ethnicity in the United States for underrepresented minorities due to the police shootings of Black people (Ruck et al., 2021). Documenting each participant's voice and

lived experiences will assist pedagogical practices for all teachers of not just underrepresented minorities but all students to foster inclusion and cultural pluralism within the school context with ethnic-racial socialization practices. The findings of this study will provide teacher education programs, teachers, and educational administration with the ability to understand the importance of ERS to adolescent youth.

### **Research Questions**

The research questions guiding this study are:

#### **Central Research Question**

What are the lived experiences of educators as ethnic-racial socialization (ERS) agents for adolescent youth in public schools in the United States?

#### **Sub-Question One**

How does student diversity affect the perception of educators as ethnic-racial socialization agents?

#### **Sub-Question Two**

What are educators' experiences with the curriculum as it affects their role as ethnic-racial socialization agents?

#### **Sub-Question Three**

What are educator's experiences as ethnic-racial socialization agents promoting cultural relevancy in the classroom?

### **Definitions**

The pertinent terms of this study are defined below.

1. *Ethnic-racial socialization* (ERS) is defined as verbal and non-verbal messages transmitted to youth for the development of attitudes, behaviors, beliefs, and values about

the meaning and significance of race and racial stratification, intergroup and intragroup interactions, and personal and group identity (Lesane-Brown, 2006).

2. *Marginalization treats* a concept, group, or person as insignificant or peripheral (Hall et al., 1994).
3. *Racial identity* is a fundamental aspect of the self that includes a sense of membership in an ethnic group and the attitudes and feelings associated with that membership (Phinney, 1996).

### **Summary**

The problem is that ethnic-racial socialization messages impact youth positionality in school and society (Byrd & Legette, 2021; Osborne et al., 2023; Saleem & Byrd, 2021). The purpose of this hermeneutical phenomenological study is to discover and interpret the educator's experience as an ethnic-racial socialization (ERS) agent with adolescent youth in public schools in the United States . Ethnic-racial socialization (ERS) messages have a long-lasting impact on adolescent youth in school and adulthood in society. Adolescent youth in public schools in the United States are educated in classrooms and with teachers who may not incorporate ethnic-racial socialization practices, which increases adverse outcomes academically and psycho-emotionally. The diversity of America continues to grow and expand, yet inclusive practices for minoritized adolescent youth have not made the same strides.

## **CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Overview**

A systematic literature review explored the problem that ethnic-racial socialization messages (ERS) impact youth positionality in school and society. In the first section, the theories relevant to the ethnic-racial socialization model are followed by a synthesis of recent literature regarding parental socialization, culturally relevant pedagogy, and the impact on youth ethnic-racial identity development and formation. Lastly, the literature surrounding the factors that lead to developing educator practices to advance ethnic-racial socialization (ERS) development for adolescent youth will be examined. A lack of research concerning the role of school and ethnic-racial identity development of adolescent youth presents a viable need for the current study.

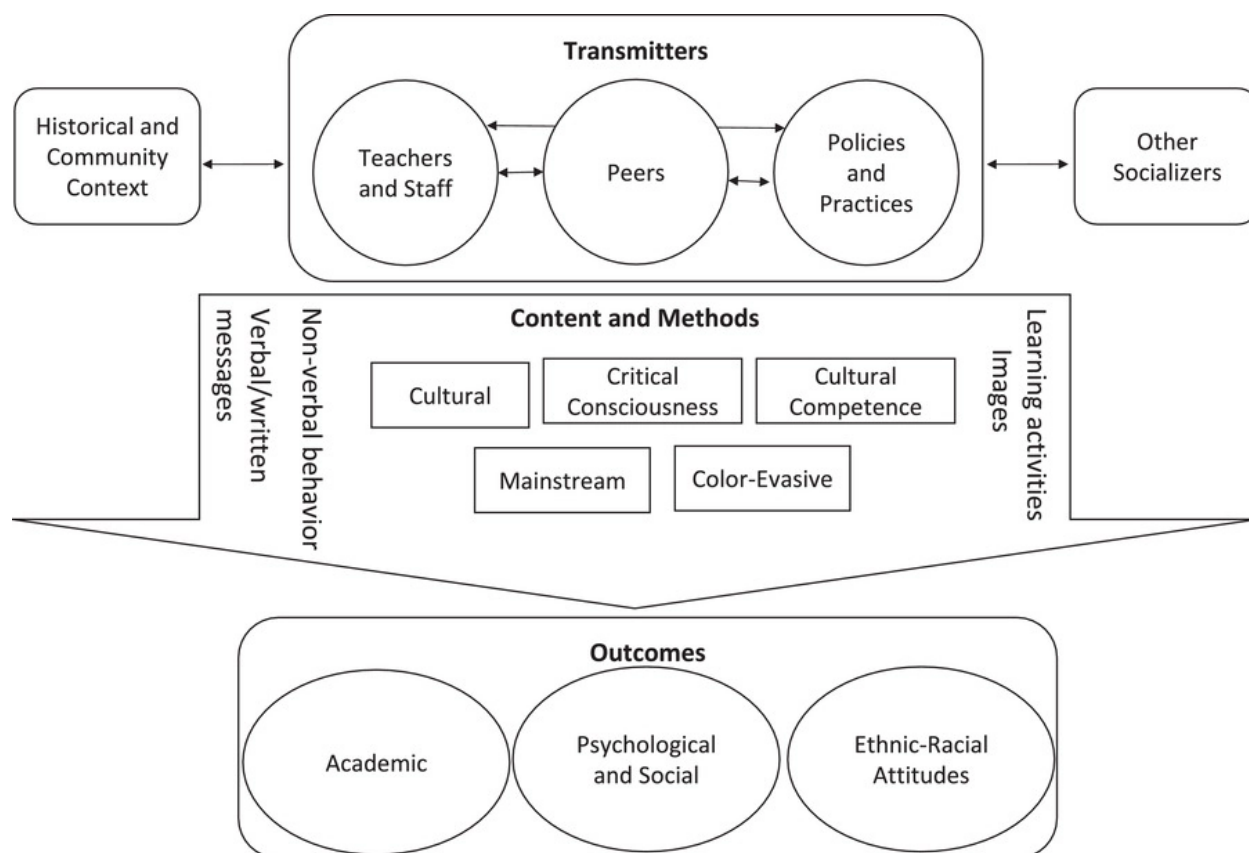
### **Theoretical Framework**

Farzana T. Saleem and Christy M. Byrd's (2021) school ethnic-racial socialization conceptual model will frame the development and formation of ethnic-racial socialization (ERS) transmission and the school context. The conceptual model focuses on (ERS) development as a general phenomenon. Saleem and Byrd (2021) conceptualized a model examining the transmission of ERS in schools using the school ethnic-racial socialization model to examine educator practices and the school context as ERS transmitters. The proximal influence of the school context and educator practices considerably impacts students' academic and psychosocial development. This study focuses on the educator as the primary transmitter in the school ERS context.

### **School Ethnic-racial Socialization Transmission Model**

Parents are the first transmitters of ethnic-racial socialization (ERS), but transmitters within the school context become more critical as youth move into adolescence (Saleem & Byrd, 2021). As intergroup social interactions increase during adolescence, the school context becomes a prime socialization setting for informing adolescents' perspectives on the meaning of race and ethnicity, enriching their understanding of racial stratification processes, and developing their coping skills to manage sociocultural stressors (Eccles et al., 1993; Wang et al., 2020). The ERS model includes methods and content on how schools influence adolescent outcomes. There is a growing demand for ERS research outside of the home context (Ruck et al., 2021), considering the additional contexts that influence parental socialization messages (Caughy et al., 2002; Hughes et al., 2016; Saleem et al., 2016).

Despite the growth in literature on ethnic-racial socialization (ERS), until recently, very little research has focused on contexts outside the home (Hughes et al., 2016; Priest et al., 2014). ERS is a common and necessary practice within ethnic minority families to teach youth about race, ethnicity, and racial discrimination (Hughes & Kwok, 2006; Umana-Taylor & Hill, 2020). Adolescent youth must negotiate an increasingly complex world of socialization messages from multiple sources (Hughes et al., 2011). There is a need for research on ERS outside of the home context (Ruck et al., 2021). The most salient context outside of the home is school, and it is a vital environment to understand the transmitters, content, and effects of school ERS (Saleem & Byrd, 2021). School ERS transmissions within the school context can influence how adolescent youth manage racial stressors and impact academic psychosocial outcomes, including ethnic-racial attitudes (Saleem & Byrd, 2021).

**Figure 1***School ERS Transmission Model*

*Note.* Figure 1 and Appendix C exhibit the transmitters, content and methods, and outcomes of ethnic-racial socialization messages upon adolescent youth in schools in the United States. From “Unpacking school ethnic-racial socialization: A New Conceptual Model” by Saleem, F. T. & Byrd, C.M., 2021, In *Journal of Social Issues*. 77: 1106– 1125.

<https://doi.org/10.1111/josi.12498>

**Transmitters**

The School ERS Transmission Model has three components: 1) transmitters, (2) content, and (3) outcomes (Saleem & Byrd, 2021). Teachers and staff, who are transmitters, can explicitly and implicitly communicate beliefs and values about race through speech and

curriculum choices by avoiding conversations or focusing on racism as a historical artifact (Aronson & Laughter, 2016; Byrd & Hope, 2020; Saleem & Byrd, 2021; Walton et al., 2014). Explicitly or not, teacher and staff behaviors can convey messages about race and ERS (Saleem & Byrd, 2021). Similarly, peers transmit messages about race to each other through conversations and behaviors (Saleem & Byrd, 2021; Wang & Benner, 2016).

### ***School ERS Transmission: Content***

The content of school ERS can be conceptualized within the school climate, which is a broad construct and has often been focused on racial discrimination rather than socialization messages (Saleem & Byrd, 2021; Byrd, 2017). Parental ERS has been established as a foundation for understanding the content of school ERS and has aligning dimensions that are unique to the school context based on culturally relevant teaching and multiculturalism (Aldana & Byrd, 2015; Byrd, 2015; 2017; Hughes & Kwok, 2006; Saleem & Byrd, 2021). The content areas include cultural socialization, critical consciousness socialization, promotion of cultural competence, mainstream socialization, and colorblind socialization; other content areas may exist outside these five (Saleem & Byrd, 2021).

Cultural socialization refers to messages about being a member of one's ethnic-racial group, including statements about the importance of one's culture and opportunities for history and traditions (Saleem & Byrd, 2021). Promoting cultural competence are opportunities to learn about other cultures and develop cross-cultural skills, including comfort with outgroups and a wide range of people (Ponterotto, 2010; Ríos et al., 2016; Saleem & Byrd, 2021; Shockley & Frederick, 2010). Critical consciousness socialization encourages awareness, reflection, and action about racial injustice and aligns with the preparation for bias (Hughes & Kwok, 2006; Saleem & Byrd, 2021). Mainstream socialization includes messages about mainstream United

States norms and values, which are cultural mismatch frameworks for adolescents of color, who are more communal and may be mismatched with school values of individualism and competition (Arunkumar et al., 1999; Saleem & Byrd, 2021; Tyler et al., 2008). Minorities must first overcome stereotypes and inequality by the dominant group that threatens an individual's sense of self (Chavez & Guido-DiBitro, 1999; Phinney et al., 1990). Lastly, colorblind socialization is messages encouraging students to ignore the role of race in their lives and society, and color-evasive will be used to more accurately capture the ways that mainstream socialization messages acknowledge racial functions in society (Annamma et al., 2016; Nelville et al., 2001; Saleem & Byrd, 2021). Color-evasive socialization claims that all people are equal, and racial equality has been achieved while dismissing evidence of institutional and systemic racism (Gallagher, 2015; Saleem & Byrd, 2021).

### ***School ERS Transmission: Method***

The content of ethnic-racial socialization (ERS) messages can be transmitted in two standard dimensions within parental socialization messages that can be applied to the schools: expressions, intent, frequency, and integration (Boykin & Toms, 1985; Hughes & Kwok, 2006; Lesane-Brown, 2006; Paasch-Anderson et al., 2019). How messages are transmitted and the intended message, along with the frequency and integration, helps to understand the school ERS process (Lesane-Brown, 2006; Yasui, 2015; Saleem & Byrd, 2021). Expression is the transmission mode and can be divided into the following categories: verbal and non-verbal (Paasch-Anderson et al., 2019). Verbal messages are the most examined, including conversations of any ERS content, and verbal messages are generally more explicit and transmitted than non-verbal messages, which are less explored but include visual items like bulletin boards that may facilitate the promotion of cultural socialization (e.g., Black History



Month) or mainstream socialization (e.g., American flag) (Paasch-Anderson et al., 2019; Saleem & Byrd, 2021).

In addition to expression, the intent of the transmitter is another consideration for ERS messages, which are deliberate and unintended, while others characterize the intent as reactive or proactive (Hughes & Chen, 1999; Lesane-Brown, 2006; Saleem & Byrd, 2021). For this study and conceptual model, the ideas were merged as passive, proactive, and reactive. Passive messages are unintentional but still convey ERS messages; proactive messages are intentional and may be given; reactive messages are also intentional but in poor response to an event such as racial discrimination (Saleem & Byrd, 2021). Another factor of ERS is how frequently adolescent youth hear each message, and the majority of ERS measures include some frequency component (Hughes & Kwok, 2006,) but messages that are listened to more frequently are more impactful—be it positive or negative (Lesane-Brown, 2006; Saleem & Byrd, 2021). ERS messages of Black American figures in history are more impactful when integrated into the curriculum and instruction and less when transmitted on special days, like the Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday (Banks & Banks, 2019). It is important to note that expression and intent are multidimensional and interconnected (Saleem & Byrd, 2021).

### ***Outcomes of school ERS transmission***

School ethnic-racial socialization (ERS) and parental socialization are both similar in the effects can influence adolescent youth outcomes, and specific dimensions are linked to academic, psychological, and socioemotional outcomes (Dunbar et al., 2017; Hughes et al., 2009; Huynh & Fuligni, 2008; Neblett et al., 2006; Saleem & Byrd, 2021; Tran & Lee, 2010). Parental ERS messages are protection measures against the deleterious effect of racial discrimination on adolescent youth's academic and psychological health (Banerjee et al., 2018;

Saleem & Lambert, 2015; Saleem et al., 2021; Wong et al., 2003). Parental cultural socialization messages were also discovered to mitigate the effect of teacher racial discrimination (Wang & Huguley, 2012). ERS is an essential contributor to adolescent youth's adjustment and well-being due to the influence on how racial stressors impact adolescent youth academically, psychologically, and socially while shaping their ethnic-racial identity (Saleem & Byrd, 2021). Black minority adolescent youth are vulnerable to individual and systemic experiences with racism in school that can be stressful and potentially traumatic (Saleem et al., 2021).

### **Related Literature**

The School ERS Transmission Model has three components: 1) transmitters, (2) content, and (3) outcomes (Saleem & Byrd, 2021). Teachers and staff, who are transmitters, can explicitly and implicitly communicate beliefs and values about race through speech and curriculum choices by avoiding conversations or focusing on racism as a historical artifact (Aronson & Laughter, 2016; Byrd & Hope, 2020; Saleem & Byrd, 2021; Walton et al., 2014). Explicitly or not, teacher and staff behaviors can convey messages about race and ERS (Saleem & Byrd, 2021). Similarly, peers transmit messages about race to each other through conversations and behaviors (Saleem & Byrd, 2021; Wang & Benner, 2016).

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### **Outcomes of school ERS transmission**

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data attests to the reality that, even after Brown's precedented landmark ruling in 1954, United States schools continue to marginalize minoritized students. Also, to bridge the racial achievement gap, the system must consider how race and culture influence the educational outcomes of all students (Utt & Tochluk, 2020).

Early Black Racial Identity (BRI) research by Kenneth and Mamie Clark (1939) and Eugene and Ruth Horwitz (1939) suggested that Black self-hatred in choosing White over Black among African American children. It was not until the early 1970s that evidence corroborated earlier findings and formulated the Black self-hatred hypothesis (Porter, 1971). Black theorists such as W.E.B. DuBois (2013/1903), B. T. Washington (1901), and M. Garvey (2004) all believed in the development of distinctive African or Black identity as a central task in the development of Black Americans post-slavery (Zirkel & Johnson, 2016). Specifically, DuBois (1903) believed exploring racial socialization in Black families was essential. Black families struggle with the double consciousness of being Black and how others see and treat them (Cross, 2020). The double consciousness is relevant as racial disparities continue in the U.S. (Cross, 2020; Del Toro & Wang, 2021; Minniear & Soliz, 2019).

Interest in the importance of racial-ethnic identity came from the post-1960s interracial baby boom (Root 1992, 1993; 1996; Zack, 1995). Racial identity is integral to the overall well-being of minoritized students (Appling & Robinson, 2021; Burrell-Craft, 2020; Cardwell et al., 2020; DeCuir-Gunby, 2009; DeCuir-Gunby et al., 2012; Hypolite, 2020; Kiecolt & Hughes, 2017; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). More importantly, racial identity may contribute to the quality-of-life assessments (Cloverdill et al., 2011), suggesting that a stronger, more positive racial identity will be related to a higher subjective quality of life (Kiecolt & Hughes, 2017). Racial identity development may significantly impact coping skills against the adverse effects of

discrimination and provide a more positive self-image (Appling & Robinson, 2021; Burrell-Craft, 2020; DeCuir-Gunby, 2009a; DeCuir-Gumby et al., 2012b; Del Toro & Way, 2021; Hypolite, 2020; Kiecolt & Hughes, 2017; Rivas-Drake et al., 2014;).

Normative development for African American students is inextricably linked to environmental factors that often devalue their racial group/identity (Appling & Robinson, 2021; Burrell-Craft, 2020; DeCuir-Gunby, 2009a; DeCuir-Gumby et al., 2012b; Kiecolt & Hughes, 2017; Nieto, 2017). A more substantial and positive racial identity is related to better self-attitudes and mental health for minorities (Bennett, 2006; Brown & Evans, 2002; Del Toro & Way, 2021; Hughes et al., 2006; Ida & Christie-Mizell, 2012; Neblett et al., 2009; Umaña-Taylor et al., 2006; Umaña-Taylor & Rivas-Drake, 2021). The related literature can further examine racial-ethnic identity and racial-ethnic identity development in schools for this study, including racial identity development and the role of teachers as ERS agents. The literature intersects with parents and schools as racial socialization agents, and how the messages may influence the identity and academic achievement of minoritized adolescent youth students will be reviewed in this section.

### **Ethnic and Racial Identity**

The focus of identity research was derived from the theoretical work of Erikson (1968) and the empirical work of Marcia (1966). As children grow into adolescence, identity development continues to manifest into the introspective examination of cognitive abilities, environments, and social roles and falls under a social identity (Arnett, 2002; Cross, 2020; Spencer et al., 2006). Erikson (1968) viewed identity development as the central issue of adolescence, and Erickson's seminal theories have remained the most influential. Racial socialization is fundamental to understanding the evolution of racially minoritized youth in the

United States (Anderson & Stevenson, 2019; Hughes et al., 2016; Neblett Jr et al., 2012; Spencer, 1983; Umaña-Taylor & Hill, 2020). As all research areas focus on the development of children of color, racial socialization research has been constrained by structural barriers that render it less worthy of scholarly attention (Syed et al., 2018; Smith-Bynum, 2023). Racial socialization is one of the most studied topics in contemporary minority development (Reynolds & Gonzales-Backen, 2017; Stein et al., 2018; Umaña-Taylor & Hill, 2020; Wang et al., 2020). School is a salient context where adolescent youth encounter, process, and witness ethnic-racial socialization practices that may impact ethnic and racial identity (Saleem, 2021).

### ***Identity Theory***

The first strand of identity theory based on Mead's fronts is the relationships between social systems and identities (Stryker et al., 2005). The systems may be categorized by quantifiers: economic, ethnic, and kinship are large structures; schools and neighborhoods are intermediate structures; families and social groups are small (Burke & Stryker, 2000). The first to use the term ego identity, giving a subjective sense of self, Erikson suggested that a successfully formed identity is linked to a person's overall psychological well-being (Cardwell et al., 2020; Lally & Valentine-French, 2019; Yishan et al., 2022). Black American and Latinx adolescent youth are overrepresented in at-risk contexts in neighborhoods and schools, resulting in biopsychological vulnerability that influences youth's identity and mental health (Saleem et al., 2021; Walters et al., 2011). The combination of identity development and racial stress may exacerbate risks for psychological and academic difficulties and perpetuate disparities for those from racially marginalized groups (Saleem et al., 2021).

Identity is a set of beliefs about oneself and the world around one with perceptions of sameness, difference, integrity, and continuity over time (Erikson, 1968). The primary



psychological task of adolescence is establishing an identity and emphasizing the unique role of the first stage of the child's life in identity formation. James Marcia (2010) expanded the theory by identifying four possibilities of combinations of the dimension of commitment and exploration: identity diffusion, identity foreclosure, identity moratorium, and identity achievement. Most research has focused on this essential developmental phase of life as identity is an ongoing transactional process; however, studies have shown that identity development evolves beyond adolescence and factors in the interactions with the social environment and background (Cramer, 2004; Fadjukoff, Pulkkinen, & Kokko, 2016; Kroger, 2006; Stone, 1962; Umana-Taylor, 2011).

### ***Ethnic Identity***

Phinney's ethnic identity approach was based on Marcia's identity status paradigm, with Phinney focusing on the ethnic identity of minority group adolescents in the U.S. (Phinney, 1989). The Three-Stage Model of Ethnic Identity Formation concept is based on Phinney's (2003) definition of ethnic identity as a dynamically multi-layered identity construct that one assigns to one's life as a member of a distinct group. Based on Erickson's (1994) and Marcia's (1994) theories and evaluation of identity formation, two components are the central focus: exploration and commitment. This research study contributed to the identity development theory by understanding the lived experiences of educators as ethnic-racial socialization transmitters of adolescent youth within the school context.

Ethnic identity is the interaction between the exploration of and commitment to a given cultural background of acceptance based on ethnic or racial ancestry (Maehler, 2022; Phinney, 2006). Race has changed in definition and understanding throughout United States history, only referring to skin color at times and at other times as a stand-in for ethnicity (Minniear & Soliz,

2019). Hence, the term ethnic-racial was coined (Umaña-Taylor et al., 2014), alleviating the need to distinguish between the two concepts. Ethnic-racial socialization (ERS) is a relevant socialization goal for parents of color and is repeatedly linked with adolescents' psychosocial and academic outcomes (Byrd & Legette, 2022; Hughes & Kwok, 2006; Huguley et al., 2019; Umaña-Taylor & Hill, 2020; Witherspoon et al., 2021).

### ***Racial Identity***

Cross's (1971) previous research and theoretical developments concerning identity development in Black American youth document how identity changes orient towards racial identity throughout life. Black American youths begin their lives without the direct knowledge of racial stratification; however, through engagement in the socioenvironmental context, they realize the implications of being a member of a minority group (Bañales et al., 2020; Cross, 1971). During adolescence, unlike childhood, it is not the world of objects that one seeks to explore, but the person themselves and the environment around them; the emotional relationships seek security and are often viewed as authority figures, like parents and teachers (Lally & Valentine-French, 2019). Interactions with teachers and school curricula influence racial identity development in young children (Hypolite, 2020; Piper, 2019). Black Americans live and must operate in a racist society in which prejudice and discrimination are ubiquitous and often institutionalized (DeCuir-Gunby, 2009; Zirkel & Johnson, 2016); thus, educators and other adults must help Black youth see themselves as part of a community and culture that actively refutes negative experiences, attitudes, and images seen in schools and elsewhere (Cross, 1991; Robinson & Biran, 2006; Sellers, 2003; Tatum, 2004).

Racial stereotypes, in general, are harmful to minority adolescent youth (Eberhardt et al., 2006; Griffith et al., 2019; Legewie, 2016; Smedley, 2019; Steele, 1997) and are just as harmful

in the school context which impacts academic performance. Black American and Latinx adolescent youths must navigate discrimination, racism, and negative socially constructed stereotypes exploration in schools every day (Alfaro et al., 2009; Banerjee et al., 2018; Burrell-Craft, 2020; DeCuir-Gunby, 2009; DeCuir-Gumby et al., 2012; Gray & Morton, 2018; Kyere et al., 2021; Melucci, 1996; Osborne et al., 2023; Zirkel & Johnson, 2016). Black American students face high suspensions, expulsions, and incarceration rates, negatively influencing identity development (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Zirkel & Johnson, 2016). Black American parents play an indispensable role in establishing and defining racial identity, and research has shown that parents stress protective socialization and awareness of racism. (Cross, 2020; DeCuir-Gunby et al., 2012; Stevenson et al., 2002; Wang et al., 2019)

Several theories have described how individuals form attitudes, beliefs, and meanings of racial group membership (Cross, 1991; Helms, 1990; Phinney, 1993), influencing the developmental models of ego identity (Erickson, 1968; Marcia, 1966). Phinney's ethnic identity model (1989, 1992, 1993) is like the REI model, having identity status through which development to a more psychologically healthy ethnic identity resolution. Phinney (1992) used the term *ethnic identity* to refer to individuals' attitudes and beliefs toward their ethnic group and *racial identity* as models of group identity when explicitly applied to African Americans.

### ***Ethnic-Racial Identity***

Ecological frameworks indicate that adolescent youth development results from interactions between individuals and the context, precisely the school context and educator practices in this study. Students receive frequent messages from the school and educator practices that convey strengths or deficits about, value, or disvalue of minoritized racial groups (Howard, 2020; Saleem & Byrd, 2021). Many adolescent youths of color contend with and

internalize ethnic-racial encounters at schools (Adams-Bass et al., 2014; Anderson et al., 2019; Henderson et al., 2021). The focus on school racialization is essential to counteract racist policies and practices and promote educational equity in educational settings (Wang et al., 2023). When schools perpetuate racial stress and trauma or alienate minoritized adolescent youth of color, negative consequences across functioning and development may result (Saleem et al., 2020). Contextual experiences are critical for shaping adolescent youth identity development, and the school context is highly influential. Adolescent youth development is shaped by the impacting perceptions of current and future self (Bronfenbrenner, 1988; Ogbu, 2004; Spencer et al., 2006). Ethnic-racial identity (ERI) development in minoritized adolescent youth is particularly salient due to exploring race and how others perceived them, including European Americans (Rivas-Drake et al., 2014).

Studies examining ethnic-racial identity development have mainly examined the dynamics that impact family ethnic-racial socialization (ERS) shapes ERI (Hughes, 2016). ERS has necessary implications for adolescents' academic performance, behaviors, and mental health (Hughes et al., 2019). The school context plays a crucial role in students' understanding and conceptualization of race (Aldana & Byrd, 2015; Byrd, 2015, 2017; Legette, 2018; Saleem & Byrd, 2021; Saleem et al., 2021; Tyson, 2011) and is the reason for this study. Phinney's ethnic identity model (1989, 1992, 1993) is like the REI model, having identity status through which development to a more psychologically healthy ethnic identity resolution.

The distinction between race and ethnicity is particularly complex for African Americans due to historical events such as forced slavery and cultural disconnection from their indigenous African culture (Seaton et al., 2006). Sellers and his colleagues (1998) advanced the concept of racial membership in American society, providing the primary psychological connection among

Black Americans. However, Cross (1971) and other scholars use identity development frameworks, which do not account for the messages minority youth receive and affect, but rather the cognitive aspect of identity development. Minoritized adolescent youth of color report experiencing various forms of ethnic-racial stressors, such as bullying and teasing, that are associated with adverse mental health and academic consequences (Douglas et al., 2016; Jernigan & Daniel, 2011; Saleem et al., 2021; Wong et al., 2003).

The distinction between race and ethnicity is particularly complex for Black Americans due to historical events such as forced slavery and cultural disconnection from indigenous African culture (Seaton et al., 2006). The concept of racial membership in American society provides the primary psychological connection among Black Americans (Sellers et al., 1998). However, Cross (1971) and other scholars use identity development frameworks, which do not account for the message and impact minority youth receive but rather the cognitive aspect of identity development. Parents and children shape the racial socialization process through conversations about race-related and cultural events in their lives (Brown & Lesane-Brown, 2006; Caughy et al., 2002; Hughes & Chen, 1999; Smith-Bynum, 2023; Stevenson et al., 2002; Thomas & Blackmon, 2015).

### **Parental Ethnic-Racial Socialization**

Ethnic-racial socialization (ERS) is processing information and worldviews concerning race and intergenerational ethnicity transmission from family, friends, and communities (Hughes et al., 2008, 2017). Parents and children shape the racial socialization process through their conversations about race-related and cultural events in their lives (Brown & Lesane-Brown, 2006; Caughy et al., 2002; Hughes & Chen, 1999; Smith-Bynum, 2023; Stevenson et al., 2002; Thomas & Blackmon, 2015).

The racial socialization process occurs through the lived experiences of both parents and children. Parents and children shape the racial socialization process through their conversations about race-related and cultural events in their lives (Brown & Lesane-Brown, 2006; Caughy et al., 2002; Hughes & Chen, 1999; Smith-Bynum, 2023; Stevenson et al., 2002; Thomas & Blackmon, 2015). Parents can facilitate mastery of racial socialization through direct conversations about racial matters and modeling strategies for coping with discriminatory situations (Anderson & Stevenson, 2019; Jones et al., 2020).

Ecological frameworks indicate that youth development results from interactions between individuals and their context, precisely the school context and educator practices in this study. Contextual experiences are critical for shaping their identity development, and the school context is highly influential. Adolescent youth development is shaped by the impacting perceptions of their current and future self (Bronfenbrenner, 1988; Ogbu, 2004; Spencer et al., 2006). Ethnic-racial identity development in minority adolescent youth is particularly salient due to their exploration of the perception of their race and how others perceived them (Rivas-Drake et al., 2014), including European Americans.

### **Ethnic-Racial Socialization**

Ethnic-racial socialization (ERS) is how socialization agents transmit messages of ethnicity and race to children (Hughes et al., 2016). The broad definition includes (1) messages from varied agents of socialization, (2) messages that are deliberate and unintentional, and subtle and overt. ERS theoretically covers an array of inputs into the child's racial knowledge and learning (Hughes & Watford, 2022). The empirical focus on parents' ERS is embedded in the idea that messages received from parents and others are among the most critical forces that shape their racial knowledge (Hughes & Watford, 2022). Studies have shown that specific

parental socialization messages are associated with various indicators of youth identity and adjustment, racial beliefs, and attitudes (Hughes & Kwok, 2006).

Studies examining the adolescent and parental transmission of ethnicity and race found that more frequency in cultural socialization results in favorable identity outcomes and academic and psychosocial domains (Huguley et al., 2019; Umaña-Taylor & Hill, 2020). In sum, research has focused almost exclusively on parental socialization messages. In contrast, the importance of the school context, specifically educators, has downplayed the impact on ethnic-racial identity formation and development. Landmark scholarship and theoretical studies outlined concepts and practices that comprise racial socialization (Anderson & Stevenson, 2019; Hughes et al., 2016; Neblett Jr. et al., 2012; Spencer, 1983; Umaña-Taylor & Hill, 2020).

ERS is understood to play a vital role in developing minoritized adolescent youth. Still, greater exploration is needed to realize the full spectrum of this practice across developmental transitions, discriminatory contexts, and racial and ethnic groups (Osborne et al., 2023). Parental socialization strategies prepare minority adolescent youth for discrimination as children enter elementary school (Contreras et al., 2021). Racial socialization among White children is essential to understanding the role of race and ethnicity in child development (Hagerman, 2018).

The study of race has needed more attention in integrating racial socialization into other aspects of child development (Smith-Bynum, 2023), including the school context. This study seeks to envision the school context as one of the primary transmitters of ERS to adolescent youth. I will apply the school ethnic-racial socialization model to examine the ERS messages transmitted in the classroom and school culture by teachers.

### ***Educators' Influence on Racial Identity***

Identity development often elicits resistance from educators, especially when the focus of learning about identity is race and racism (Piper, 2019). Racial identity development in young children is influenced by interactions with teachers and the school curriculum (DeCuir-Gunby, 2012a; Howard & Navarro, 2021; Piper, 2019). Moreover, proximal factors such as teacher support can influence students' attitudes and beliefs regarding a school (Quin et al., 2018) and themselves. Black American students perceiving White teachers as having limited views of their academic ability is quite problematic for sustainable teacher-student relationships and education (DeCuir-Gunby, 2012a; Howard & Navarro, 2016). White teachers viewed with positional power may affect the racial identity of African American students and the attitudes and peer relationships with non-Blacks. The school staff often do not prioritize, recognize, or feel adequately equipped to address race-related topics and issues and do not engage (Adams-Bass et al., 2014; Howard, 2020; Sue et al., 2009). School staff and teachers may miss opportunities to promote racial healing and foster a healthy racial climate with frequent interactions (Saleem et al., 2021).

The critical shortage of Black American teachers due to recruitment and retainment issues limits cultural connections among White teachers who are not sensitive to the needs of Black American students (DeCuir-Gunby, 2012a; Howard & Navarro, 2016; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). The lack of Black American teachers and representation in the curriculum, coupled with culturally disconnected teachers, impact Black American students' sense of racial identity, directly and indirectly, and peer relationships (DeCuir-Gunby, 2012a; Howard & Navarro, 2016; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). Warm and caring teachers achieve positive educational and social outcomes for students (Ware, 2006) and have a qualitative effect on the lives of



minoritized students (Cormier et al., 2021). Student outcomes are positive regardless of demographics, with high expectations rooted in a caring dynamic. (Cormier et al., 2021).

### **Peer Influence, Academic Achievement, and Racial Identity**

School racial socialization is a multidimensional construct encompassing the explicit and implicit messages students receive about race and culture (Byrd, 2017). Adolescents usually spend more time with their peers and less time with their families, with little to no supervision of adults with their peer engagement (Lally & Valentine-French, 2019). Adolescent friendships are based on intimate exchanges of thoughts and feelings (Lally & Valentine-French, 2019). All students need to belong and interact with peers with the same characteristics, which increases their chances of acceptance (DeCuir-Gunby, 2012a; Howard & Navarro, 2016; Jugert et al., 2020; Osterman, 2000). School racial socialization has been found to occur most commonly in schools and represents key factors of youth perspectives: cultural socialization and promotion of cultural competence (Byrd & Hope, 2020; Del Toro & Wang, 2021).

The demographic makeup of classrooms in America continues to become more culturally, racially, and socioeconomically diverse (Del Toro & Wang, 2021; National Center for Education Statistics, 2019). Classrooms consist of students with varying academic abilities and a mix of cultural backgrounds and socioeconomic statuses, with an expectation that all the students will demonstrate identical educational outcomes without exception to societal barriers to achievements or cultural considerations (Ross, 2021). Some schools and districts implement cooperative learning, pre-k education, differentiated learning, and culturally responsive teaching methods to provide more equitable and practical instruction to increase the academic achievement of minority students (Rust, 2019). Although culturally responsive teaching is needed in classrooms nationwide, educators must also incorporate equitably responsive teaching.

### ***School-Community Relationships and Racial Identity***

Culturally responsive teaching began in the early 1990s with the work of Anna Maria Villegas, who presented that cultural differences impact the achievement levels of minoritized students. The cultural dissimilarity between a student's school and a student's home contributes to the academic challenges of minority students and coined culturally responsive pedagogy to build upon the principle that learning is different across cultures (Villegas, 1991). To create a bridge between the parental socialization messages to the children and the school context as a racial socialization agent, the maximization of learning opportunities by teachers gaining knowledge of the cultures represented in their classroom, translating this into instructional practice (Villegas, 1991).

School engagement broadly involves students' thoughts, feelings, and behaviors toward the school involvement, learning activities, and curriculum (Fredricks et al., 2004). Students who are engaged participate in classroom and school activities exhibit interest in learning (Fredricks et al., 2004), whereas, when students are disengaged, they demonstrate disruptive behaviors and are more likely to withdraw from school (Hirschfield & Gasper, 2011; Rumberger & Rotermund, 2012). Teachers must actively engage in classroom activities to develop an appreciation and understanding of their students' cultures (Emdin, 2016).

One microsystem environment involves directly engaging parents and family members (Bronfenbrenner, 1986, 2005). Another microsystem environment includes school, where teachers, administrators, and peers play essential roles in socialization (DeCuir-Gumby et al., 2012; Jugert et al., 2020). Family and school contexts inform adolescents about membership into different groups to which they belong, such as race/ethnicity, gender, religion, and future occupation (DeCuir-Gumby et al., 2012; Rockquemore & Brunnsma, 2002). Family, school, and

social environments promote identity development differently (DeCuir-Gunby et al., 2012). The overarching goal of both familial and school settings is to equip adolescents regarding membership in groups they belong, such as race/ethnicity, gender, and class (DeCuir-Gumby et al., 2012).

### ***Racial Identity Development in Schools***

In addition to parents, another setting important to youth's identity development is the school context, encompassing teacher-student interactions, peer relationships, and the school culture (Byrd & Legette, 2022). Teachers are often the first line of defense for adolescent youth coping and dealing with traumatic events (Saleem et al., 2021). Adolescent youth spend most of their day attending school or engaging in extracurricular activities, so these experiences and interactions influence identity-related processes (DeCuir-Gunby, 2009). Existing studies suggest that the interactions and experiences occurring within the school context may be particularly relevant to the identity of Black American youth, including their subsequent achievement outcomes (Byrd & Legette, 2022).

School interactions tend to affirm optimistic or pessimistic views of Black American adolescents' identity and communicate negative racial stereotypes (DeCuir-Gunby, 2009; Harper, 2007)). Schools may overtly and covertly indoctrinate race-related messages about racial identification to Black American adolescent youth (DeCuir-Gumby et al., 2012). Research has shown that parental ethnic-racial socialization (ERS) tends to be positively related to academic outcomes and can moderate the adverse effects of discrimination and psychosocial outcomes (Harris-Britt et al., 2007; Neblett et al., 2008; Wang et al., 2020; Wang & Huguley, 2012). This study focuses on the role of schools in ethnic-racial socialization (ERS) identity using culturally

responsive pedagogy to promote learning environments that are responsive to the needs of underrepresented minority students, specifically Black Americans.

Racial-ethnic identity suggests culturally relevant curriculum and instruction promote racial identity development (DeCuir-Gumby et al., 2012; Howard, 2021; Ladson-Billings, 1998; Nieto, 2017). Adolescents learn best when academic pursuits are pertinent to their everyday lives and sociocultural contexts (Byrd, 2017; Wang et al., 2019). The operation of racial socialization in the school context has supporting evidence for the benefit of youth development (Wang et al., 2023). Understanding the role of race and ethnicity in the broader social world is a core developmental competency and essential to socioemotional and identity development (Wang et al., 2020). Educators and school culture are integral to racial identity development in schools (DeCuirGumby et al., 2012; Hypolite, 2020; Howard, 2021; Howard & Navarro, 2016; Nieto, 2017). School cultural socialization focuses on teaching youth about their racial and ethnic community's cultural heritage, history, and traditions; it also helps foster youth's cultural pride and commitment to their sociocultural groups (Byrd, 2019; Hughes & Kwok, 2006). With a school ethnic-racial socialization lens, we will examine the roles of educators and schools in developing a positive racial identity to enhance self-esteem and promote academic achievement through culturally relevant teaching (Wang et al., 2023).

### ***School Culture and Racial Identity***

School culture refers to the norms, beliefs, and values held by adults and students, as well as the quality of interpersonal relationships within the school (Wang & Degol, 2016). A positive school culture has been shown to contribute to students' academic performance (Berkowitz et al., 2017). Therefore, it is critical to amend racial disparities in adolescent youth school culture perceptions while promoting universally positive school experiences (Wang et al., 2023). New

teachers remain dependent upon the scripted and one-size-fits-all curricula that do not include a wide range of differentiated directives for various dimensions of identity development, leaving little room for teachers to promote critical appreciation for differences among students, much less to affirm these differences through their creative teaching practices (Piper, 2019). The lack of understanding of diversity issues can negatively affect the educational success of their students (Ladson-Billings, 1995; Wood, 2009; Zeichner, 1996). Race and identity influence school practices that shape K-12 education in the U.S. and the social and cultural capital the students of color bring (Kyere et al., 2021; Ladson-Billings, 1998). Educational disparities are rooted in teachers' and school cultures' critical roles in Black American students' behavioral and cognitive development (Ladson-Billings, 1998; Redding, 2019). Teachers, educational leadership, and supporting staff all contribute to the school culture, and those who are not critically race-conscious or do not comprehend that ethnic-racial socialization transmission messages and practices may induce harm by overlooking the events or responding punitively (Saleem et al., 2021; Ullucci, 2010).

Racial hierarchy is essential to understanding the structure and cultural boundaries between students, teachers, supporting staff, and Black American and Latinx students (Kyere et al., 2021; Ladson-Billings, 1998; Umaña-Taylor & Rivas-Drake, 2021). The parents primarily establish racial identity development, and the school context serves as an extension of the identity transmitted by parents, or they can communicate an utterly different identity (Burrell-Craft, 2020; DeCuir-Gumby et al., 2012; Gray & Morton, 2018; Melucci, 1996; Wang, Smith, Miller-Cotto, & Huguley, 2019; Zirkel & Johnson, 2016). Schools can have a significant role in racial identity development and transform perspectives by fostering inclusion and cultural

pluralism (Burrell-Craft, 2020; DeCuir-Gumby et al., 2012; Hughes & Kwok, 2006; Wanget al., 2019; Winter-Hoyte & Smith, 2020).

The school context encompasses peer relationships, school culture, and teacher relationships that influence identity-related processes (DeCuir-Gumby et al., 2012; Howard & Navarro, 2016; Redding, 2019; Wang, Smith, Miller-Cotto, & Huguley, 2019). Particularly for Black American students, the school context has relevance to identity development and academic outcomes (DeCuir-Gumby et al., 2012; Gray & Morton, 2018; Howard & Navarro, 2016; Wang et al., 2019). Schools can affirm identity development or communicate racial stereotypes through peer interaction and school culture (DeCuir-Gumby et al., 2012; Howard & Navarro, 2016; Redding, 2019; Wang et al., 2019).

Cultural socialization involves an explicit focus on the cultural practices, perspectives, and sociocultural experiences of diverse racial and ethnic groups; it operates as a counternarrative against mainstream forms of racial socialization that remain silent on issues of race and racism or implicitly reinforce norms and practices that perpetuate racial inequities (Wang et al., 2023). The school context can replace negative narratives with a positive representation of Black Americans in the educational context (Kyere, 2021; Ladson-Billings, 1995). Teachers and school culture may covertly and overtly transmit racial messages that affect the identity development of Black American students (DeCuir-Gumby et al., 2012; Kyere, 2021; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Nieto, 2017; Redding, 2019; Wynter-Hoyte & Smith, 2020). Notedly, research is required to add to the field of study for schools operating as racial socialization agents (DeCuir-Gumby et al., 2012; Wynter-Hoyte & Smith, 2020).

## **Cultural Relevancy and Inclusion in Urban Education**

Urban schools are uniquely positioned to contribute to the development of racial identity and are usually the primary force in the socialization of Black American adolescents (Harper, 2007; Hypolite, 2020). Cultural promotion and socialization refer to opportunities for youth to learn about their culture, traditions, and histories and is practiced in the school context and classroom (Byrd, 2017; Wang et al., 2023). The opportunities include history courses, celebrations like Black History Month, or culturally affirming books and reading (Aldana & Byrd, 2015; Phinney et al., 1997; Saleem et al., 2022; Wang et al., 2023). Underrepresented minority adolescents, specifically Black Americans, face pervasive forms of racism, discrimination, and prejudices that challenge that negatively impact their progress and success much differently from their White peers (Chavous et al., 2008; Spencer, 2017; Spencer et al., 2012; Wang & Holcombe, 2010; Hong et al., 2020).

School instruction and practices incorporating adolescents' culture are essential for engagement and belonging (Aronson & Laughter, 2016; Dotterer et al., 2009; Howard, 2001; Saleem et al., 2022; Schachner et al., 2019; Wang et al., 2023; Young, 2010). School cultural socialization was associated with better grades over time, and the associations were mediated by ethnic-racial identity (Del Toro & Wang, 2021). Cultural promotion and socialization efforts encompass educational practices that integrate multicultural perspectives into the school curriculum and communicate an understanding of and respect for the contributions of diverse racial and ethnic groups (Wang et al., 2023). A school culture characterized by mutual respect, trust, and friendship across ethnic-racial lines promotes the opportunity for all students to appreciate their own and peers' ethnic-racial and cultural backgrounds (Aboud et al., 2003).

Examining the historical structure of schools and the biases perpetuated within the education system is necessary to understand why this blame is constantly and specifically associated with specific groups of students, particularly students of color and people with low incomes (Geronimus, 2003; Lenhardt, 2016; Piper, 2021; Umana-Taylor & Rivas-Drake, 2021). The school racial climate is often shaped by the educational institution's beliefs, values, and expectations, and those within them share and set the tone for the school-wide racial environment (Chavous, 2005; Saleem et al., 2021). Racially biased policies, practices, and systems, such as academic, behavioral, curriculum, and discipline, transmit race messages to adolescent youth (Saleem et al., 2021). School policies that ban natural and ethnic hairstyles through physical suspension and psychological and cultural penalization are discriminatory and convey a devaluation of cultural and physical traits while transmitting messages about race and the sense of belongingness (safety). Recent controversies surrounding efforts to eliminate school-based discussions of race as well as historical and contemporary forms of racism, discrimination, and prejudice are driven in part by the assumption that such practices will harm White students by increasing their psychological distress and further marginalize Black youth by highlighting racial barriers and undermining their agency (Wang et al., 2023).

Adolescent youth meaning making about their social identities and developmental contexts is essential for determining how racial socialization practices impact their learning and performance (Spencer et al., 2012). Adolescents' experiences in school have ramifications for their overall school adjustment (Wang et al., 2023), yet Black youth consistently rate markers of school climate, belongingness, and interpersonal relationships less favorable than their White peers (Konold et al., 2017; Voight et al., 2015). Adolescent youth who experience school racialization efforts that explicitly promote the transmission of positive cultural messages may



engage with each other on an equal footing (Ladson-Billings, 2014). All students stand to benefit from racial socialization practices involving the promotion of cultural competence that highlights the role of the school as a safe space where people from all backgrounds can learn and grow by engaging in meaningful dialogues and positive experiences regarding ethnicity and race (Seider et al., 2015). Adolescents who attend schools that expose them to their culture and show appreciation for diversity have reported a stronger sense of school belonging and more teacher support (Appling & Robinson, 2021; Byrd, 2015, 2017; Dickson et al., 2016; Sellers et al., 2006).

The current social and political climate has influenced racial identity for Black Americans, including curricula that do not include the countless achievements of persons of color (Ladson-Billings, 1995; Nieto, 2017; Redding, 2019; Saleem et al., 2021). Minoritized students need more curriculum and instruction in culturally relevant teaching (DeCuir-Gunby, 2009; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Nieto, 2017; Redding, 2019; Saleem et al., 2021). Racial identity development provides Blacks, Whites, and other ethnic groups a sense of belonging and inclusion (Appling & Robinson, 2021; Kiecolt & Hughes, 2017). Schools can significantly influence racial identity development and transform perspectives by incorporating culturally relevant teaching and a culture of inclusion (Appling & Robinson, 2021; Howard & Navarro, 2016; Hypolite, 2020; Kiecolt & Hughes, 2017; Ladson-Billings, 1995). Curriculum history reveals a history of racially weaponizing the curriculum to exclude marginalized populations (Appling & Robinson, 2021; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Vickery, 2020). Mainstream ideology and pedagogy in the United States K-12 schools focus substantively on and privilege the contributions of Western civilization and White historical figures (Wang et al., 2023).

Diversity and multicultural awareness training are advantageous for all teachers working with ethnically racially minoritized students as they navigate through learning about pedagogical practices that increase student engagement (Kerns et al., 2021; Piper, 2019). Most teachers are not culturally sensitive to the needs of Black students (Gay, 1999). White nationalist ideology encompasses a focus on White identity and White cultural pride, which is anathema to the forms of cultural socialization advocated for ethnic and racial equity in schools (Wang et al., 2023). Awareness training primarily benefits new teachers without racial and cultural knowledge within a given community (Kerns et al., 2021; Piper, 2019). Building a sense of efficacy in teachers helps develop beliefs that they can teach all students (Delale-O'Connor, 2017). Teacher education and continued professional development assist with addressing the dynamics of the school community, multiculturalism within the curriculum, and the integration of culturally responsive pedagogy; this awareness training strengthens cultural relations and is customizable for any demographical area (Andrews, 2021; Kerns et al., 2021).

Teacher education programs must include opportunities for development and growth to effectively initiate and facilitate classroom conversations regarding race and racism (Howard & del Rosario, 2000; Saleem et al., 2021). Academic leadership and supporting staff should have opportunities and reinforcement for continuous accountability, support, and ongoing training. Valuable knowledge that supports the development and growth of all learners of diverse cultures is gained through awareness and diversity training (Kerns et al., 2021), and cultural differences are embraced (Fiddiman & Partelow, 2021), thereby building inclusion and countering bias (Kerns et al., 2021).

### ***School Belonging***

School belonging entails students' perceptions of the degree to which they feel accepted, included, and supported by others in the school community (Anderman, 2003; Goodenow & Grady, 1993; Saleem et al., 2022). School belonging is essential for academic outcomes such as achievement, academic competence, and school withdrawal (Neel & Fuligni, 2013; Korpershoek et al., 2020; Saleem et al., 2022). A feeling of belonging strongly predicted youth life satisfaction and well-being (Arslan et al., 2020) and positively correlated with positive affect and self-esteem (Ammar, 2022). Positive psychological and behavioral changes were associated with belonging (Longaretti, 2020). The reason behind the increasing desire to attend college could be attributed to the long and short-term impact of the school on a student's psychological and academic outcomes (Allen et al., 2021). School belonging is strongly associated with positive student well-being outcomes (Porter et al., 2021).

School belonging positively predicted student grades and grade point averages in a study by Faircloth and Hamm (2005). Adolescence youth will be happier, experience greater satisfaction and school engagement with a sense of school belonging, which could indirectly enhance student achievement (El Zaatari & Maalouf, 2022; Fong Lam et al., 2015; Korpershoek et al., 2020). School engagement may increase and decrease truancy and dropout rates and violent involvement with academic motivation (Allen et al., 2018; Henry et al., 2021; Korpershoek et al., 2020; Koyuncu, 2021; Sahin et al., 2016). Motivated students with a sense of belonging would academically achieve more than those who are not committed and motivated (Fong Lam et al., 2015; Korpershoek et al., 2020; Longaretti, 2020).

Adolescent youth exist in a system of the interconnectedness of activities, relationships, roles, and settings (Shelton, 2019). During stressful experiences and disconnectedness, adolescent youth cannot correctly apply coping mechanisms to control thoughts and feelings,

which impacts academic performance as the sense of belonging declines (Abdollahi et al., 2020; Allen et al., 2018). Students from more affluent families tend to have a stronger sense of school belonging as they can afford the necessary resources to adapt to the school environment (Allen et al., 2021). As students reach adolescence, they seek autonomy and independence as they develop their identity (Salmela-Aro, 2011).

Students in more hierarchal cultures perceive significant status differences with their teachers (Chiu et al., 2016; Cortina et al., 2017). The interactions may cause a weaker teacher-student relationship and a decreased sense of belonging to school (Ibrahim & El Zaatari, 2020). As students reach adolescence, they seek autonomy and independence as they develop their identity (Salmela-Aro, 2011). Adolescents empowered to make decisions and feel in control have their voices heard, preparing them for the future (El Zaatari & Maalouf, 2022; Ibrahim & El Zaatari, 2020).

Teachers must support students' sense of agency over their learning (Booker, 2021). Academic support can enhance students' sense of school belonging and beliefs regarding their present and future potential (Darling-Hammond et al., 2020; Goodenow, 1993). Collaborative learning and group work are essential classroom learning practices that promote common goals with peers and have a stronger sense of belonging (El Zaatari & Maalouf, 2022; Keyes, 2019). Group activities may satisfy the desire to belong and define an adolescent identity (Booker, 2021). Teachers must encourage the engagement of all diverse students in multicultural classrooms to enhance their critical thinking skills and social awareness through diversified learning environments that are inclusive and welcoming (Robinson, 2020).

Racial stressors have been linked with decreased school belonging for youth of color at the secondary level (Booker, 2006; Bottiani et al., 2016; Dotterer et al., 2009; Roche &

Kuperminc, 2012). Research on Black American adolescents has found that racial discrimination was negatively correlated with school belonging (Bottiani et al., 2016; Roche & Kuperminc, 2012). School racial socialization is a multidimensional construct encompassing the explicit and implicit messages students receive about race and culture (Byrd, 2017). The focus on school racial socialization is essential to promote educational equity and counteract racist policies and practices in educational settings (Wang et al., 2023).

### ***Teacher-Student Relationship***

Positive interpersonal relationships are characterized by mutual understanding, open communication, warmth, and respect (Wang & Degol, 2016). Having caring, supportive, and respectful relationships with adults is essential for adolescents due to their increased need for social acceptance (Eccles et al., 1998). The nature and quality of teacher-student relationships have been the subject of much school climate research (Wang et al., 2023). The teacher-student relationship is the most influential variable in students' sense of belonging to their school (Allen et al., 2018, 2021; Uslu & Gizir, 2017). Teachers are the gatekeepers to a sense of belonging when their practices are based on caring and a sense of warm concern (Booker, 2021). Teachers who provide academic and emotional support promote a sense of belonging through an interest in becoming better acquainted with the student's personal lives and culture (Berlian & Huda, 2022; Booker, 2021; Chhuwon & Wallace, 2014; Ibrahim & El Zaatari, 2020; Longaretti, 2020; Porter et al., 2021; Robinson, 2020).

Teachers' care must extend its remit to be more sensitive to their students' needs, emotional states, and culture (Berlian & Huda, 2022; Booker, 2021; Chhuwon & Wallace, 2014; Porter et al., 2021; Robinson, 2020). Culturally relevant pedagogy assists teachers in developing a better relationship with their students and helps students connect more with their teachers (El

Zaatari & Maalouf, 2022). Teachers can positively influence the teacher-student relationship, and their relationship can have a significant influence on academic performance (Berlian & Huda, 2022; Robinson, 2020; Wang et al., 2023). Despite the importance of interpersonal relationships, research has shown that Black youth tend to experience fewer positive relationships with teachers and peers than their other-race peers (Hughes & Kwok, 2007; Voight et al., 2015).

### ***Teacher Support, Curricula, and Pedagogy***

Within schools, teacher support is imperative to the success of all students (DeCuir-Gunby et al., 2010; Hudley & Durán, 2012; Tucker et al., 2002). Teacher support and expectations influence student motivation and academic achievement (Gay, 2014; Hudley & Durán, 2012; Reeve & Jang, 2006). The more support teachers show, the more students feel they belong (DeCuir-Gunby et al., 2010; Shevalier & McKenzie, 2012). Studies have suggested that Black American students are susceptible to teacher support (Hudley & Durán, 2012; Tucker et al., 2002). Teachers are necessary for program implementation and its ultimate success as significant change agents (DeCuir-Gunby et al., 2010; Yans-McLaughlin, 1990). Teachers can support or deny the effectiveness of a program, and the teachers' perspectives are essential to implementing school-based program effectiveness (DeCuir-Gunby et al., 2010; Yans-McLaughlin, 1990).

When ethnic and racially minoritized students' lived experiences are reflected and centered in a culturally responsive classroom, they are more likely to engage in school, and the racial academic achievement gaps narrow (Dee & Penner, 2017). Not being worthy of mention in curricula affects students' sense of worth and endorses negative stereotypes about Black, Indigenous, and People of Color communities (Kuchirko & Nayfield, 2021; Urrieta, 2004). Pedagogy is a powerful context for messages about ethnicity and race (Kuchirko & Nayfield,

2021). Teachers can convey color-blind messages to adolescent youth by emphasizing meritocracy during history lessons and underscoring the ideology that upholds racial structures (Kuchirko & Nayfield, 2021; Mitchell, 2013; Solt et al., 2016).

Pedagogical practices that promote individual agency, hard work, and equality while denying racial discrimination and structural barriers to success can message minoritized students that their lived experiences of oppression do not factor into their academic performance (Kuchirko & Nayfield, 2021). Color-blind messages can limit adolescent youths' abilities to think critically about ethnicity, race, and racism and hinder their preparation for bias (Aldana & Byrd, 2015; Kuchirko & Nayfield, 2021). White teachers will likely emphasize color-blind messages with their students (Hazelbaker & Mistry, 2021). The 2021 right-wing backlash against and censorship of critical race theory illuminates how the act of making visible society's racial hierarchies is perceived as a threat to the white stream mode of education (Kuchirko & Nayfield, 2021).

Culturally responsive pedagogy and curricula promote cultural socialization, including works by and about minoritized communities (Aldana & Byrd, 2015). Promoting culturally responsive pedagogy and curricula encourages students to learn about their ethnic and racial heritage and history, promotes cultural customs and traditions, and fosters students' racial and ethnic pride (Kuchirko & Nayfield, 2021). Cultural socialization in curricula is educulturalism and teaches critical thinking about race, power, and social and cultural issues (Lea & Sims, 2008). Culturally relevant pedagogy equips students with knowledge about diverse social groups, informs their racial attitudes, and promotes positive intergroup relationships (Brown-Jeffy & Cooper, 2011; Ladson-Billings, 2014; Souto-Manning, 2013). The possibility of reframing the education landscape to represent multiple voices, viewpoints, and values and to promote cultural

pride, ethnic, and cultural pride through strength-based, culturally relevant, and experiential pedagogy (Souto-Manning, 2013).

### **Summary**

Ethnic-racial socialization (ERS) practices in the school context have become a necessary model to examine diversity and inclusionary pedagogical practices and curriculum instruction of educators in public schools in the United States. The classrooms are becoming much more diverse than the teaching staff, specifically with disparity in the recruitment and retention of Black educators. Literature has shown ethnic and racial identity exploration profoundly affects adolescent youth positionality and is a transactional process. The curricula in public schools are still predominately hegemonically White. ERS has been associated with positive social and educational outcomes. ERS promotes a multicultural classroom and school culture while educating all students on diversity, equity, and inclusion. School ethnic-racial socialization has primarily been unexamined in the school context of educator practices. This study has theoretical and practical value in examining educator practices and ERS in curriculum and instructional practices. The school ethnic-racial socialization conceptual model will allow the interpretation and discovery of ethnic-racial socialization transmissions from educators to adolescent youth in public schools in the United States for use in developing and designing policies and pedagogical practices to address diversity, equity, and inclusion for all students. This hermeneutical phenomenology study adds to the field of knowledge by exploring educators' lived experiences as ethnic-racial socialization agents in public schools in the United States.



## **CHAPTER THREE: METHODS**

### **Overview**

The purpose of this hermeneutical phenomenological study is to discover and interpret the educator's experience as an ethnic-racial socialization (ERS) agent with adolescent youth in public schools in the United States. Chapter Three discusses the research design and appropriateness of this hermeneutical phenomenological study. This chapter details the research design, research questions, and the characteristics of the setting and participants. The chapter concludes with information regarding participant selection, methods for data collection, trustworthiness, and ethical considerations.

### **Research Design**

The qualitative research design allows the researcher to understand the experiences being studied (Schwandt, 2007). I employed the qualitative research design to explore teachers' experiences as ethnic-racial socialization agents in middle and secondary schools in the United States of America. The qualitative method was chosen best to interpret the lived experiences of educator practices of ethnic-racial socialization. The qualitative inquiry method allows the researcher to attain empathy on an empirical basis (Patton, 2015). Historically, academic research has utilized quantitative or empirical; however, qualitative research methodologies have been growing (Laverty, 2003). The early 1980s was a time of greater disenchantment with the limits of logical-empirical research (Osborne, 1994). There is a growing recognition of the limitations of addressing many significant questions in the human realm within the requirements of empirical methods and its quest for indubitable truth (Polkinghorne, 1983). Out of this milieu, various research methodologies have grown in popularity, including phenomenology (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). Qualitative research employs a naturalist philosophical approach to investigate

and interpret data to understand the phenomena and underlying meaning better (Gall et al., 2007).

This phenomenological study describes the lived experiences of ethnic-racial socialization agents as a phenomenon. The term lived experience derives from German *erlebnis*, which translates to an experience lived through and recognized as a particular experience (Adam & Van Manen, 2008). Phenomenology aids the researcher in gaining insightful descriptions of individual experiences (Van Manen, 2016). Phenomenology also permits the researcher to focus on how the experiences of the phenomena experienced by the participants perceived the experience (Moustakas, 1994). Edmund Husserl (1913/1954) first applied to social science to study how people describe things or experience them through their senses (Patton, 2015). Phenomenology studies lived experience or the lifeworld (Van Manen, 1997). Polkinghorne (1983) identified this focus as trying to understand or comprehend the meanings of human experiences as they are lived. The lifeworld is understood as what humans experience pre-reflectively, without resorting to categorization or conceptualization, and quite often includes what is taken for granted or those things that are common sense (Husserl, 1970). Studying these phenomena intends to return and re-examine these taken-for-granted experiences and perhaps uncover new or forgotten meanings (Lavery, 2003). This methodology disclosed a realm of being that presented itself with absolute certainty, arising from the experience (Lavery, 2003). Husserl saw this method as reaching true meaning by penetrating deeper and deeper into reality (Lavery, 2003). Phenomenology was a movement away from the Cartesian dualism of reality that was separate from the individual (Jones, 1975; Koch, 1995).

Edmund Husserl (1913/1954) first applied social science to study how people describe things or experience them through their senses (Patton, 2015). Phenomenology is the study of

lived experience or the life of the world (Van Manen, 1997). Polkinghorne (1983) identified the primary focus as trying to understand or comprehend the meanings of lived human experiences. The life world is understood as the experience pre-reflectively, without resorting to categorization or conceptualization, and quite often includes what is taken for granted or those things that are common sense (Husserl, 1970). Studying lived human experience phenomena intends to return and re-examine these taken-for-granted experiences and perhaps uncover new or forgotten meanings (Lavery, 2003). The methodology disclosed a realm of being that presented itself with absolute certainty, arising from experience possible (Lavery, 2003). Husserl saw the method as a way of reaching true meaning by penetrating deeper and deeper into reality (Lavery, 2003).

This hermeneutical phenomenology research design method is most appropriate for this study to identify, describe, and interpret the lived experiences of educators of ethnic-racially diverse students in the school context. Phenomenology allows the researcher to focus on lived experiences and how the participants perceive the experience (Moustakas, 1994). Hermeneutical phenomenology describes and interprets meanings with depth and richness (Van Manen, 2016). This hermeneutical phenomenology study may provide a deeper understanding of the practices and perspectives of teachers as ethnic-racial socialization agents.

### **Research Questions**

The research questions guiding this study are:

#### **Central Research Question**

What are the lived experiences of educators as ethnic-racial socialization (ERS) agents for adolescent youth in public schools in the United States?

#### **Sub-Question One**

How does student diversity affect the perception of educators as ethnic-racial socialization agents?

### **Sub-Question Two**

What are educators' experiences with the curriculum as it affects their role as ethnic-racial socialization agents?

### **Sub-Question Three**

What are educator's experiences as ethnic-racial socialization agents promoting cultural relevancy in the classroom?

## **Setting and Participants**

In this section, the study examined the site settings where the research occurred. In exploring teachers' lived experiences as ethnic-racial socialization (ERS) agents, the setting (site) and participants' details will be provided for this hermeneutic phenomenological qualitative study. The site was described, and the profile of the participants was based on the criteria for participation in the study.

### **Site**

The sites were middle and secondary schools in the United States. There are 98,609 operating schools in the United States in 19,254 operational districts (NCES, 2021). The participants will be those who are within the United States. Public schools in the United States have 49,356,945, and teachers account for 3,023,471. The student population nationally is 49.5 million in public schools (NCES, 2021). Underrepresented minority students account for nearly half of the student body population: 45% White, 28% Hispanic, 14% Black, Asian, two or more races, American Indian/Alaska Native, and Pacific Islander account for the remaining percentages (NCES, 2021). Refer to Table 1 and Appendix D.

**Table 1***Student Enrollment Racial Demographics Race/Ethnicity*

Race-Ethnicity	Student Total	Percent
White	22.4 million	45%
Hispanics	14.1 million	28%
Black	7.4 million	14%
Asian	2.7 million	5%
Two or more races	2.3 million	4%
Native American	.5 million	1%
Pacific Islander	.2 million	<1%
<b>Total</b>	49.5 million	

*Note.* Table 1 and Appendix D show the number of students in United States public schools by ethnicity-racial identity. Adapted from “Digest of Education Statistics as of fall 2021, National Center for Education Statistics, 2021.

**Table 2***Race and Ethnicity of Public School Teachers*

Educators by Race/Ethnicity	Percentage
White, non-Hispanic	79.30%
Black, non-Hispanic	6.70%
Hispanic	9.30%
Asian, non-Hispanic	2.10%
Pacific Islander	0.20%
Native American	0.50%
Two or more races	1.80%

*Note.* Table 2 and Appendix E show the number of educators nationally in public schools, including private school teachers. Adapted from “Race and Ethnicity in Public School Teachers and their Students,” U. S. Department of Education, 2020.

## Participants

Participants in this study were teachers of adolescent youth students in United States public schools with at least one year of experience in core content areas. Thirteen teachers were recruited with the abovementioned requirements until saturation attainment. Saturation has widespread acceptance as a methodological principle in qualitative research (Saunders et al., 2018). Saturation indicates that the data has been collected or analyzed, and further analysis and collection are necessary. A link to the study was created in Google Forms, requesting participant demographic information, years of teaching experience, and years of teaching underrepresented minority students. The participants were recruited by posting the Google form link to the social media pages of Kappa Delta Pi (KDP) and Liberty University's Doctoral Cohort Group (LUDCG) by Dr. Tank on Facebook. KDP is an international honor society in education. There are 625 chapters with 1.2 million lifetime members and 40,000 collegiate members. KDP was founded in 1911, with membership limited to the top 20 percent of those entering or currently teaching in the field of education. LUDCG is a private Facebook group started by Dr. Tank with 1.9 thousand members from various schools of doctorate programs at Liberty University.

Recruiting teachers from all geographic regions of the United States and different school contexts allows for different perspectives of the participants' lived experiences as ethnic-racial socialization agents. Snowball sampling was used to recruit more participants. It is acknowledged that snowball sampling allows for the recruitment of potential participants through word-of-mouth or the recommendation of a participant (Gall et al., 2007). Snowball sampling begins with relevant and information-rich interviews and asking for additional pertinent contacts (Patton, 2015). The designated sampling pool was teachers of an underrepresented minority student population with at least one year of experience. Snowballing

enables the identification of participants who may also have experienced the phenomenon being investigated (Cresswell & Poth, 2018).

### **Recruitment Plan**

The recruitment of participants for this study commenced after receiving Liberty University International Review Board (IRB) approval. The Google Forms document contained identifying information of the participants: name, age, educator type (primary, secondary schools), and years of experience. An email was sent to Kappa Delta Pi and Liberty University's Doctoral Cohort Group to request permission to post a flyer for participant recruitment. The recruitment outlined the study of primary and secondary school educators of minoritized adolescent youth. Recruitment continued until saturation. The sample pool of Kappa Delta Pi 625-chapter members is 1.2 million, and Liberty University's Doctoral Cohort Group is 1.9 thousand, from which I recruited. The sampling was purposeful. The purposeful sampling method was chosen to ensure that qualified and credible participants were selected. I implemented snowball sampling to identify other potential participants. The informed consent was signed by each participant before participation in the study.

### **Researcher's Positionality**

The research study is essential to assist in understanding the lived experiences of educators as ethnic-racial socialization agents. It is necessary to provide an understanding of my position in this study. I am a member of Kappa Delta Pi and Liberty University Doctoral Group by Dr. Tank. I have no authority over the recruitment of participants in this study. This section will discuss my choice of interpretive framework and philosophical assumptions that will intersect this hermeneutical study.

## **Interpretive Framework**

The interpretive framework will be the philosophical stance that provides a set of beliefs to guide actions (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). I used the interpretive framework to explore “the nature of the world, the individual’s place in it, and the range of possible relationships to that world” (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994, p. 107). The motivation for conducting this study is based on my interpretive framework of social constructivism. Qualitative researchers have underscored the importance of understanding the beliefs and theories that inform our research and actively writing about them in our reports and studies (Patton, 2015). The primary social constructivist assumption is that phenomena can only be understood within the context in which they are studied (Guba & Lincoln, 1998). In reviewing the phenomena from different perspectives, I was able to identify, describe, and interpret the phenomena.

## **Philosophical Assumptions**

Philosophical assumptions allow me to make my philosophical positionality known. In doing so, I made my philosophical assumptions known regarding ontological, epistemological, and axiological assumptions. Making my assumptions known assists the reader in understanding the approach that guiding this study.

### ***Ontological Assumption***

Ontological relativity holds that all tenable statements regarding existence depend on a worldview, and no worldview is determined by empirical data about the world (Patton, 2015). The ontological issue relates to the nature of reality and its characteristics. As a mother of three children of minoritized racial ethnicity, I imparted messages of racial-ethnic pride as my parents had done for me. My sons were given more detailed and distinct transmissions due to the negative stereotypical depictions assigned to Black youth and men. I also acknowledge that I did



not see the school context as an extension of the racial-ethnic pride messages being given at home. Still, I ensured that they had a sense of racial pride in a world that may not celebrate their diversity.

As a student in elementary, I was afforded the blessing of a relationship with my 2nd-grade teacher, Miss “M.” Although we did not share the same ethnic-racial background, she was White, and I identified as Black; I was encouraged and empowered by her belief that my blackness was beautiful and not an impediment to academic achievement. In essence, Miss “M” was an extension of the parental socialization messages given at home. I understand that my experiences may or may not be the lived experiences of the educator participants. Ontological assumptions permit the researcher to identify the nature of reality by allowing multiple aspects experienced by the educator participants (Patton, 2015). As evidenced by Moustakas (1994), when writers compile a phenomenology, they report how individuals participating in the study view their experiences differently. I collected data for this hermeneutical phenomenology study through interviews, focus groups, and protocol writing to gather multiple views of the phenomenon. The findings from the participant’s perspective of the phenomenon were documented as themes.

### ***Epistemological Assumption***

Epistemology studies the nature of knowledge and justification (Schwandt, 2015). This means that subjective evidence will be assembled based on the individual participants’ views. As the qualitative researcher, I attempted to minimize the “distance” or “objective separateness” between myself and those who are being researched (Guba & Lincoln, 1988, p. 94). I sought to understand how knowledge of the phenomenon is created and communicated through interviews, focus groups, and writing protocols by capturing direct quotes from each

participant. The effects essentially obtain a lived experience of corporeality (being present), temporality (future of being), spatiality (experience in space), and relationality (experience with others) (Van Manen, 2016). By utilizing the participants' voices regarding the lived experiences of teaching underrepresented minority students, I described and interpreted each participant's lived experience.

### ***Axiological Assumption***

The axiological assumption established my value as an educational researcher. I believe that my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, died for the sins of all. I also ascribe to a Christian worldview as the guide for ethics and morality in practice and standards. In spreading the gospel, Jesus went to the people and brought the word of God. He spoke in parables and their common languages to educate and communicate with the masses. Jesus Christ got the message to nations of differing races and ethnicities, but with the belief that the love of Christ would be given in a message that they could understand and comprehend. The diversification of the classroom has created the need for educators to incorporate language and practices into the curriculum and instruction to motivate learning and socialization through ethnic-racial socialization transmissions. I hope this study continues to yield research to add to the school context as ethnic-racial socialization transmitters to bridge ethnic and racial differences and celebrate the diversity of the school context. Minoritized students often feel excluded from the curriculum and disliked by teachers. In celebrating the diversity of classrooms, ethnic-racial socialization practices may build positive identity and sustainable relationships.

### **Researcher's Role**

Researchers recognize that their background shapes their interpretation and place themselves in the research to acknowledge personal, cultural, and historical experiences. The

role of the researcher is to understand the teachers' perceived attitudes and experiences toward racial identity development. Being the human instrument and the researcher, my relationship with the participants will be neutral, and no bias will adversely influence the data collection.

Ethnic-racial identity (ERI) development is an area of study that requires more exploration, especially after the social protests of 2020. I am considered a Black American and have experienced teachers as ethnic-racial socialization agents in grade school. Still, I bracketed out my experiences to avoid bias or invalidate the data and the study. As the researcher, I bring the personal experiences and perspectives of being a Black American student in a racial hegemony society with implicit and explicit messages of bias. I was fortunate enough to have parents who were my first ethnic-racial socialization agents and conveyed to me the ability to do everything with a good education without regard to my race. The school attended provided socio-emotional support and inclusion that promoted the development of a positive racial identity and a belief that academic achievement was not simply possible but expected. Therefore, I am aware that my background shapes my interpretation.

I have lived abroad in Asia and was wholly immersed in Korean culture. The topic of race differs by global geographical region. America uses race as a placeholder, category, and identification purpose. However, there was no use of race and only nationality in Asia. Many Koreans could not understand the concept of race but based their stereotypical depictions on television news, broadcasts, movies, and social media because that was their primary mode of racial identification for Black Americans. The experience led me to consider the influence of the schools and teachers on Black American students who are often underrepresented or not

represented in the curriculum, have decreasing minority teachers, and may not have a culturally inclusive culture in the classroom. The implicit and explicit societal messages regarding racial identity in Black American students may create a lack of well-being due to the lack of connectedness and sense of community. I arrived at the focus of teachers as racial socialization agents due to their being gatekeepers to culturally relevant teaching and inclusive classrooms. Therefore, teachers' experiences and perceptions may influence their practices and instruction. My personal experiences and perspectives generated the inquiry, but I will remain unbiased and filled with ethics to conduct a valid study.

In data collection, the researcher needs to acknowledge the potentiality of the researcher's influence on participants. Bracketing is the epoché that displaced judgmental researcher biases or preconceived ideas of the researcher (Moustakas, 1994). I did not attempt to accomplish epoché due to my Christian biblical worldview and lived experiences of a student with parental ethnic-racial identity socialization and the culturally inclusive school context. I am providing explicit assumptions, biases, beliefs, and presumptions to avoid making presuppositions during reflection, as van Manen (2016) advised. Therefore, I applied the framework of hermeneutical phenomenology to this study. Reflexivity was accomplished by memoing. Qualitative researchers must bring themselves to an understanding of biases or experiences through reflexivity (van Manen, 2016). Van Manen (2016) advanced researchers' experiences with the phenomenon because it can provide additional meaning and context from others with similar experiences. The data collection recruitment process will only seek United States educators of K-12 adolescent minority youth.

### **Procedures**

Conducting research is an ethical process. I gained approval from the Liberty University Institutional Review Board (IRB) before data collection. IRB has been formally designated to monitor and review research involving human subjects. After gaining IRB approval, I initiated data collection. I included a copy of the IRB approval in Appendix A. Participants must understand and sign the informed consent form before participating in the research study and data collection.

### **Data Collection Plan**

This study utilized Van Manen's (1990) hermeneutic phenomenological research framework to identify, describe, and interpret minority educators as ethnic-racial socialization (ERS) agents. Phenomenological research mandates using various data collection devices (van Manen, 1990). This study collected data via interviews, focus groups, and writing protocol to thoroughly describe and interpret the phenomenon after receiving approval from IRB. This study aims to understand the phenomenon and articulate my findings based solely on what is gathered from the participants (Moustakas, 1994). Data triangulation will be accomplished with interviews, focus groups, and protocol writing (Gall et al., 2007).

### **Individual Interviews**

The interview gathers data by using open-ended research questions and shaping the questions thoroughly (Moustakas, 1994). One-on-one interviews are costly and time-consuming but are ideal for interviewing participants who are quick to speak, articulate thoughts, and share comfortably (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019). Phenomenological approaches explore transforming experiences into consciousness and shared meaning, and in-depth interviews gather data from lived experiences (Patton, 2015). Using interviews, data generated through direct interactions may produce new and emergent sources. The interview data will be collected via

Microsoft Teams meetings. A web-based video interview will allow for audio and visual at a distance and recording the responses (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019). The participants were informed that the interview will last 30 minutes, and a timer will be used for timekeeping. Signed consent documents was collected to conduct the interview, and each participant was informed that submitted answers will be published but anonymous to the reader (Moustakas, 1994). The interview serves a dual purpose: to collect experiential narratives and develop a deeper understanding of the phenomenon (Van Manen, 2016). Interviews via Microsoft Teams meetings using computers and phones as backup recording devices to examine the lived experiences of educators as racial socialization agents (RQ). The individual interview questions are found in Table 3 and Appendix F.

### **Table 3**

#### *Individual Interview Questions*

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#### Questions

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##### *Introduction and Background Questions*

1. Please tell me your name and about yourself.
2. How did you choose to become an educator?
3. Please describe your current position.

##### *Questions Relating to Cultural Socialization*

4. Please describe your challenges in establishing ethnic-racial socialization messages through curriculum and instruction with underrepresented minority students in your class. (CQ 1)

5. Explain how this makes you feel as an educator of adolescent youth of color and the perceived student impact. (CQ 1)

*Questions Relating to the Promotion of Cultural Competence*

6. Please describe successful pedagogical practices establishing ethnic-racial identity development when working with underrepresented minority students in your classes. (SQ 2)
7. Explain how this makes you feel as an educator of adolescent youth of color and the perceived student long-term impact. (SQ 2)
8. Describe the professional development experiences that have prepared you to work with underrepresented minority students as a teacher. (SQ 1)
9. What would you like to add to our discussion of your experiences with underrepresented minority students that we have not discussed? (SQ 1)
10. Explain the professional development experiences that have prepared you to work as a teacher with adolescent youth of color. (SQ 3)
11. What else would you like to add to our discussion of your experiences with lower SES students that we have yet to discuss? (SQ 3)

*Questions Relating to Critical Consciousness Socialization*

12. Describe your challenges in educating underrepresented minority students after the social protests in 2020. (SQ 1)
13. Describe successful practices you used when educating underrepresented minority students after the social protests in 2020. (SQ 2)

*Questions Relating to Color-Evasive Socialization*

14. Please describe how avoiding topics of race and the role of race with your students

made you feel. (SQ 3)

*Questions Relating to Mainstream Socialization*

15. What professional development experiences prepared you to work with underrepresented minority students after the social protests in 2020? (SQ 3)
  16. What else would you like to add to our discussion of your experiences with ethnic-racial socialization that we have yet to discuss? (SQ 3)
- 

Questions one through three are introductory questions that allow the participants to become comfortable with the interview by answering background questions. The questions assisted the researcher in obtaining demographic information regarding the influence and motivation to enter the field of education. The introductory questions may help create an open rapport in a neutral environment (Patton, 2015). Questions four and five relate to the cultural socialization practices within the classroom. Cultural socialization refers to messages about what it means to be a member of one's ethnic-racial group, including messages about the importance of one's culture and opportunities to learn more about the history and tradition of one's group (Saleem & Byrd, 2021). Through reflection, the questions examine educators' sense of cultural socialization in pedagogical practices.

Questions six through eleven relate to the promotion of cultural competence. The questions help identify opportunities for multiculturalism in educator practices. Questions twelve and thirteen relate to critical consciousness socialization. The question encourages educators' perception and awareness of racial injustice that may affect adolescent youth.

Question fourteen relates to color-evasive socialization. Color-evasive attitudes claim that all people are equal, and that racial equality has been achieved (Gallagher, 2015). The



question seek insight into the educators' perception of color-evasive socialization (Saleem & Byrd, 2021). Questions fifteen and sixteen relate to mainstream socialization. The question seeks insight into the cultural mismatch of minorities with the individualistic and competitive nature of school values.

### **Focus Groups Data Collection**

Focus group interviews will be my second data source. The focus group gained an in-depth understanding of the educators' experiences as racial socialization agents of adolescent youth. Focus groups will provide a shared sense between multiple people and specific persons (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019). The focus group obtained data from the educators regarding their attitudes, feelings, and beliefs, which is impossible with a Likert-style questionnaire. The focus group was comprised of 6 educators selected by the researcher. Each educator has unique experiences, and a focus group allowed me to gather their data at once to save time and cost related to interviewing individually. I sought participants from various locations to avoid the oversaturation of one geographical area. The focus group participants were scheduled collectively to meet via Microsoft Teams. A disadvantage of a focus group may be that they may be hesitant to discuss their true feelings. I informed them that honest answers were needed and appreciated because there were no wrong answers or perspectives. In case of connectivity issues, the one-hour focus group will be held via Zoom. The focus group allowed the participants to share other experiences and practices in ethnic-racial identity development. There was no data source collection until the International Review Board's (IRB's) approval had been granted. Table 4 below and Appendix G contains the focus group interview questions.

### **Table 4**

#### *Focus Group Interview Questions*

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*Questions*

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*Introductory and Background Questions*

1. What are the reasons you all decided to become educators?
2. Explain in detail the reason you all chose to become educators.
3. Discuss the individual who influenced you to pursue education.

*Questions Relating to Cultural Socialization*

4. Please describe your biggest challenge in establishing ethnic-racial socialization messages through curriculum and instruction with underrepresented minority students in your class. (CRQ)
5. Describe how this makes you feel as an educator of adolescent youth of color and the perceived student impact. (CRQ)

*Questions Relating to the Promotion of Cultural Competence*

6. Please describe successful instructional practices establishing ethnic-racial identity development when working with underrepresented minority students in your classes. (SQ2)
7. Describe your feelings when you are tasked with presenting multicultural lessons. (SQ2)

*Questions Relating to Critical Consciousness Socialization*

8. Describe how the social protests of 2020 affected the ethnic-racial socialization of underrepresented adolescent minority students in your class. (SQ3)
9. Explain how the school can improve the ethnic-racial socialization practices for adolescent minority youth. (SQ3)

*Questions Relating to Color-Evasive Socialization*

10. Please explain how avoiding topics of race and the role of race with your students affected you all. (SQ3)

*Questions Relating to Mainstream Socialization*

11. What professional development experiences prepared you to work with underrepresented minority students after the social protests in 2020? (SQ1)
12. Explain your feelings as an educator of minoritized adolescent youth during the social protests of 2020. (SQ1)
13. What else would you like to add to our discussion of your experiences with ethnic-racial socialization that we have yet to discuss? (SQ1)

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The questions align with the literature gap to identify successful practices of educators as ethnic-racial socialization agents. Questions one through three provide the group with opportunities to be comfortable speaking in the group by demonstrating the commonality of the participants. Questions four and five are questions relating to cultural socialization practices. Questions six and seven relate to educator perceptions of cultural competency. Questions eight and nine relate to critical conscious socialization of reflection and racial injustice. Question ten relates to color-evasive socialization and educator perception. Questions eleven through thirteen address mainstream socialization and the mismatch of cultural values of minoritized adolescent youth and the school context.

**Protocol Writing Prompt Data Collection Approach**

Hermeneutical phenomenology offers a perspective for interpreting narrative texts and uses qualitative methods to establish context for interpretation and examination (Patton, 2015). Protocol writing generates original text that the researcher can utilize (Van Manen, 2016).

Participants received a writing prompt to develop a 250-300-word response to an experience of ethnic-racial socialization (ERS) within the school context. The writing prompt is in Appendix H and Table 5. The participant promotes reflectivity by describing the lived experience for interpretation by the researcher (Van Manen, 2016). The lived experiences of others aid the researcher in identifying the phenomenon as experiences, which assists in interpreting the depth of the phenomenon's essence.

### **Table 5**

#### *Protocol Writing Prompt*

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Please write in 250-300 words or more an event you experienced an ethnic-racial socialization (ERS) incident with minority adolescent students within the school context. Describe your emotions, feelings, and any noticeable impact upon the student(s).

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### **Data Analysis**

Data analysis was conducted using the hermeneutical phenomenology framework by Van Manen (2016). All collected data from interviews and focus group sessions was transcribed via Microsoft Teams. Transcripts were checked for accuracy. Member checks were performed. Protocol writing prompts were synthesized with all transcribed data collected from interviews and focus group sessions for hermeneutical circle analysis. Data analysis requires the researcher to be aware of one's own experiences with the phenomenon to provide a deeper understanding and reorientation of the researcher to the phenomenological study (Van Manen, 2016). I kept a small journal of thoughts of experiences to ensure awareness would be brought from the unconscious mind to the conscious mind for awareness of personal biases. I remained aware of

the participants' lived experiences by reflecting upon the four existential of the lived experience: spatiality, corporeality, temporality, and community (Van Manen, 2016).

The data was collected from the participants and transcribed. Member checking was completed to ensure accuracy after the transcription. The transcribed information was transferred into Microsoft Excel for data analysis. Memos were utilized to capture reflective thoughts while reading the transcribed data. Selective coding was performed during the data rereading to identify the participant's short phrases and words during the interview. Coding was used on catchwords and phrases used by the participant. The interview served dual purposes: to collect narratives for a deeper understanding of the phenomenon and to create an open communication space with the participants to understand the meaning of the experience (Van Manen, 2016). Reflection of the data occurred again to ensure all codes were documented for recoding and refining. Codes were sorted and grouped into categories. Categories were reflected upon, recategorized, and refined. Category codes were synthesized into themes and interpreted. All themes were compiled for further synthesis to identify the thematic essence of the phenomenon.

Focus groups allow the participants to interact with those who have experienced the phenomenon, allowing the researcher to gather further information about the lived experiences. In the data analysis of the focus group, the selected participants' statements were recorded. The transcription was validated by participants for errors or needed changes. All identified codes were sorted and categorized into groups. The transcribed data was imported into Microsoft Excel for data analysis. The transcribed data was reread for accuracy. Observations and thoughts during reflection on the transcribed collected data were captured by using memos. The holistic approach Van Manen (2016) posited to identify thematic analysis for focus group data analysis

was employed. The holistic approach analyzes the entire paragraph. The whole text was concentrated to determine its meaning or significance. The focus group participants' discussions, answers, agreements, and disagreements were used to determine patterns. Every phrase that gave rise to the meaning of the whole text will be coded. All identified codes were reread and reflected upon to ensure no recoding or redefining would be necessary. All the codes were reflected upon and were sorted into categorized groups. Each categorized group was reflected upon to acquire the theme. All themes detected were compiled for further data synthesis, interpretation, and theorization.

Hermeneutical phenomenology research interprets "texts" of life and lived experiences (Van Manen, 1990). The protocol writing prompt was collected and imported into Microsoft Excel for data analysis. The participant's submitted protocol prompt was read and reflected on. Memo was used to document reflective thoughts. The detailed approach analyzed the participant's submitted protocol writings. The prompt writing protocol analyzed line-by-line for reflection of meaning and context (Van Manen, 2006). No transcription was necessary due to the participant's writings. Codes were identified and labeled to determine the nature of the phenomenon. The document was reread for recoding or redefining codes. Codes were organized into categories. The code groups were reflected upon to ascertain the theme. Every theme was further synthesized for data analysis, interpretation, and theorization.

### **Data Synthesis**

Each participant's description of the lived experiences was organized for thematic analysis after deepened reflection. Themes establish control and order in the research and the researcher's writing (Van Manen, 2016). Microsoft Excel was used to assist in thematic assimilation. Microsoft Excel permitted the researcher to analyze the number of times a code is

presented to assist in developing emergent themes. I reoriented and reflected upon the research question to ensure all participants' responses addressed the Central Research Question and Sub-Questions.

Three approaches to thematic analysis, holistic, selective, and detailed, are suggested by Van Manen (2016). The holistic approach was employed for thematic analysis and interpretation of synthesized data. The thematic analysis was conducted for each interview, focus group session, and protocol writing will be synthesized. Commonalities were discovered among the collected themes. Common themes were grouped to address this study's Central Research Question and Sub-Questions. Holistic reflection was used while reading each grouped theme for an overall textual description of the participants' lived experiences. The identified emergent group themes were documented using the participants' voices, named, and interpreted to answer the Central Research Question and Sub-Questions and theoretical framework while reflecting upon the phenomenon's essence (spatiality, corporeality, temporality, communality). The technique of free imaginative variation was implemented, as suggested by Van Manen (2016), to assist in identifying incidental and essential themes. The incidental and essential themes determine the quality of the emergent theme to discover strategic aspects of the phenomenon (Van Manen, 2016). Data collection and analysis were organized and mindful of participant confidentiality.

### **Trustworthiness**

Lincoln and Guba (1985) conceived of the foundational concepts and terms that establish the trustworthiness of a study, precisely credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. These terms are synonyms for relative quantitative terms, such as internal and external validity, reliability, and objectivity. While the qualitative researcher can go to great

lengths to attempt to create the conditions to achieve all four of these trustworthiness criteria, in the end, the reader makes the final subjective determination of the extent to which the qualitative researcher achieved trustworthiness in their study.

### **Credibility**

Credibility is the first step to trustworthy qualitative research (Shenton, 2004). The participants must be credible and truthful to determine their position as qualified candidates. Credibility also refers to the extent to which the study's findings accurately describe reality, according to participants' perceptions, as a proximation of the truth of the phenomenon in question (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). I used credibility as an internal validity to ensure that what was examined and explored was reality. The data analysis was returned to the participants for a member check for accuracy. A second analysis was conducted and returned to the participants for further accuracy checks (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Once the data has been checked and no discrepancies were discovered, I will accept the data and have a peer debriefing for continued safeguards (Patton, 2015).

To safeguard against credibility issues, I have studied the procedures and methods of successfully published qualitative research on ethnic-racial identity development. Prolonged engagement with the participants provides understanding and builds trust with all parties (Shenton, 2004). I ensured participants felt comfortable and open to expressing concerns and asking questions to accomplish this. Credibility refers to something trusted or an aspect of reality in the research findings. The high level of accuracy of the data collected needs to be unchanged to favor any results. A reliable study has full credibility to be used for further studies. The findings of this study are credible and accurately describe the research. The research used



methods of triangulation and triangulation of sources. The data collected will be shared with the participants after the study.

### ***Triangulation***

The acquisition and combination of multiple data collection methods strengthen a research study (Patton, 2015). Validity was maintained with triangulation of the three data collection points of participant interviews, focus groups, and protocol writings. Theoretical triangulation will be achieved using the School ERS Transmission Model (Saleem & Byrd, 2021), and data analysis using the hermeneutical theory posited by Van Manen (2016). The data was analyzed with the importance of the individual part's interaction with the entirety of the collected data.

### ***Peer Debriefing***

Peer debriefing enhances the trustworthiness and credibility of the research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Academic colleagues were consulted to discuss findings and to ensure that the findings were rooted in the data. Corroboration with colleagues as to whether the findings are aligned with the central question and sub-questions will occur.

### ***Member Checking***

As a minority adolescent youth in public schools, I have experienced ethnic-racial socialization in the school context. I asked and sought to understand the lived experiences of the participants. The participant interviews and focus group sessions were recorded and transcribed. Elements of the data transcription were clarified with the participants for accuracy after the data transcription. Member checking is the process of checking for accuracy with the participants with transcription (Cresswell & Guetterman, 2019). Modifications were completed on the participants' sections following their input to reflect their thoughts and views accurately.

**Transferability**

Transferability shows that the findings have applicability in other contexts (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Transferability of research only occurs if the research was conducted ethically, specifically, and accurately. Transferability will be the external validity brought to the study (Shenton, 2004). Transferability is a crucial context in viewing concepts and the relationship and connectedness. Yin (2014) defined external validity as the problem of “knowing whether a study’s findings are generalizable beyond the immediate study” (p. 47). This study was conducted so that transferability may occur. Therefore, the research questions aided in obtaining generalizations with properly formatted questions to prevent hindrances to the data analysis and, additionally, provide necessary descriptions of the essences. The researcher investigated to allow readers a complete understanding and facilitate them by comparing instances that may emerge in other situations (Shenton, 2004). The data collected was considered transferable to other urban public schools.

**Dependability**

Dependability shows consistent and replicable findings (Lincoln & Guba, 1995). Dependability addresses the reliability problem in research, ensuring that others obtain similar results when repeating the study with the same methods and participants in the same context (Shenton, 2004). The operational processes have been included in the data collection, and the researcher has been transparent in evaluating the study’s effectiveness. Objectivity was critical to ensure that the readers could fully understand the authentic experiences and ideas of the participants without investigator bias. Member checking was used to ensure dependability and to refine and strengthen my research during the investigation (Shenton, 2004). Dependability is crucial in providing the study with assurance and consistency concerning the other quantitative

analyses. Knowledge of the interrelationship of concepts and sources to maintain a high accuracy establishes dependability (Simon & Goes, 2013). A dependability audit ensures that the participant is reliable and that the research is solid.

### **Confirmability**

Confirmability is a degree of neutrality or the extent to which the findings are shaped by the respondents and the researcher's bias, interest, or motivation (Lincoln & Guba, 1995).

Confirmability is essential to providing study assurance and consistency. Others may confirm or corroborate the study's results to determine the degree of confirmability. After conducting the research, a data audit determined potential bias. Antagonistic lenses were used by the researcher to seek flaws and confirmability issues. Expert reviews were performed after data for this study had been collected. For transparency, I created a detailed audit trail of procedures, raw data, analyzed data, and the final report. Triangulation and reflexivity were also used to bracket my bias in this study.

### **Ethical Considerations**

This research study must maintain high standards and respect the rights of the participants. The data collection and analysis must be ethical in all aspects to avoid the misuse of the participants. Each participant signed a consent form before participation, which is in Appendix B. All requirements, data tools, and equipment were present and accounted for. This phenomenological study has no moral or ethical considerations due to following the guidelines and prescribed data collection and analysis methods. This study has caused no harm to any of the participants. The names of the participants and the specific site will not be shared or published, and the data is password-encrypted and protected. All recorded materials will be erased after five

years, following the final approval by the research committee, to minimize any future risks related to confidentiality and personal privacy.

### ***Permissions***

Permission was obtained through the Liberty University Institutional Review Board (IRB) prior to conducting research. Following IRB approval, participant recruitment will commence. No site permissions were required due to the open accessibility.

### ***Other Participant Protections***

The participants were informed that participation is voluntary, and they could withdraw from the study at any time. Pseudonyms were used to protect the privacy of the participants. The electronic data is electronically secured with password protection for five years. The physical data is stored in a locked filing cabinet that requires a key for five years.

### **Summary**

Chapter Three provides in-depth details of the research process of the focus topic. This chapter is the foundation for the research, and the collected data sought to answer the questions specific to this research. This qualitative hermeneutic phenomenological study was conducted using interviews, observations, and focus groups to explore the main overarching question: What are the lived experiences of educators as ethnic-racial socialization (ERS) agents? The research will be derived from trustworthy and credible subjects using dependable and ethical research methods. The phenomena were defined and organized into categories during the research process for comprehension and learning. This study eliminated bias from the researcher and conversations and dialogue.

## **CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS**

### **Overview**

The purpose of this study was to discover and interpret the experiences of middle and high school educators in a content area of minority adolescent youth located in the United States. Data analysis was completed using the hermeneutical framework posited by Van Manen (2019). Chapter Four introduces each participant. The participants' voices are provided in the results section of this chapter. The responses to each research question are discussed using the thematic findings discovered in this study. The chapter concludes with a chapter summary.

### **Participants**

The participants for this study were middle and high school teachers of adolescent minority youth in a content area located in United States public schools. The participants were recruited by maximum variation sampling and later snowball sampling. Aliases were applied to all participants to ensure confidentiality. Thirteen participants were recruited for this study. The age range of the participants was 26-64 years old. Three participants obtained a bachelor's degree (BA/BS). Five participants completed a master's degree (MEd/MS). Two participants obtained an education specialist degree (Ed.S.). Two participants obtained a Doctor of Education (EdD). One participant received a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD). Three participants were in the western region of the United States. Four participants were in the central region of the United States. Six participants were in the eastern region of the United States. The summary of the participants are located in Table 6 and Appendix I.

**Table 6***Participant Demographics*

Name	Age	Education	Grade Level	Subject	Experience	State
Alex	40-50	Bachelor's	Middle	Math	15 years	New Jersey
Dakota	30-40	Master's	Secondary	Math	7 years	New Jersey
James	50-60	Ed.S. <sup>a</sup>	Secondary	English	20+ years	California
Ainsley	20-30	Ed.D. <sup>b</sup>	Middle	LA <sup>d</sup>	4 years	Florida
Campbell	30-40	Ph.D. <sup>c</sup>	Middle	CE <sup>e</sup>	14 years	Texas
Noah	50-60	Bachelor's	Middle	PE <sup>f</sup>	15 years	Texas
Riley	40-50	Master's	Secondary	Spanish	14 years	New Mexico
Adrian	60-70	Ed.D. <sup>b</sup>	Secondary	Social Studies	16 years	Washington
Blake	20-30	Ed.S. <sup>a</sup>	Secondary	English	4 years	Arkansas
Cameron	30-40	Master's	Secondary	CW <sup>g</sup>	5 years	Maryland
Drew	30-40	Master's	Middle	English	12 years	New York
Ellis	50-60	Bachelor's	Secondary	Math	21 years	Maryland
Finley	20-30	Master's	Middle	CIE <sup>h</sup>	6 years	Washington

*Note:* The abbreviations for the subscripts are <sup>a</sup> Education Specialist, <sup>b</sup> Doctor of Education, <sup>c</sup>

Doctor of Philosophy, <sup>d</sup>Language Arts, <sup>e</sup>Career Education, <sup>f</sup>Physical Education, <sup>g</sup>Creative

Writing, <sup>h</sup> Civic Education

**Alex**

Alex was led to teach because he loves kids. The students' belief inspires him in education. He believes changing students' mindsets can produce a better future for themselves through education. Alex teaches math in New Jersey and has fifteen years of teaching experience in public schools in the United States.

**Dakota**

Dakota's aspiration to create inclusive and equitable classrooms led her to teach. She has always wanted to be a teacher and believes teaching impacts others. She entered teaching to experience what it is like to learn from others. Dakota teaches math in New Jersey. She has seven years of experience as an educator in public schools in the United States.

**James**

James was led to teaching by his mother. His mother was a teacher, and he recalled her teaching and lecturing nationwide. James's mother enjoyed teaching teenagers, and James has adopted the same passion. James teaches language arts in California. He has been an educator in middle and secondary schools in the United States for over twenty years.

**Ainsley**

Ainsley indicated that he never had a good teacher growing up. He prayed that he would impact youth's lives, which motivated him to become an educator. Ainsley teaches algebra in Florida and has taught for four years in middle and secondary schools in the United States.

**Campbell**

Campbell delved into education because he wanted to inspire the next generation. His only motivation was the youth. Campbell teaches career education in Texas and has taught at middle and secondary schools in the United States for over fourteen years.

**Noah**

Noah grew up around many younger kids around the house and enjoyed teaching them new things. Educating the youth made him happy, and it became his passion for providing a brighter future for kids. Noah teaches career education in Texas and has taught in middle schools in the United States for over four years.

**Riley**

Riley was inspired to enter teaching due to student loan forgiveness. As a first-generation college student, she chose a profession that would help reduce student loans. She became fond of teaching and feels this is her life's purpose. Riley teaches Spanish and English Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) in New Mexico and has taught for over four years in secondary schools in the United States.

**Adrian**

Adrian was not sure how she arrived at teaching. She emphatically states that she is pleased with the position. Adrian decided to transition into teaching after writing curricula for the state of Washington. She teaches social studies in Washington. Adrian has taught in middle and high schools in the United States for over sixteen years.

**Blake**

Blake's passion was to enter the field of education. She hopes to become a principal or superintendent and implement positive changes in the classrooms for minority youth. She feels limited in her reach without being involved in leadership and administration. Blake teaches English in the state of Arkansas and has been an educator for four years.

**Cameron**

Cameron's parents were both educators. Growing up in a family of educators, she eventually found the desire to teach. Working as an editor for a newspaper was not fulfilling, and she sought a career with purpose. Cameron teaches creative writing in Maryland. She has been an educator in middle and public schools in the United States for five years.



**Drew**

Drew stated that his passion for teaching led him to enter teaching. Since he was a kid, Drew has always known he wanted to teach. He teaches English in New York and has taught for twelve years in high schools in the United States.

**Ellis**

Ellis really enjoyed mathematics and entered teaching right out of high school. She realized she was good at math but could not make any sense of it when the teacher taught it. Ellis teaches math in Maryland and has taught for twenty-one years in middle and secondary schools in the United States.

**Finley**

Finley indicated a passion for teaching, which led her to become an educator. She teaches civic education in Washington. Finley has taught for six years in the United States in middle and secondary schools.

**Results**

The thematic results of this study describe the lived experiences of educators as ethnic-racial socialization agents in the school context. The hermeneutical framework posited by Van Manen (2016) was used to ascertain themes according to this study's theoretical framework. The participants completed a protocol writing prompt, semi-structured interview, and focus group discussion. The themes are the educators' lived experiences that can be visualized below in Table 7 and Appendix J.

**Table 7***Primary Themes and Sub-Themes*

Themes	Sub-Themes
Addressing Feelings of Discomfort and Exclusion	Addressing Race and Ethnicity
Commitment to Equity and Inclusion	Support Among Peers
Challenges in Educating About Black Issues	Challenges in Addressing Racism
Desire for Awareness and Change	
Racial Profiling and Social Challenges	
Educator's Approach	
Facilitating Learning and Understanding	
Parental Engagement	Building Relationships
Importance of Cultural Education	
Impact on Mental Health	
Teacher Perceptions	
Resistance and Pushback	

**Addressing Feelings of Discomfort and Exclusion**

Many educators who participated in this study shared sad stories of acknowledging and addressing the discomfort and exclusion of minority adolescent youth. Alex acknowledged:

A lot of African American students feel a little bit left out and feel a little bit of being uncomfortable. So, I try as much as possible to let them know that they are a part of us and it's not about skin color.

Feelings of discomfort and exclusion with minority adolescent youth were perceived among educators within the school context. Acknowledging and addressing the feelings of discomfort are of primary concern for Dakota. Dakota utilizes “teaching strategies that reflect the cultural backgrounds and experiences of minority students so they can feel valued and respected

in the classroom.” James touched on the challenges African Americans face in social interactions and perceptions. The challenges' gravity is due to misconceptions and prejudices that may impact friendships. James added that he noticed “white kids were not comfortable sitting with African American kids in the cafeteria. They were all distant, and I saw those needs addressing.” Many participants mentioned a racial divide in the classroom and cafeteria.

The continued perception of addressing feelings of discomfort and exclusion extended from other socializers like the historical and community, societal context, and including social media platforms (internet) into the classroom. Participants shared numerous experiences of perceived feelings of discomfort and exclusion with adolescent minority youth within the school context. Campbell expressed addressing feelings of discomfort and exclusion of adolescent youth minorities due to racial strife and within the educators' interactions saying,

I would start by saying on the whole racial thing, it's not just about the students. I would say that there are also teachers racially profiling, and it's very difficult having to see a lot of that happen. It gave me a reason to educate the students more, so they don't have to grow up having to face these challenges. I would say the most significant part of it is having to socialize after being profiled by that person. The biggest challenge in racial profiling each other makes it more difficult to actually socialize. I am actually being profiled by other teachers already. The chance of students being profiled is possible as well, which makes it more difficult to socialize with these students or interact with the teachers the way we should.

The participants shared feelings of discomfort and exclusion from teaching peers and the perspectives of adolescent minority youth in middle and secondary schools in the United States.

The feelings associated with exclusion and counter to a sense of belonging results of direct and indirect incidents of ethnic or racial bias experienced or observed. Campbell added, “I see the difficulties because of this; I see a lot of teachers not actually feeling comfortable having the black teacher around.” Campbell reflects on his experiences and then applies it to the adolescent minority youth’s perception by stating, “You can imagine how they feel or how the teacher would actually treat a student because of racial profiling as well.” Participants indicated that minority youth learn about racial socialization and status based on the school context, providing an inclusive learning environment. Some participants used racially sensitive topics and discussions to promote a sense of welcomed diversity and belonging to address feelings of discomfort and exclusion expressed by adolescent minority youth.

### ***Addressing Race and Ethnicity***

Many participants noted challenges in addressing race and ethnicity. The participants expressed difficulty in making students understand diversity, especially between Whites and Blacks. Ainsley acknowledged that “it’s not about the color of the person’s skin.” Ainsley illustrated a fight between a White and Black student, “I try to make them [students] understand that you must be respectful of all races.” James intervened and attempted to quell the racial tensions within his class by talking to both students to understand the reason for the fight. Many participants indicated that they faced challenges in addressing racism when it escalated to physical violence. James iterated, “By the time they engage in violence, it is hard to remedy the solution. It usually escalates to an us versus them and grouped by race.”

Some participants indicated the challenges in addressing race and ethnicity when they have learned racial bias from home and societal contexts. Campbell added, “I think it’s something learned from their upbringing.” The parental socialization of adolescent students is

the foundation upon which ethnic-racial socialization builds. One participant advised that adolescent youth mature with the mindset of race and ethnic stereotypes from the parental context, and this makes ethnic-racial socialization much more difficult to accept and promote. Participants noted that racial bias and stereotypes were also projected by White teachers toward adolescent minority youth. Campbell further shared, “It is more difficult when you see an African American child not being given opportunities or not feeling comfortable with certain teachers.” However, most participants acknowledged the challenges in addressing race and ethnicity but will still promote addressing race and ethnicity in the school context. The participants were not deterred or dismayed in efforts to bridge racial divides by providing safe spaces within the classroom and building and developing student-teacher relationships.

Many participants indicated the need to address racial issues during the social protests of 2020 and the importance of standing up and speaking up for themselves. The social protests of 2020 were used by many participants to demonstrate the ability to change mindsets through social justice and unity. Dakota emphatically stated, “I think it is crucial for young people to learn about social justice. So, I try as much as possible to educate them about social justice.” Adrian described the methods used for addressing race and ethnicity in the classroom,

I play a vital role in the sense that the students need to learn a lot from me. I make them feel comfortable so that they will talk to me and listen to me. So, as an educator, when I stand in the middle of class to try and explain things to my children, I believe they understand what I tell them, and I see improvements when ethnic and racially diverse students work together on group projects.

Some participants noted the need to address social justice by providing emotional support during the social protest of 2020 and beyond in the school context. James added, “These kids need to

understand and know all about racial profiling and how to socialize with other ethnicities and bring each other together.”

### **Commitment to Equity and Inclusion**

Several participants expressed a commitment to equity and inclusion but needed more school administration and leadership support. Participants advocated for inclusivity by creating environments where minority students feel safe and accepted. Many participants emphasized the role of schools and administration in promoting a sense of educational equity and belonging for all students. Riley clarifies that “schools avoid some of the race discussion, and they should be addressed to enhance students' feelings properly. If students have race and ethnicity issues, then the school is not properly addressing it.” Many participants tried to teach students about discrimination and promote unity. Blake said, “There’s no discrimination in everything we do. We are all one despite being Black or White, so I have different races engage and interact to work as a team.”

Participants measured the school context’s commitment to equity and inclusion based on the support of peer teachers and administrative leadership. James acknowledged that most teachers in his school are committed to equity. James believed the promotion of inclusion due to the minority-led leadership, “Having Black folks in higher authority has actually helped as well.” The support of leadership has assisted James in creating an inclusive environment for all students. Some participants claimed that socializing influences from outside of the school context presented challenges in the school context. “Ethnic-racial issues are carried into the classroom and are one of the main reasons for bullying, which is a barrier to equity and inclusion,” added Dakota.

Ellis celebrated by observing “that all kids can be successful and not because you’re a

certain color.” Participants, like Ellis, emphasized that being “weaker or smarter” was not based on skin color but on the individual’s ability and the educator’s ability to create an equitable and inclusive classroom using culturally relevant teachings. Every participant reported the importance of providing an equitable education while creating an inclusive classroom to promote positive outcomes academically and psychosocially.

### *Support Among Peers*

Participants acknowledged that some educators understand the importance of their efforts to educate students about racial profiling and cultural competence with some peers. The interviewed participants believed that other educators do not see the importance of it. “Most teachers are quite uncomfortable with me sharing ethnic-racial socialization messages with my students,” admitted Cameron. Dakota asserted that many teachers “are not comfortable with these topics.” “Race is a touchy subject, and you have to worry about administration and parents, and that prevents teachers like me from using it at times,” Blake assessed. Noah knows some teachers are apprehensive about ethnic-racial topics, but it is done “...for the greater good.” The schism in presenting ethnic-racial socialization messages is due to Noah’s belief that “the white folks might not really understand because they are not judged by skin color.”

The importance of educating peers, in addition to students, was expressed by Blake. He suggested, “I enjoy educating the teachers more because I think the kids will love them as white teachers, and they will actually listen to them.” James identified ethnic-racial gaps in his school and focused on the areas of professional development and training for his peers. Blake indicated that most students aligned relationships along ethnic-racial lines, and the school cafeteria exemplified the ethnic-racial stratification. Participants commented that professional learning communities provide educators with opportunities to identify ethnic-racial socialization issues

and develop plans and pedagogical practices with the support of their peers. As James put it, “A lot of times, they just don’t come to me. They talk to the white teachers as well because I made the students understand it’s not about the color of the teacher.”

Some participants viewed the support of peers as colorblind socialization rather than the conveyance of ethnic-racial socialization messages. Every minority participant advanced ethnic-racial socialization messages in the classroom context. Alex corroborates the practice of colorblind socialization with peers because “the white teachers don’t take this too seriously, and I try as much as possible to show them the importance because there are different mindsets and backgrounds that influence perceptions.” During meetings, Blake would advocate for the importance of all teachers engaging in ethnic-racial socialization practices. Drew believed the kids are very interested in it, and these are opportunities for training in these areas.

### **Challenges in Educating About Black Issues**

A focus on social justice and intentional adjustments made to the curriculum was mentioned by participants. Finley incorporated topics related to social justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion. Finley postulated, “Ensuring messages like inclusion and respect for all perspectives while addressing sensitive topics. One of the major challenges is limited resources and support for multicultural education within the curriculum.” Resistance from White teachers due to their belief that they are not qualified to speak on Black issues was noted by participants. Participants highlighted the challenges encountered when addressing racial issues in an educational context. James remarked on the importance of kids to identify racial profiling and how to socialize and bring about unity.

One participant in a large, diverse district reflected on the challenges in educating about Black issues. Ellis, a white educator, sought the assistance of Black educators to better assist her



in reaching her minority students. The core of Ellis's argument is that "some of those teachers do not see the value and may feel that nothing would change for minority students." Drew is clear that not all teachers feel this way, and many teachers "have really come with the times and teachers come from a place where they've grown." Blake contended the inconsistent implementation of education about Black issues is a major challenge. As a lead educator, Ellis has been asked if she feels uncomfortable in tackling issues that are barriers to adolescent minority youth as a white person. Ellis's point is that she does not feel uncomfortable and is compelled to challenge barriers that impede learning for her diverse students.

Many participants spoke of the impact of the social protest in 2020 and the challenges presented in the school context. Riley corroborated that "there were challenges during that period because some students were being carried away by the waves of protest." The social protests of 2020 were considered disruptive to learning due to the time allotted to answer questions and tend to the emotional well-being of adolescent youth, Drew emphasized. Riley allowed students to freely speak during this time to observe "how they see themselves" and the impact of the protest on them. The fear of unsure times required Riley and other participants to use classroom time for teaching to provide positive reassurance to emotionally charged students. Black participants interviewed acknowledged that there is a shared ethnicity with his minority students, and the shared commonality provides a sense of trust with his students. Finley described during that time, "it would have been so unpleasant for the student and uncomfortable for them in that class period." Students needed "somebody like them, who they see as their own, and they feel comfortable enough to share with you," explained Adrian. James passionately insisted that "you have to address what is going on outside of the classroom, too, because it has an impact on what goes on in the classroom."

## Challenges in Addressing Racism

The participants highlighted the complexities of challenging and addressing racism in adolescent youth. Racial tensions in the school context are at an all-time high, and educators are challenged to help students understand racism, especially between White and Black students. Ainsley remarked, “As an educator, it makes me feel very uncomfortable, and I want to create awareness...to know that racism is not very good.” Addressing racism in an educational setting is complex “because the students’ behaviors are influenced by racial biases and stereotypes,” Alex insisted. Dakota chose to handle discussions of race in teachings straightforwardly and without prejudice or excessive emphasis on the negative aspects. Balancing discussion about race with positive stories to relax the students and ensure they are left with a positive feeling and not troubled by negative narratives was noted by Ellis. Dakota reported that her classroom “Is a safe and inclusive space where my students feel comfortable expressing their identities and experiences, which can help start positive racial and ethnic identity.”

The experiences and perspectives in addressing race can be associated with the ethnic-racial background of the participant. During multiple participant interviews, the Black participants expressed the necessity of informing adolescent youth in preparation for bias. White participants indicated the need for diversity but often lacked the implementation of ethnic-racial socialization and social justice discussions. Riley says teaching peers “avoid some of the race discussion, and these issues should be addressed.” Noah viewed this position as “transforming the system.” The system must be challenged because Noah believes that all schools do not offer knowledge that benefits students in and out of school to prepare them for a racially stratified landscape.

### **Desire for Awareness and Change**

Participants empowered students with knowledge and awareness regarding racial profiling. Riley postulated, “teaching them that it is wrong and advocating for unity as a better team.” The theme emphasizes the role of education in creating awareness and change to challenge stereotypes. Cameron reported, “If I can educate them, it will go a long way. I think it is good we educate...so they don’t grow up with the same challenges we had.” Ellis reflected on her twenty-plus-year journey of becoming more aware by reflecting on her personal growth in cultural competency, “I feel like I didn’t pay attention to it so much when I began teaching as much as I do today.” “How do we meet the needs of all students? How do you keep that promise for all students?” Ellis ingeminated. The participants' perspectives align with a future where students, regardless of race or background, can work together for positive contributions to society. Curriculum inclusion is an approach that some participants use to change the narrative regarding minorities. Drew said, “I try as much as possible to make sure that I am giving them instruction without the mindset of the stigmatization and racial discrimination.” The interview of the participants revealed all had a desire for increased awareness and positive change with ethnic-racial socialization practices with the school context. The participants communicated the role of an educator and the impact on identity development in adolescent youth.

### **Racial Profiling and Social Changes**

In addressing racial profiling and social changes, two participants shared their experiences with racial profiling resulting in the death of a family member. Noah and Campbell used their personal experiences as motivation for an intentional commitment to eradicate racial profiling and promote social change. The experience in racial profiling experienced by Noah compelled him to broach the topic in class, “I start by talking about it, educating them more

about racial profiling and skin color.” The open dialogue regarding racial profiling is used to generate social changes. Noah assumed, “...bringing up the whole skin color... to understand more about skin color and racial profiling.” Racial profiling and its impact on social interactions with other teachers were also mentioned among teachers. Participants noted the challenges faced due to prejudices based on race. Campbell described, “I would start by saying as a teacher, I am being profiled by other teachers already.” “Racial profiling of students [takes place] inside the school and outside the school for students and teachers,” remarked by Campbell. Several Black participants expressed the racial profiling within the educator community and believed this widespread racial profiling extends to adolescent minority youth in the school context.

### **Educator’s Approach**

Participants acknowledged an openness to answer questions, especially during the Social Protests of 2020. The interactive nature of their teaching approach facilitates learning through dialogue. “I don’t feel afraid to have uncomfortable conversations with them and tell them what might happen if we should profile someone, or how a person racially profiled feel,” contended Noah. Noah challenged his students to conduct research and exercise critical thinking to enhance the student’s overall educational experience in race and ethnic topics. Some participants expressed that they were creating an atmosphere where students from all backgrounds feel welcome, engaged, and connected in the school environment. The participants' main approaches were promoting inclusivity and fostering a positive learning environment that values diversity. Drew discussed his approach as an educator, which is embedded with the belief that you should never turn your back on minorities. As an African American, he understands the feeling of exclusion and disconnectedness in the school context. “I have tried as much as possible not to inflict any pain or to coalesce any Black person negatively or make them feel sad or

stigmatized,” stated Drew. Participant approaches were based on empathy and inclusivity to ensure the minority student felt welcomed, loved, and not stigmatized. Riley’s approach was based on empathy and inclusion but a more hardened stance on equity and access advocacy. Whereas Ellis advocated for equitable opportunities and access to quality education, especially in subjects like math. “Kids sense when you don’t believe in them, and it breaks my heart when it’s like that. I love math so much, and I feel like math truly could give students the tools to be successful,” stressed Ellis. Participants warned that there are unaddressed opportunity gaps, but are limited due to a shortage of teachers, especially math teachers. Many participants expressed an effort to bridge the opportunity gap and ensure all students have the support and learning resources to succeed. However, the need for more qualified teachers adds a layer of complexity that participants noted.

### **Facilitating Learning and Understanding**

The participants reported positive outcomes observed in the classroom from inclusive teaching practices. Improved student engagement and conducive learning environments promote educator practices rooted in empathy, understanding, and cultural competence, which was acknowledged by Noah. Ainsley maintained the transformative impact of creating inclusive and equitable learning environments on student learning outcomes and overall classroom dynamic. Noah addressed positive outcomes by stating, “I’ve seen them work together, and I’ve seen a lot of impacts. I’ve seen a lot of communication between them and less judgmental looks.” The measures taken by Noah yielded positive outcomes as he observed, “these young kids have less judgment and are more welcoming to each other. I’ve given them a reason to feel racial profiling is wrong, and they can come together and make a better team.”

Participants spoke of using the social justice approach to foster learning and understanding. Several participants who had experienced racial profiling among peer educators used knowledge transfer to students. Campbell emphasized the role of teachers as facilitators of social justice learning to understand racial-ethnic socialization issues with a favorable reception. “They become aware and are welcomed. I try to educate both genders and both races. They are pretty much aware, and they’re interested in the teaching,” pointed out by Campbell. Cameron empowered students to advocate for social justice and inclusivity beyond the classroom, exemplifying the long-term impact on students. “I think it will affect the younger generation if we try to educate them more on racial profiling and applying this in schools,” Cameron admitted. Cameron argued that “it will help them a lot, and they will go far.” Participants, like Ainsley, advanced building a supportive and inclusive learning environment where students feel comfortable and positive racial and ethnic identity development improves students’ perspectives through these efforts.

### **Parental Engagement**

Participants emphasized the importance of maintaining a positive relationship with parents. Ainsley mentioned parent-teacher meetings where parents are introduced to each other and foster community and communication. Campbell admitted, “It is all about a positive relationship with parents.” Campbell also stated that the relationships with parents help teachers identify and understand parental needs and concerns. James posited that most questions from students begin at home, be it from an avoidance of the ethnic-racial socialization topic or a racially discriminatory and biased perspective. Ainsley believed the parental influence on the student is a means of vetting the teacher to determine their political, social, and pedagogical practices. “Most questions are being raised at home and brought to school because the parents

prodded the students up,” James added. The participants actively engage in parental engagement for positive academic and psychosocial outcomes. Participants spoke of being challenged to address numerous student questions, particularly those not commonly discussed in schools. The interviewed participants confidently addressed questions without bias and incorporated parents' assistance to address the questions at home further. A child-centered approach was the bridge participants sought to build positive relationships with parents. Ellis advised parents that “kids are kids, and that has nothing to do with race or color,” emphasizing commonalities among students and not behaviors due to stereotypes.

### ***Building Student Relationships***

Participants used addressing student questions as a way to build relationships, not only with parents but with students, too. The approach contributes to a more engaged and informed educational environment, and Adrian admitted that he measures the impact on his students by creating a constant relationship with them. “I try to know what they are going through, what they are terrified of, what is disturbing them,” Adrian claimed. Dakota’s approach has been measured with an outcome of “students coming closer to you more” because they feel you are friendly and welcoming. Cameron noted that when their students feel safe enough to come to them with questions and concerns, it was an opportunity to build stronger, sustainable relationships. James cited, “I’ve been able to bring them closer and educate them more and help them understand some part of life that might not be taught in school or home.” Through the questions being brought to the participants, they were able to educate them and build a stronger relationship with the students.

Engagement and communication were the proactive steps the participants mentioned. Individual student engagement creates opportunities for open communication and understanding,

which builds relationships was cited by Cameron. Riley conveyed, “I see how I can let the student know that sharing their challenges and issues can be of better help to seek proper counsel to guide them.” The Social Protests of 2020 presented many opportunities to address questions and concerns while building relationships. “I took time to make changes to instruction and draw them closer within the period. And even after the classroom prior, I still engage the student,” Riley added. The participant’s actions demonstrate adaptability and a focus on building positive relationships with students.

### **Importance of Cultural Education**

Most of the participants mentioned curriculum integration of culturally relevant teaching. Participants noted the importance of understanding and respecting differences to avoid discrimination in curriculum and instruction. The importance of a cultural education prepares minority adolescent youth for preparation for bias, contends many participants. Campbell described involving parents to foster a positive relationship by “keeping them informed of the activities” or racial issues between students. Participants also highlighted the influence of cultural upbringing and education on perceptions of racial profiling and further advanced the importance of providing culturally relevant education to address biases and promote inclusivity, highlighting the need for a shift in mindset and practices. Classroom time was allocated by Cameron for education on essential topics and during racial tensions in society and the school. The participants taught students about cultural diversity, racial profiling, and racial and ethnic socialization issues. Cameron also noted that “most teachers are uncomfortable with me sharing stuff like that.” At the end of the uncomfortable state is the understanding of why Cameron and other participants understand why educating students is “for the greater good.” Ellis challenged minority educators’ contribution to the student and community. “What does this mean for your



community and the pride in your school? That means you prepare a [relevant] lesson,” Ellis questioned.

During the interview, participants indicated that understanding different cultures, backgrounds, and perspectives enhances students’ learning experience. They were creating a culturally responsive environment through strategies gained from diversity training. Some participants felt that ethnic-racial socialization topics were beyond their content scope, even with diversity training. Dakota contended, “While discussing it, I say it the way it is and explain it, and then try to give a little backstory about race to close it with something positive.” Blake emphasized that the impact upon her students is that it “keeps their minds relaxed and at ease.” Black participants declared that recognizing and addressing unconscious biases through implicit bias training ensures fair treatment of all students. Drew expounded on feelings of excitement and motivation when implementing culturally relevant teaching strategies and promoting inclusion and equity within the school context and classroom. To connect with his diverse students, Drew mentions Black scholars who have succeeded in America and white nations, like Nelson Mandela. The culturally relevant teachings “created a fire within them, making them happy” as observed by Cameron. Noah added by expressing his belief that in educating all students in the class, the points of the “message may create growth or job opportunities” because they will know their race or ethnicity does not limit them. Noah’s promotion of cultural importance was motivated by a belief that stigmatization and racial discrimination would decrease in upcoming generations.

Participants echoed the impact of upbringing, societal norms, and historical legacies on people’s attitudes and behaviors. The persistence of discriminatory attitudes towards minority groups illustrated the ongoing challenges despite social progress. Finley discovered that

“students might engage eagerly, expressing curiosity and a desire to learn more about different cultures.” The theme captures the transformative impact of culturally relevant teaching approaches on school culture, promoting a positive shift towards respect, empathy, and inclusivity. Participants noted a cultural change in the classroom with culturally relevant teachings. Adrian contrasts, “I played a vital role in making them feel comfortable and enjoy school in particular.” Noah believes the prerequisite to cultural shifts in the classroom begins with the teacher’s ability to form a relationship with the student to become engaged and motivated. By first engaging students with humor and storytelling to build rapport and inclusion, Noah can promote cultural importance while building sustainable student-teacher relationships.

### **Impact on Mental Health**

Several of the participants identified students appearing in distress and witnessing barriers related to race and ethnicity among students. The apparent discomfort motivates participants to address these issues and encourage a mindset and mood shift among students. Riley rationalized, “Some students are uncomfortable with some of my colleagues, who are not from their race and ethnicity.” Blake was presented with many questions during the Social Protests of 2020 due to his being a minority teacher and a shared race and ethnic background. Drew observed the mental stress in minority students as “many of them came with questions like, what is happening? Why is the protest happening? What is the reason for the protest?” Students came up with questions that they were uncomfortable with, and participants advised that they did their best to address the questions. Noah also noted that minority adolescent youth without access to a teacher with shared ethnic-racial backgrounds needed “somebody who was like them and makes them feel comfortable enough to share what they think and feel.” Despite the

challenges, the participants took proactive measures to address the student's psychosocial well-being.

Participants expressed the ramifications of colorblind socialization in White and Black students, but the impact was most visible in the minority students. Several participants advocated for inclusivity by encouraging their schools to create environments where students of different minorities feel comfortable and accepted. Noah warned that the educational system requires transformation for the mental health of students subjected to racial profiling or cyberbullying by a fellow student. "It's harmful, not just physically, but more emotionally...might make that person commit suicide or affect their mental," Noah speculated. A participant shared that cops had killed a family member due to racial profiling and he shared his motivation for educating students on the ills of bias and racial discrimination. The family member ran from the cops because "he was scared and a good kid, but when a Black kid meets a White cop, it can be dangerous and deadly," Ainsley warned. Riley believes that educating them at a young age will make adults less prone to racial biases and prejudicial behavior and actions. Many participants emphasized the harmful effects of racial profiling, both emotionally and physically, on adolescent minority youth. Noah and Ainsley stressed the importance of educating students about these consequences to prevent harm and promote empathy and understanding.

Random assemblies are called to address and avoid racial issues at Blake's school, which is not diverse in ethnicity or race. Most of the conversations regarding race and ethnicity are initiated by Blake's minority students. Dakota identifies as a minority and feels her school does well in creating an inclusive culture. Cameron thinks addressing race and ethnic issues is crucial to enhancing a sense of belonging and positive mental health in the school environment and throughout adulthood. Alex's school emphasizes that a happy environment contributes to

students' practical learning and academic success. Cameron outlined, "Outside school environments, racial profiling has been a huge deal. And being in America, it's quite difficult." Ainsley's students described "encounters that have made them much more uncomfortable, such as not being welcomed at city parks." Due to the external influences on minority adolescent youth, Alex makes a concerted effort to make "everyone happy, the school happy, and that makes a perfect place for learning." James spoke in support of minority administration for positive impact and empowerment, "The higher authorities come around and speak about their life experience, and the students see we are all facing the same issues." Several participants advised that positive impact and empowerment are promoted when minority students are equipped to handle racial situations and exhibit resilience in facing racial issues.

### **Teacher Perceptions**

All participants expressed a commitment to educating students. The participants spoke candidly about racial profiling and cultural competence to prevent future challenges and promote a more inclusive society. The teacher's perceptions were based on personal experiences. Cameron explained, "I don't want my kids to face what I faced, so now we can start a better future." He attributed his approach to teaching and addressing sensitive topics to their life experiences, personal mindset, and dedication to positively impacting students' lives. Some participants cited a lack of professional development training or support from professional learning communities during the social protests of 2020 for White teachers to address sensitive topics with their minority students. Black participants did not recall many changes to their instructional approach during this time. Dakota presented "the fact that some of my colleagues are quite supportive," which helps the teacher's perspective to feel supported. She was "quite disturbed initially" because she did not know how everyone would relate to her ethnic-racial

socialization messages in the classroom with heightened racial tensions during that time. Other participants expressed a lack of satisfaction with surface-level changes to address ethnic-racial socialization issues. Several participants remarked about “much more to come” but lacked a belief in the effectiveness of superficial measures. Drew stated, “It was said and done publicly, so the school's image is protected. But practice is different and wasn’t put into practice.”

All participants noted the significance that training is necessary for success in a diverse classroom. Participants implied the value of continuous learning and skill development in culturally diverse classrooms. Adrian stated her teacher education program in college provided her with invaluable training that prepared her for a diverse classroom. Finley shared, “The training included all about cultural competence, diversity, equity and inclusion, which are essential for effectively working with minority students.” The theme highlights teacher advocacy for ongoing professional development to support teachers in implementing effective strategies for addressing social justice and diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging. The training contributes to a positive cultural shift within the school environment, promoting respect, empathy, and inclusivity among staff, students, and stakeholders. Participants reiterated the value of creating a school culture that supports diversity and equity. Riley advised, “Schools of mixed-race and ethnicity should address the issue that comes with race and ethnicity to make all students feel comfortable by providing teachers training.” Participants agreed training empowers teachers with practical strategies to improve their teaching practices, such as culturally relevant teaching methods.

### **Parental Influence**

The influence on ethnic-racial perspectives in adolescent youth and educators alike begins with socialization messages from home. Parental influence has produced students who

challenge diversity. Schools with limited diversity provide additional challenges to comprehensive discussions of race-related issues. Alex indicated that many of the White teachers do not see the significance of ethnic-racial socialization messages in classroom instruction and curriculum. “The White teachers don’t take it seriously like I do. We have a different mindset and different experiences in life,” Alex proclaimed. Black participants noted that their parents first provided preparation for bias, and through personal growth and adaptation, they found not all Whites were biased or prejudiced. These are the messages imparted to their students but have been met with pushback and resistance. James mentioned, “I include notable minorities in my instruction and assign essays on Michelle Obama and Oprah Winfrey, and I have had White parents resist the assignment as useless to their child.” Participants indicated they often share culturally relevant teaching methods with other minority teachers for support and reinforcement. When the administration is a minority, the resistance and pushback are met with the need to prepare students for a diverse world properly. Ellis added, “I do not touch those topics or push the narrative because I have seen the wrath of the privileged White parent upon the teacher with good intentions.” Campbell received admonishment from leadership due to a parent not agreeing with his teachings during the social protest of 2020. “I did not receive support from my principal and was not shocked. I said the social protests were a result of unarmed Black men being killed by cops,” Campbell advised. Participants indicated that strides have been made, but the influence of hegemonic-biased parents presents an additional barrier to changing mindsets and perspectives.

## **Outlier Data and Findings**

An unexpected finding was discovered that did not align with the specific research questions. The outlier discovered was medical malpractice. The outlier discovered, and the interpretation of the finding are presented below.

### ***Medical Malpractice***

One participant mentioned his motivation for imparting messages of unity and celebration of diverse cultures due to the loss of his sister. James said, “My sister was not given proper care because they saw her color and not a woman of value pregnant with a child.” The participant warned of the negative implications of a lack of diversity in schools. James continued, “The schools create the doctors who don’t care about minority healthcare. The schools create police officers who stereotype young Black boys.” There have been studies regarding the mortality rate of Black newborns with White doctors (Greenwood et al., 2020), but this study does not address the medical context. James was the only participant to mention medical malpractice.

## **Research Question Responses**

The research questions provide a foundational implication for the overall success of a qualitative study. This research consisted of one central research question and three sub questions. Each research question aligned with the theoretical model. A table of thematic alignment to each research question is exhibited below in Table 8 and Appendix K. This section provides detailed responses for each research question with supporting information detailed in each sub-question.

**Table 8***Primary Themes and Sub-Themes Alignment*

Themes	Sub-Themes	Research Question
Addressing Feelings of Discomfort and Exclusion		Central Question
Addressing Race and Ethnicity		Central Question
Commitment to Equity and Inclusion	Support Among Peers	Central Question
Challenges in Educating About Black Issues	Challenges in Addressing	Sub Question 1
Desire for Awareness and Change		Sub Question 1
Racial Profiling and Social Challenges		Sub Question 1
Educator's Approach		Sub Question 2
Facilitating Learning and Understanding		Sub Question 2
Parental Engagement	Building Relationships	Sub Question 2
Importance of Cultural Education		Sub Question 2
Impact on Mental Health		Sub Question 3

**Central Research Question**

The central research question for this study is, what are the lived experiences of educators as ethnic-racial socialization agents for adolescent youth in public schools in the United States?

Data analysis revealed three themes experienced by the educators: addressing feelings of discomfort and exclusion, commitment to equity and inclusion, and challenges in educating about Black issues.

Educators of middle and secondary adolescent minority youth in public schools in the United States experienced and shared feelings of discomfort in educators and students when applying ethnic-racial socialization messages in the classroom. Participants spoke of White teachers not utilizing the ethnic-racial socialization approach and did not see the necessity,



whereas minority teachers implemented the approach consistently. Adolescent youth will receive mixed messages regarding ethnicity and race based on the educator's pedagogical practice since there is no uniformity in instruction and use. Educators expressed feeling uncomfortable witnessing barriers related to race and ethnicity among students. This discomfort motivates them to address these issues and encourage a mindset shift among students and educators. Riley responded

It makes me feel very, very uncomfortable as an educator. My goal is to see the students have good relationships with everyone, where ethnicity, race, region, and other things cannot be a reason for dislike. Seeing the barriers within themselves makes me so uncomfortable. But as an educator, I see how I can talk to them and make them see logical reasoning. I attempt to grow the mentality that their peers are their brothers and sisters. My goal is to change their mindset.

Riley and other participants aimed to engage students in discussions to challenge and change negative mentalities or sentiments based on race and ethnicity.

Several participants exhibited a commitment to equity and inclusion. Ellis advocated for inclusivity by encouraging other educators to create environments where diverse students feel accepted and comfortable. Alex emphasized the role of schools in promoting a sense of belonging for all students. Campbell reported, "I will start by discussing the racial issues; it's about the Black and Brown students. Teachers are racially profiling them, and it's difficult to sit back and watch." James suggested a call for inclusivity and support for African American students. Participants emphasized the importance of creating welcoming environments where students feel accepted and valued, regardless of appearance or background. Adrian specifically mentioned educating genders, races, educators, and students to promote inclusivity and open-

mindedness. Participants were committed to creating an environment where everyone felt accepted and valued, regardless of differences.

Participants mentioned the need for cultural awareness for all teachers to become more attuned to cultural and diversity-related challenges in teaching about Black and Brown issues. Some participants reflected critically on teaching practices and beliefs that produce the best learning outcomes for the students. The importance of cultural capital in education and how it shapes interactions with students was stressed by Ellis. Furthermore, Ellis described

Sometimes, it breaks my heart when I'm standing in a classroom that's predominately black and brown students. It seems like the opportunity is not there for them to learn what they're supposed to learn because the teacher doesn't have the background or cultural knowledge to reach them. Sometimes it can be very painful.

Ellis challenges her educators to change the narrative about low assessment scores. She believes that low assessment scores require innovative teaching and practices to close academic gaps. Participants mentioned focusing on engaging and understanding students' cultural backgrounds, acknowledging challenges and the diverse experiences Black students bring to the classroom.

### **Sub-Question One**

How does student diversity affect educators' perceptions of them as ethnic-racial socialization agents? Sub-Question One explored and identified the influences on educator perceptions of them. The data analysis identified three themes: desire for awareness and change, racial profiling and social challenges, and preparation for bias.

Every Black participant mentioned the importance of changing mindsets within the school context for awareness and change. Most participants noted a proactive approach to

promoting awareness and change and combating racial discrimination. James shared his experience

I witness a lot of bullying online, and the kids bring it to school. The Black students indicate White students are bullying them online and in school for one reason or another. It is painful to see an African American kid not being stood up for because of skin color or race. That's why I educate them on this and White teachers too.

Participants view education as changing mindsets, creating awareness, and combating the influence of preconceived biases and notions that students may bring to school from home.

Black participants acknowledged having firsthand experience with racial issues, which enhances their ability to educate others and change mindsets through awareness. James said, "I prefer educating the teachers because if the kid loves the White teachers, they will listen to them." Minority students feel more comfortable going to minority teachers to complain or inform of grievances because of their shared race, Campbell shared. James added, "With time, they just don't come to me anymore. They also will go to white teachers as well because I made them understand it is not about skin color." Examples of discrimination and prejudice based on skin color were provided by James. James also informed of qualified individuals looked over for jobs due to racial biases, further highlighting the ongoing challenges faced with creating awareness and changing mindset. Despite the difficulties described, the participants believed positive changes would occur in the future, and it is happening now with a focus on awareness, education, and efforts to combat racism and promote inclusivity.

The interviewed participants actively educated students about acceptance, belonging, and freedom, particularly in the context of racial profiling and racial challenges experienced outside

the school environments. Finley encouraged students to feel accepted and valued and foster a sense of belonging. Alex shared, “When I see them a little bit uncomfortable and not participating the way they should for one reason or another, I try as much as possible to make them feel they have freedom and shouldn’t be left out.” Finley took the position of attempting to make the student feel at home to promote inclusion and learning. Riley commented, “You see a lot of Black parents try to educate their kids because whenever an encounter occurs with a White person, the Black kid is usually blamed.” Participants stressed the importance of successfully educating students, especially White students, about racial issues. Ainsley indicated that White students may see Black students mistreated online and in society and think that is the proper treatment for minorities, further emphasizing the importance of providing students with knowledge and understanding of racial issues and their long-term impact.

Most participants prepared students for bias by empowering and encouraging self-worth. Noah promoted interaction between students to interact with each other and prioritized an inclusive and positive learning environment where all students feel comfortable, happy, and valued. Participants noted the importance of handling racial issues correctly and positively. Noah said, “Because I think I’m actually transforming the system, and I think this is something every school and teacher should offer.” Ainsley added, “A White teacher may not know how to speak life into that Black kid...to connect with the students through shared racial experiences.” Cameron’s commitment to preparation for bias is due to the adverse outcomes of racially profiling students and teachers. Initiating discussions about racial issues has allowed the participants to train more and change student mindsets. Noah believes in preparing students for the outside world by discussing brutal realities. Racial topics may be challenging, but ultimately

influential in molding students' attitudes and perspectives was the lived experience of teachers interviewed as ethnic-racial socialization agents.

### **Sub-Question Two**

What are the educator's experiences with the curriculum as it affects their role as ethnic-racial socialization agents? Cameron expressed that educators face the monumental task of educating all students. Dakota tried to teach students about the absence of discrimination and promote unity regardless of racial background. Blake spoke candidly of her approach,

I love the challenge of getting students to learn and understand English. It isn't really easy, but I'll always try my best. Even though it's very difficult, I will always give my best to ensure the students get the best they deserve.

Blake's approach emphasized that everyone is equal and should work together as a team, regardless of ethnic or racial identity. Culturally relevant teachings and discussions to connect and motivate learning were used by Blake and other participants. In incorporating diversity and collaboration in diverse groups of students and encouraging them to work together harmoniously, Dakota's approach fosters a sense of inclusivity and teamwork among the students, collaboration, and mutual respect.

Several participants facilitated learning and understanding through positive outcomes from inclusive teaching practices. Participants mentioned using multimedia for education to connect with students constantly connected to cell phones and digital devices. However, during the social protests of 2020, Noah met challenges in teaching and learning. The time constraints from teaching, as told by Noah, were because students had many questions regarding the protests. Some participants felt they had to choose between the students' psychosocial and academic needs. Ainsley had never experienced social demonstrations, and he educated himself

on the inception of the social protests by researching social protests. Blake advised students and answered their questions based on what was learned through news networks. Ainsley and Blake transferred knowledge gained to facilitate learning in adolescent minority youth.

Participants mentioned parental engagement as positive or negative regarding influence on ethnic-racial socialization messages imparted in the curriculum and instruction. Blake advocated for parental involvement in the educational process is essential, as “it fosters partnerships that support learning and understanding.” Finley spoke of a parent who became angry whenever she would include Native American stories in her instruction. “The mother would come to a meeting and tell me that I have no right to teach their native children the ‘White man’ version of their history,” Finley explained. Finley refuted the claim and replied that she told the stories as Native American authors and scholars had published them. Drew added the negative parental involvement may stifle and damage student-teacher relationship building. Positive parents' participation in the educational process allows collaboration with families to understand cultural values, support student learning at home, and build partnerships that benefit student success as Drew further advised. Most participants claimed positive parental engagement builds community partnerships.

Cultural sensitivity highlights the importance of respecting and understanding diverse cultural backgrounds within the educational context. Cultural sensitivity includes addressing cultural differences, creating a welcoming environment for students from various cultural backgrounds, and promoting inclusivity. Adrian explained

As a teacher and mother of bi-racial kids, I want them to know both of their histories. We are equal, and one is no more important than the other. I see the assignments that come home, and they are not culturally relevant to my bi-racial

kids. Seeing this firsthand and teaching diverse students, I consistently try to include cultural relevance to my students. I have also asked for help from parents to teach them better their culture. Most of my teaching peers try to provide a cultural education, but in Washington State, the focus is socio-emotional learning, which needs more culture.

Drew advanced that cultural education requires training in cultural competence. Participants emphatically advised that school culture must include diversity training for teachers to educate diverse student bodies appropriately. Many Black participants proposed that teachers with shared ethnicity and race may feel comfortable with cultural didactics in the classroom.

### **Sub-Question Three**

What are the educator's experiences as ethnic-racial socialization agents promoting cultural relevancy in the classroom? Every participant mentioned the impact on the mental health of the students due to the potential adverse effects of racial discrimination, stereotypes, and stigmatization. Drew said, "The students bring the mental trauma from the internet and society into the classroom. I must not only educate minority students but also instill hope into them during sometimes dark times." Blake highlights the need to address these issues proactively to prevent detrimental effects on students' academic and well-being experience. Each participant mentioned their role as a social worker in addressing disparities and supporting minority students. Drew continued, "You help them cope with different issues, but the reality is that most of those issues remain despite addressing them repeatedly." Many participants acknowledged the skepticism in navigating these challenges can be difficult, but they are committed to change for the future.

Participants' teacher perceptions varied based on the school's diversity, background, and

culture. Black participants expressed their responsibility and mentorship to ethnic-racial socialization in the school context. Many Black participants saw themselves as an extension of the parents in preparation for bias. The support of colleagues with shared perceptions of the necessity of ethnic-racial socialization practice in the classroom which helped the participants feel more comfortable and excited about discussing such topics. Dakota indicated, “I and several other teachers share and offer teaching strategies and approaches to best help minority students overall. We created our own group.” Interviewed participants stressed the importance of creating a culturally supportive learning community that helps teachers teach with ease and less discomfort for the betterment of the students.

Some of the participants mentioned resistance and pushback. In particular, White participants attribute their approach to teaching and addressing sensitive topics to wanting to create an inclusive environment. Still, some participants feel they need more knowledge and training to reach the students. Cameron questioned, “How do I address these topics and create inclusion when I haven’t had any training? How am I expected to do something I have not been prepared for?” All participants agreed on promoting cultural competence in education for students but felt teachers should receive training, too. Noah spoke regarding instances of resistance and pushback from students. Some of the interviewed participants practicing in schools with less diversity indicated that minority students may not feel comfortable enough to share their experiences. An additional layer can be the parents' resistance to culturally relevant curricula, as told by Dakota. Participants commented that a culturally pertinent curriculum has complexities in implementation and educator comfort.

### **Summary**

Chapter Four allowed the participants to voice their experiences as ethnic-racial



socialization agents in middle and secondary schools within the United States. Data analysis utilizing the hermeneutical framework provided the identification of thirteen themes which are: addressing feelings of discomfort and exclusion, commitment to equity and inclusion, challenges in educating about Black issues, desire for awareness and change, racial profiling and social challenges, preparation for bias, educator's approach, facilitating learning and understanding, parental engagement, importance of cultural education, impact on mental health, teacher perceptions, and resistance and pushback. The voices of each participant's shared stories revealed the phenomenon experienced by educators as ethnic-racial socialization agents in middle and secondary schools in the United States. The thematic findings of this study were aligned with the research's central question and sub-questions.

## **CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION**

### **Overview**

Chapter Five provides an interpretation of the findings from Chapter Four. The chapter discusses the implications for practice in accordance with the findings. The empirical and theoretical implications are discussed, in conjunction with limitations, and delimitations. The chapter concludes with recommendations for further research and a conclusion.

### **Discussion**

This section discusses the study's findings, considering the themes developed from hermeneutical phenomenology data analysis. The findings are supported by empirical and theoretical sources acquired from the study's data. This section addresses the findings, implications for practice, theoretical and empirical implications, limitations and delimitations, and recommendations for future research.

### **Summary of Thematic Findings**

The purpose of this study is to discover and interpret the lived experiences of educators as ethnic-racial socialization agents in middle and secondary schools in the United States. Thirteen participants shared their lived experiences as ethnic-racial socialization agents within the school context. The thirteen primary themes that emerged from this research study were (a) addressing feelings of discomfort and exclusion, (b) commitment to equity and inclusion, (c) challenges in educating about Black issues, (d) desire for awareness and change, (e) racial profiling and social challenges, (f) preparation for bias, (g) educator's approach, (h) facilitating learning and understanding, (i) parental engagement, (j) importance of cultural education, (k) impact on mental health, (l) teacher perceptions, and (m) resistance and pushback. In addition, the study also revealed four associated subthemes: (a) addressing race, (b) support among peers,

(c) challenges in addressing racism, and (d) building student relationships.

### **Interpretation of Findings**

The hermeneutical framework posited by Van Manen (2016) was used to attain the results of this study. The School Ethnic-Racial Socialization Transmission Model (Saleem & Byrd, 2021) was the guiding theoretical framework. The participants shared lived experiences through a semi-structured interview, protocol writing prompt, and focus group. Thirteen participants were recruited for this study. The participants were recruited by maximum variation sampling and later snowballing sampling.

### ***Instilling Racial and Ethnic Pride***

The participants intentionally aimed to instill ethnic-racial pride, support ethnic-racial identity development through curriculum choices, and highlight historical minorities' achievements. Each participant could convey cultural pride with intentionality and strategic integration into teachings that resonate with students through ethnic-racial or cultural association. All participants spoke of cultural integration into the curriculum but were challenged with multicultural resources for teaching in their content area. Several participants mentioned participation in a focus group of educators and shared culturally centered lesson plans and assignments. Access to culturally diverse curricula was not accessible, and many participants created their own, lacking uniformity and equitable access to an appropriate culturally relevant education.

Cultural pride was complemented by efforts to instill cultural competency or cultural appreciation of other groups. Many participants suggested that while it was important to have pride in one's ethnic-racial identity, it was also necessary to understand the history and achievements of ethnic-racial groups. Participants expressed the need for cross-cultural learning

opportunities to build students' emotional and cognitive capacity to process external societal influences and social media. Cross-cultural learning and awareness include ethnic-racial groups other than Black and Latinx. The intersectional approaches of ethnic-racial and lower socioeconomic factors challenge educators in instilling cultural pride due to the negative impacts on education with these factors.

The importance of instilling racial and ethnic pride is noted to be necessary for minority adolescent youth. However, many participants emphasized the need for ethnic-racial socialization for white students. White students often do not have to internalize feelings of insecurity due to their race. They grow up in a hegemonic racially stratified American landscape and the educational system is the prime arena to challenge their beliefs regarding diversity and multiculturalism. The celebration of cultures requires consistent integration into the curriculum and open discussions where all students feel safe to engage and share—additionally, educators who are comfortable and trained to engage in culturally relevant teachings. Research has shown that minority students are positively affected when they are connected to the classroom and teachings and motivated to learn (Byrd & Legette, 2022; Cardwell et al., 2020; Howard, 2021; Rivas-Drake & Umana-Taylor, 2019; Yishan et al., 2022). The participants agreed and tried to empower students by instilling ethnic and racial pride.

### ***Preparation for Racial Bias***

In addition to instilling cultural pride, participants were compelled to prepare students for racial bias. The social protests of 2020 created a need for the interviewed participants to increase the students' critical consciousness and understanding of race and racism in the United States. Participants noted minority students felt more safe and comfortable approaching educators with shared ethnicity and race for questions regarding race and racism. Participants strengthened

relationships as authoritative figures through shared ethnicity and race by quelling their concerns about the social climate. The Black participants could efficiently address the needs of the adolescent youth due to shared experiences. Many spoke of the racist experiences from which they drew upon to communicate with their students effectively, whereas some White participants were leery and apprehensive regarding addressing racial topics. The lack of addressing topics that impact students sends a message that their concerns and issues are not valued or valid. White educators, more than minority educators, should make the effort to address the students' concerns to promote inclusivity and build sustainable student-teacher relationships across ethnic-racial divides.

Preparation for racial bias was further revealed through educators' socialization of mistrust. Educators, regardless of their racial background, were very adamant about not being inclusive of an entire race based on the inherently wrong, mainly White people. Participants, especially Black, reported having to be highly mindful of how they present the ethnic-racial socialization messages due to potential perceived bias by those in power. The Black participants noted racial bias with their peers and believed that it was not possible to avoid it, but they learned how to deal with the impending bias. The Black participants transferred their knowledge with racial bias to instill confidence and belief in minority students to counter the negative stereotypes with achievement. Some participants mentioned that the students should not see their skin as an impediment to success or potential relationship-building with students of other ethnic-racial backgrounds.

Participants expressed the harsh reality that Black minority students are often prepared for a world that may not welcome or appreciate them. Minority adolescent youth usually lack a sense of belonging in the school culture and live in a society that has a social hierarchy and caste

systems based on race was mentioned by several participants. The mental impact on minority adolescent youth can be monumental, and participants warned of negative implications for academic and psychosocial outcomes. However, this is not a practice common in white households to prepare their young sons as a rite of passage into adulthood (Saleem & Byrd, 2021). The need for the celebration of diversity and the promotion of cultural relevance was advanced by the interviewed participants. The school context provides limitless opportunities to bridge the racial divide and lessen the expectation of racial bias by diversifying the curricula and pedagogical practices (Saleem & Byrd, 2021).

### ***Colorblind Socialization***

Every Black participant was mindful not to vilify an entire race based on their personal experiences or beliefs, even in opposition to a color-evasive perspective. Participants indicated most schools utilized a colorblind socialization approach unless there was a need to address some topic or issue. The participants exhibited grace toward the white power structure and a strident belief that the students they encountered may be positively impacted. The participants did not show anger or respond to the bias presented to them with matched bias. Instead, the participants implored the importance of exhibiting resilience to do the best they can with what they have.

The challenge of a colorblind approach is nothing new to many Black participants and even their parents and grandparents. The same preparation for bias provided to them in the past inspires them to highlight the contributions of notable minorities in the curriculum for inclusivity. The interviewed participants observed an ideology that race is no longer a factor; therefore, laws ensuring diversity are no longer needed and ensuring diverse curricula and instruction aren't required either. The color-evasive perception was advanced through the curriculum, which included American norms and values but lacked diversity and inclusion for

minority representation. Participants without a sense of self-efficacy and reflection support a race-evasive approach. The lack of efficaciousness in educator practices has unintended consequences of further alienating diversity, demotivating student focus, and lacking motivation for achievement. The lack of inclusion of minorities in school culture and classroom instructional strategies can support racial stereotypes and continue an ethnic-racial divide. The curricula and pedagogical practices must resemble the diverse student body to promote understanding and respect for all cultures.

### ***Barriers to School ERS***

The participants varied in their efforts and applications of school ethnic-racial socialization (ERS) messages and approaches. They identified barriers to school ethnic-racial socialization in the classroom. The primary obstacle is the need for more support from teaching peers, leadership, and administration. The state-required curriculum and teaching to the test leaves little time for engagement and add additional complexity. The lack of administration, leadership, and teaching peers highlights the barrier, which makes it more difficult. The lack of administration, leadership, and teaching peers highlights the barrier, which makes it more difficult. Some participants expressed that parents may also be barriers when they object to disseminating culturally relevant teachings, which adds challenge to implementing ERS in the classroom.

Participants mentioned needing an authentic, inclusive curriculum and resources to support students' learning. Booker T. Washington and Frederick Douglass were both great men. However, adolescent youth are most connected to current notable Black athletes, rappers, actors, and social media celebrities as stated by several participants. The interviewed participants strongly suggested that the curricula need to be current and reflective of the current times to

increase interest and motivate learning. Middle-aged protestant white men write most curricula, and some would argue that the curricula are devoid of culturally relevant teachings and are more reflective of the ideologies of most white middle-class female teachers. If the curriculum and instruction are based on the ideologies of the educator, then ERS promotion will be limited to the minority educators who practice it. The concern is that Black educators comprise approximately 7% of the workforce, and some Black students will never have the experience or relatability of a Black teacher (Saleem & Byrd, 2021). The value of minority educators is not simply for representation; they provide a safe space for addressing inquiries and issues to promote learning and understanding, as expressed by the interviewed participants. The social protests of 2020 were unsettling, and many minority students engaged in discussions with minority educators who were interviewed. Most participants noted the impact on minority students may have a long-standing effect through adulthood on their ethnic-racial identity development.

Several participants spoke on witnessing racial discrimination against Black students and the societal factors, including the internet, that impede cross-cultural learning and heighten racial tensions. Racial discriminatory practices within the school context of educators, administration, and leadership impede ERS practices. The lack of support and resources presents challenges that deny adolescent minority youth educational equity and an appropriate education. Local and national news and social media broadcasts influence student perspectives, and learning resources using technology are not readily available to adolescent minority youth in lower-income districts. The lack of sources and support may lessen the motivation of educators to use ERS practices. The school ERS transmission describes utilizing multimedia and technology as a method of engagement and learning. The lack of technological aids impedes educators and students from



being socialized into diverse classrooms and cultures and doesn't address racial tensions that may exist.

### **Implications for Policy and Practice**

This section provides an opportunity to discuss the implications for practice and policy. I utilized the study's findings to examine practice and policy implications. The findings of the study provided evidence to enhance practices and policies. Implementing recommendations within this section may assist middle and secondary educational administration and educators in utilizing ethnic-racialization socialization approaches in the classroom and school culture for minority adolescent youth.

#### ***Implications for Policy***

Educational administration and leadership in middle and secondary public schools within the United States play a pivotal role in promoting students' ethnic-racial identity, teaching youth about race, and resisting racism. Educators must have a critical consciousness and racial literacy, with the ability to solve racial conflicts within the teacher education program and ongoing training for continued workforce development (Howard, 2021). Educational administration and leadership must work in parallel with educators and be proactive in establishing policies and continued educational training to help minoritized adolescent youth. Teacher preparation programs and schools should impose policies and practices that address institutional barriers to promote open discourse about race and racism for students and educators alike.

Racial literacy may also enhance educators' ability to effectively engage with and discuss race and racism while tailoring classroom assignments to be representative and connected to the students' lived experiences (Milner, 2012). Educators' and students' racial literacy is bidirectional and changes over time. There is a need for the inclusion of ethnic-racial dialogue to promote

healing and a healthy school racial climate that may also lead to changes in society regarding racial tensions. Educators struggle with balancing time to teach the core content area and addressing racial topics and issues that impede learning. School administration must support educators within the classroom by providing the academic resources for optimal learning and time allotted and included in the curricula to provide minoritized students a safe space to be heard and share experiences and to provide cross-cultural learning opportunities for non-minoritized students.

### ***Implications for Practice***

The findings of the lived experiences of educators as ethnic-racial socialization agents within the school context helped to provide implications for practice, facilitating an opportunity for minoritized adolescent youth to encounter a school context that promotes inclusion through cultural relevancy. To address student diversity within middle and secondary schools in the United States, it may also be helpful to train and develop educators for ethnic-racial socialization transmissions and to incorporate the changes unilaterally for curricula inclusion. To create interest and connection to the classroom with minoritized adolescent youth, pedagogical practices, and curriculum development should integrate the cultural capital minoritized students bring to the school context.

Many of the participants were processing their mental impact on the social climate during the social protests of 2020 and addressing minoritized student needs. In urban schools with majority-minority students, educators were required to develop critically sustaining pedagogy to address academic areas and mental health impacts. Educators need support and training for efficacy and engagement in racial conversations in and out of the school context. The school administration's support removes a barrier to ethnic-racial socialization in the classroom and

supports a healthy school ethnic-racial climate. Building educators' racial literacy and continued development has implications for the more significant school climate and student outcomes across development (Saleem & Byrd, 2021).

Black participants in this study took on additional roles within the school context to address racial issues with students and to quell racial tensions. In addition to providing instruction, Black participants fielded questions and grievances from minority students who felt they were being targeted and discriminated against. There is a dire need for educators, and even more so for minority educators. Many of the white participants did not feel they had the support or training to provide the diverse students with clarity in racial situations. To support both educators and students, schools require a racial climate and curriculum to address the needs of the students. The findings support the need for continuous training and development in ethnic-racial socialization transmission, and minority teacher retention is an area to address the need for educators who are confident and comfortable providing appropriate education to diverse students.

The landmark case of *Brown v. Board of Education* found segregation due to race unconstitutional. Black students are now segregated into schools with diverse populations, yet the curriculum has not evolved to reflect the diverse students being educated as confirmed by several participants. Black participants spoke of integrating notable Black figures into assignments because they lacked historical figures representative of their students. Participants expressed that an urban low-income Black kid without academic resources and educational support may not have a connection to Abraham Lincoln, but LeBron James having a school that supports education may have more of an impact on them. Participants added that similarities in having come from poverty and having a single mother, James may inspire them to rise above

adversities for achievement. Unfortunately, poverty and single-family homes are the demographics in urban and low-income highly diverse schools and representative of the student populations in many districts. Many participants felt that the curriculum needs to be modernized to stimulate learning and understanding in diverse students. Educators have used and introduced culturally relevant teaching to address and develop critical thinking to appreciate their differences—race, religion, sexual identity, socioeconomic status, and other defining characteristics.

The implementation of culturally relevant teaching strategizes the development of a positive self-concept by teaching and presenting knowledge of the contributions, cultures, and histories of diverse groups. Unlike whitewashed curriculum standards, pedagogical practices are customized to multicultural students. The challenge to practice is the variances by educators and the support of school administration and leadership. Educators take different approaches to ethnic-racial socialization transmission from color-evasive socialization approaches to being an authority on social justice issues within the school. The defining motivation is their personal experience or observation of many topics: classism, racism, sexism, linguicism, religious intolerance, and xenophobia. A culturally relevant teaching approach focuses on developing the attitudes, knowledge, and skills students require for student functionality in a global workforce with different cultures.

Some White participants mentioned that they are not racist but feel unequipped to address racial issues and culturally relevant teaching. Significant differences exist between a culturally pertinent teaching approach and an anti-racist education. A culturally relevant education does not focus on race and race-related issues but provides a safe and welcoming environment for diverse students to engage and share experiences. The experiences or perspectives may include

discussions on race and race-related issues, but unlike anti-racist where the primary focal point is based on racial discussions. A clear distinction is needed to distinguish culturally relevant teachings as a celebration of all cultures and anti-racist teachings focus solely on the academic needs and success of Black students. Culturally relevant teachings may also be beneficial to predominantly white school districts. White students may not have been educated on their cultural and ethnic background, simply thinking they are White. In teaching White students about their cultural and ethnic backgrounds, they may be able to think critically about how race has been assigned to privilege. Many educators are in proximal positions to confront and dismantle racism within the school context but feel they lack the knowledge, skills, and support for implementation in practice.

### **Empirical and Theoretical Implications**

The study's findings are discussed according to the empirical and theoretical data in this section. I discuss the study's empirical alignment with the findings of this study. Furthermore, the findings of this study will be correlated to the theoretical framework.

#### ***Empirical Implications***

The empirical literature provides evidence of the importance of educators as school ethnic-racial socialization agents for the academic and psychosocial outcomes of adolescent minority youth. Much of the empirical data explored educators within the school context. The focus of this study was the lived experiences of educators as ethnic-racial socialization agents in middle and secondary public schools in the United States. There is minimal literature specifically exploring educator practices as ethnic-racial socialization agents within the school context and the role of the school context in shaping ethnic-racial identity development, which impacts academic and psychosocial outcomes. Most literature on ethnic-racial socialization focused on

minority students and teacher impact. Ethnic-racial socialization transmission focuses primarily on minoritized students, and the messages transmitted by educators as agents. This study adds to the field of knowledge by exploring educator practices as ethnic-racial socialization agents with middle and secondary minority adolescent youth.

**The School Context.** The primary and secondary school context plays a pivotal role in teaching youth about culture, history, and race, also called cultural socialization (Brand et al., 2003; Brown & Chu, 2012; Byrd, 2017; Saleem et al., 2024). However, the educators are often less diverse than their students (DeCuir-Gunby, 2012a; Howard & Navarro, 2021; Piper, 2019). The cultural mismatch in the classroom may negatively impact a minority student who may not feel comfortable approaching a White teacher with racial issues (Aronson & Laughter, 2016; Byrd, 2017; Dover, 2013; Gay, 2002; Ladson-Billings, 2001; Saleem & Byrd, 2021; Watford et al., 2021). The White teacher may be viewed as an extension of the hegemonic power structure (Saleem & Byrd, 2021). At the same time, a minority teacher may be viewed as an extension of their parents and seek out their help in grievances of race and otherwise. The experiences of educators as ethnic-racial socialization agents in middle and secondary public schools are consistent with the empirical literature regarding the experiences of educators as ethnic-racial socialization agents in private schools.

The thematic findings of the lived experiences of middle and secondary educators as ethnic-racial socialization agents demonstrated public school educators' influence on ethnic-racial identity development, demonstrated a desire for awareness and changes, addressed racial profiling and social challenges, advised adolescent youth in preparation for racial bias, the educator's approach was based on personal experiences and beliefs, and a commitment to facilitating learning and understanding for all students (Byrd & Legette, 2022). The findings are

consistent with current literature discussing culturally revitalizing pedagogies beyond teaching to centering youth voices as experts in educational spaces (McCarty & Lee, 2014; Saleem & Byrd, 2021). The findings of educators' influence on ethnic-racial identity are congruent with current literature. Ethnic-racial identity development often elicits resistance from educators, especially when the focus is learning about race and racism (Piper, 2019). Interactions with pedagogical practices and curricula influence adolescent youth's ethnic-racial identity development (DeCuir-Gunby, 2012; Howard & Navarro, 2021; Piper, 2019). Additionally, educator relationships and support may influence students' attitudes and beliefs regarding their school (Quin et al., 2018).

The lived experiences of educators as ethnic-racial socialization agents often do not prioritize, recognize, or feel adequately equipped to address ethnic-racial topics and do not engage in those conversations (DeCuir-Gunby, 2012a; Howard & Navarro, 2016). Educators and school administration may miss opportunities for cross-cultural learning, to promote racial healing, and to foster a healthy racial climate (Saleem et al., 2021). White participants indicated feelings of discomfort and exclusion in discussion topics of ethnic-racial socialization, and Black participants felt a sense of duty to prevent adolescent youth from their experiences by engaging in challenging, racially sensitive topics. Black participants spoke of minoritized students seeking their guidance in issues and grievances. Minoritized students are left feeling the effect on academic and psychosocial outcomes when they do not feel heard or have a sense of belonging in racial profiling and times of social unrest (Saleem & Byrd, 2021). Black participants' approach prepared students for racial bias by addressing race and a commitment to equity and inclusion. White participants were challenged in educating about Black issues but sincerely desired awareness and change in facilitating learning and understanding. The findings are congruent with empirical literature understanding teachers' ethnic-racial socialization practices

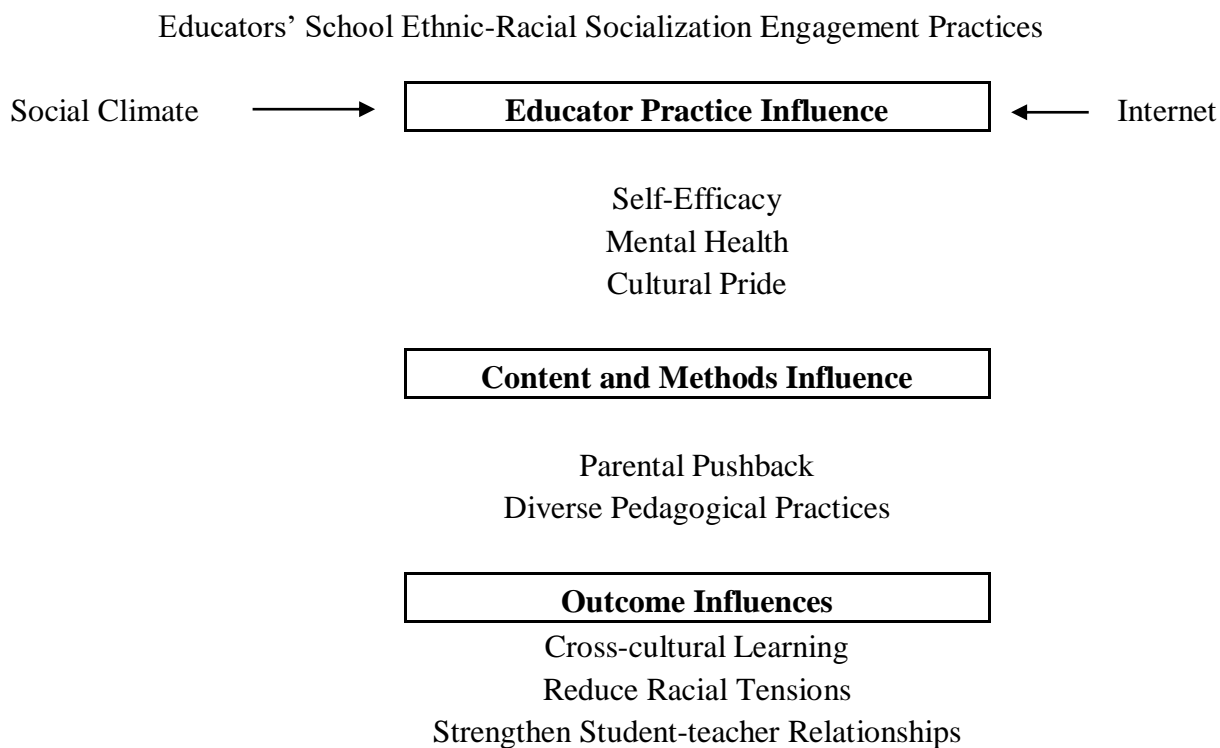
in schools with adolescent minority students and the effects of nonpractice (Aronson & Laughter, 2016; Byrd, 2017; Dover, 2013; Gay, 2002; Ladson-Billings, 2001; Saleem & Byrd, 2021; Watford et al., 2021).

Antibias frameworks, critical consciousness, and social justice pedagogy are all aligned with ethnic-racial socialization, which is preparation for and recognition of racial bias. In the school context, there may be many opportunities to respond to racial tensions and issues, but the directional approach is unclear, or agreement by all educators is lacking. There may also be opportunities for engagement in discussions that confront oppressive forces and unequal conditions (Seider & Graves, 2020). Many White participants believed in educational equity but took the approach of color-evasive or race-neutral messages in the classroom. Minoritized adolescent youth may develop a mistrust within the school context due to racial biases, and discriminatory or believed dismissive behavior. The color-evasive approach impedes teacher-student relationship building. Research has shown that there are disparities in punitive education, and adolescent youth may develop a lack of belief in the teacher and the school context entirely. The school context provides opportunities for adolescent youth to develop cross-cultural competency and skills and foster appreciation of other ethnic-racial groups through the promotion of cultural competence, multiculturalism, and support for cultural pluralism (Brand et al., 2003; Brown & Chu, 2012; Byrd, 2017; Saleem et al., 2024). Thornton (2017) acknowledged that mainstream socialization is typical within the United States and often reinforces American imperialism. The findings of this study also suggest that external factors, such as social media and social climate, impact adolescent youth, and they need safe spaces to share their voice and ask questions.

### ***Theoretical Implications***



The theoretical framework for this study was the School Ethnic-Racialization Socialization Transmission Model (Saleem & Byrd, 2021), which was used as a guiding lens to understand the lived experiences of middle and secondary educators as ethnic-racial socialization agents in the United States. The study theory's results explored educators' practices as ethnic-racial socialization agents in the school context. More so, the practices of educators as ethnic-socialization agents and the impact on academic and psychosocial outcomes. The study findings demonstrate areas of concern for educational and mental health impact, which may impede academic achievement and a healthy ethnic-racial identity. The need for development and training to promote cultural competence for educators and students was expressed by the participants. Participants who were uncomfortable and believed they had inadequate training in ethnic-racial socialization resorted to colorblind socialization. Colorblind socialization breeds mistrust in adolescent youth, and addressing cultural sensitivity builds trust to form sustainable relationships, which are predictors of academic motivation (Saleem & Byrd, 2021). Figure 2 and Appendix L demonstrate the implication of thematic findings with the theoretical lens guiding the study.

**Figure 2***Theoretical Applications*

**Educator Practice Influences.** The School Ethnic-Racial Socialization (ERS) Transmission Model (see Figure 1) has three components: transmitters, content and methods, and the effects of school ERS. The transmitters convey ERS messages; in this study, the transmitters are the participants. The theoretical framework demonstrates that influences on educator practices could negatively affect academic and psychosocial outcomes in adolescent minority youth. Many participants in this study noted that they felt they needed professional learning communities and training in cultural competence and culturally relevant teaching. The lack of confidence in providing diverse pedagogical practices and avoiding race discussion may cause one to question the unintended consequences of attempting to motivate students in this manner (Saleem et al., 2024).

Multicultural education scholars have criticized teaching focusing on a few notable minority heroes; in contrast, culturally relevant curricula that are fully integrated are more influential (Saleem & Byrd, 2021). Participants indicated the need and desire for additional training due to the questions asked by students regarding ethnic-racial socialization messages. However, the School Ethnic-Racial Socialization Transmission model suggests that pedagogical practices move beyond discussion to utilizing multimedia forms for engagement. There is a variance in the transmission of ethnic-racial socialization messages within the school context; moving to multimedia would require more consistent usage from educators and financial support from the school administration.

Participants spoke of the mental health impact of the social protests of 2020, which was wearing on them mentally. Participants had to appear as safe source for adolescent minority youth who sought counsel for cultural pride and comfort during highly salient racial strife. Some ethnic-racial socialization (ERS) messages mirrored parental socialization, while others were unique to the classroom (Saleem & Byrd, 2021). Participants varied in their efforts due to individual influences, yet they all understood the importance of ERS in the school context. Participants discussed challenges in instilling cultural pride and appreciation during times of ethnic-racial tensions that were present in society and transferred to the school context. Racialized incidents reported by participants that began online and away from the school context directly affected the school context.

The social climate, internet, and social media influence educator practices. The most prevalent issue within society, school, internet, and social media context was racial tensions. Conflicts originating in society unaddressed in the school context and further magnified online create division and add to racial tensions. External influences challenge educator practices in

creating a safe, inclusive environment for learning. Neighborhood factors and different socioeconomic strata impact ethnic-racial socialization messages from the parental context and influence educator practices based on parental pushback.

**Content and Methods Influence.** The content and messages are how and what messages the transmitting agent conveys in the school context. The school context is a proximal place to focus on racial climates in public schools, but most participants spoke on racial bias and discrimination and not ethnic-racial socialization messages. The participants addressed the immediate concerns of adolescent youths, who were informed of the ethnic-racial identity, racial climate, school policies, and the educators' approach. The School Ethnic-Racial Socialization Transmission model suggests diverse pedagogical practices and includes cultural socialization, promotion of cultural competence, critical conscious socialization, and mainstream socialization. Cultural socialization promotes membership in one's ethnic-racial group about the importance of culture and fosters cross-cultural learning. Promoting cultural competence improves knowledge about ethnic groups and includes socialization with various people. Participants used critical conscious socialization most to encourage agency, awareness, and reflections about racial injustice. The critical conscious socialization approach is based on the preparation for bias. Mainstream socialization impacts critical conscious socialization approaches due to the contradictory messages of mainstream societal racial issues. The effort placed by participants to foster an appreciation of minority cultural capital may be devalued based on American standards that may not exhibit a multicultural appreciation. Mainstream values challenge ethnic-racial socialization messages and practices of participants with competition and individualism, and many ethnic groups focus on a sense of collective community and seek less competition.

Participants spoke of the challenges to the content and methods transmitted due to various barriers. Most participants spoke of the colorblind socialization messages encouraging students to ignore the role of race. Colorblind socialization is an intentional effort by the educator that may exhibit ethnic-racial bias and blur the line of mainstream socialization. Two significant influences on the participant practices were parental pushback and color-evasive approaches. Colorblind socialization implies that race is no longer a factor and racial equality has been reached while dismissive of evidence of institutional and systemic racism. Parental pushback from ethnic-racial socialization messages has challenged and influenced practices. Minority parents of adolescent youth were elated to have their children's cultural capital celebrated. However, several participants noted parents' resistance to including notable minority figures as assignments for White students. The parents did not see the need or importance of the inclusion of minorities into the curricula. Participants are challenged by societal and parental barriers to ethnic-racial socialization (ERS) messages and must find ways to provide culturally relevant curricula to all students. The content and methods can be variably predicated upon the participants' (transmitter) and adolescent youth (receiver) beliefs, identities, values, and, most importantly, the relationship shared between student-teacher. Participants utilized different content and methods to promote understanding of ERS concepts. Every Black participant's content of verbal messages was more straightforward and more explicit with a deliberate expression. The intent of the transmitter is either intentional or unintended. The color-evasive approach may be perceived as an extension of external ethnic-racial socializers that negatively impact adolescent minority youth. Minority adolescent youth seek their minority teachers' clarity and guidance when they may feel a White teacher does not have the shared ethnic-racial background, and they do not feel safe enough to broach the topic.

**Outcome Influences.** The outcome influences the effects of school ethnic-racial socialization (ERS). School ERS is an essential contributor to adolescent youth's adjustment and well-being, and how racial stressor impacts academically, and psychosocially and develop their ethnic-racial attitude (Saleem & Byrd, 2021). Saleem and Byrd (2021) advanced evidence that the link between school ERS and academics is limited to multiculturalist messages, which are quite like the promotion of cultural competence. School ERS has been shown to increase school belonging and academic achievement. In contrast, the color-evasive approach does not address stereotypes and ethnic-racial issues, which are linked to educational outcomes in secondary minority students (Saleem & Byrd, 2021).

Implementing school ERS promotes cross-cultural competency, reduces racial tension through understanding other cultures, and builds relationships between students and teachers. Presently, limited studies focus explicitly on ERS and self-esteem and life satisfaction, but there is preliminary evidence that school ERS is associated with college students' happiness and stress (Byrd, 2019; Saleem & Byrd, 2021). Learning about and interacting respectfully across ethnically diverse groups develops and promotes positive racial attitudes. The school ERS model has positive outcomes for all students with culturally relevant curriculum and pedagogical practices. The lack of school ERS further increases the sense of exclusion and the racial achievement gap in adolescent minority youth.

The School ERS Transmission Model's theoretical principles analyze educators' lived experiences as ethnic-racial socialization agents through quantitative methods. This research study examined the lived experiences of educator practices as ERS transmitters utilizing hermeneutical phenomenology qualitative methods. Through the lived experiences of educators

of adolescent youth in middle and secondary schools, the depth of discovery and interpretation was obtained from this study's findings.

### **Limitations and Delimitations**

Creswell and Guetterman (2019) stated that researchers advance limitations or weaknesses of their study that may have affected the results. In contrast, delimitations are aspects of the study that the researcher establishes. This section discusses the limitations and delimitations of this study.

#### ***Limitations***

As with all research, the present study has limitations. Participants were recruited, but self-selection likely attracted teachers who were possibly biased, knowledgeable, and passionate about school ethnic-racial socialization messages. Interest in this topic influenced the study's generalizability. Therefore, the themes likely aligned with educators who were more likely to discuss ethnic-race-related issues in class, and the interpretation was met with caution.

The educators in the United States represent many ethnic-racial backgrounds (see Table 2). Most educators in the United States public school system identify as White, at 79%, and Black educators are approximately 7%. The most prominent minority educators in the public school system are Hispanic, and the remaining include Asian, Pacific Islander, Alaskan, and bi- or multiracial. Recruiting Hispanic, Asian, Pacific Islander, Alaskan, and bi- or multiracial was unsuccessful. Most of the participants were Black, and the remaining were White. The United States educational system is quite diverse in culture and ethnicity. The lack of minority participants with lived experiences from the minority mentioned above groups does not provide perspectives and lived experiences of their underrepresented groups. Cultural capital and ethnic-racial socialization vary based on the individual's racial background.

This study establishes the limitation of transferability to middle and secondary schools in the United States and educators as ethnic-racial socialization agents in the school context. This study may also be applied to middle and secondary educators of White students and their lived experiences as school ethnic-racial socialization agents within the school context. This study may also be applied to other educational staff and leadership as ethnic-racial socialization agents in the school context.

### ***Delimitations***

This study limited the participants to educators of adolescent minority youth in core content areas. The limitation to only educators of adolescent minority students in middle and secondary school and in core content areas was required to add to the field of knowledge of school ERS transmission in public schools. Choosing educators in core content areas ensured that educators would have diversity in students because all students must take core content areas. This delimitation ensured I would have educators with a diverse student body and opportunities to transmit ethnic-racial socialization messages in the school context.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

The findings of this study revealed a need for further research to ensure recruitment strategies that include broader teacher perspectives. Research is needed to discover and interpret the lived experiences of educators of White students. Research has shown that minority youth experience parental socialization to prepare them for a racially stratified landscape. However, White youth may not have received cultural socialization from parents and may benefit greatly from it. The discovery and interpretation of a broad educator perspective would allow school leadership and administration to learn from school ethnic-racial socialization messages to support cultural development and support of educational staff. This valuable research may assist



in policy development and curriculum changes to include the cultural experiences of diverse groups.

School ethnic-racial socialization (ERS) transmissions may differ based on the educators' cultural connections, gender, race, and sexual orientation. Educators may prioritize ERS in their pedagogical practices and instruction based on their level of cultural competence and level of school support. Future studies should collect and analyze data with consideration of educator race, other salient demographics, and core content to examine how thematic messages may vary and discover factors that may increase educator efficacy and skills in ethnic-racial topics.

Understanding school ERS requires future empirical research to continue to unpack this new conceptual model. The school ERS aligns with parental socialization, but the theoretical model is still formative. Future studies should empirically research the long-term outcomes of academic, psychosocial, and ethnic-racial attitudes. ERS has a long-term impact on adolescent youth into adulthood. The examination of long-term outcomes would benefit not only the school context but society.

### **Conclusion**

The purpose of this study was to discover and interpret educator practices of adolescent minority youth in middle and secondary public schools within the United States. Data was collected using interviews, focus group, and protocol writing. Data analysis was conducted utilizing the van Manen (2016) hermeneutical framework. The School Ethnic-Racial (ERS) Socialization Transmission Model was the guiding theory and the hermeneutical phenomenology qualitative methodology assisted in discovering and interpreting the lived experiences of educators as ethnic-racial socialization agents. There were thirteen participants recruited for this study. Thirteen themes emerged following data analysis and coding. The thirteen primary themes

that emerged were addressing feelings of discomfort and exclusion, commitment to equity and inclusion, challenges in educating about Black issues, desire for awareness and change, racial profiling and social challenges, preparation for bias, educator's approach, facilitating learning and understanding, parental engagement, importance of cultural education, impact on mental health, teacher perceptions, and resistance and pushback. Educators' shared experiences as ethnic-racial socialization agents in the school context provided an opportunity to avert influences that impede school ERS transmission practices and messages and impact the psychosocial, academic, and ethnic-racial attitudes of adolescent youth in public schools.

The study's first finding revealed that educators and students need critical consciousness and ethnic-racial literacy in curricula, pedagogical practices, and school culture. Subsequent findings reveal that the efficaciousness of the educator impacts the content, method, and frequency of school ERS messages. The need for teacher prep programs to embed cultural relevancy into curriculum development and instruction for educators. The school context can be an extension of teacher preparation training in providing professional learning communities with continued support and ethnic-racial development. Racial discrimination and bias are prevalent issues within the schools; the use of school ERS messages may prepare adolescent youth for not only identification of educational and racial inequity but also methods for which to cope—preparation for bias.

Educators are expected to perform *in loco parentis*, a Latin term for in place of the parent. School ERS was created from parental socialization. Educators must exercise the same care and preparation for minoritized students as their parents prepare them for a world that may be challenged by their race or skin color. By providing minoritized students with an inclusive learning environment, schools also promote cultural learning and ethnic-racial attitude

adjustment. Using the school ERS model ensures that student cultural capital is increased within the school context, which may counter the messages provided by other socializers that influence ERS, such as society and social media.

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## Appendix A

### Liberty University Institutional Review Board Approval

# LIBERTY UNIVERSITY

## INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

April 3, 2024

Cyntrenna Palmer

Darren Howland

Re: IRB Approval - IRB-FY23-24-1456 School Ethnic-Racial Socialization and Educator Practices: A Hermeneutic Phenomenology Qualitative Study

Dear Cyntrenna Palmer, Darren Howland,

We are pleased to inform you that your study has been approved by the Liberty University Institutional Review Board (IRB). This approval is extended to you for one year from the following date: April 3, 2024. If you need to make changes to the methodology as it pertains to human subjects, you must submit a modification to the IRB. Modifications can be completed through your Cayuse IRB account.

Your study falls under the expedited review category (45 CFR 46.110), which is applicable to specific, minimal risk studies and minor changes to approved studies for the following reason(s):

7. Research on individual or group characteristics or behavior (including, but not limited to, research on perception, cognition, motivation, identity, language, communication, cultural beliefs or practices, and social behavior) or research employing survey, interview, oral history, focus group, program evaluation, human factors evaluation, or quality assurance methodologies. (NOTE: Some research in this category may be exempt from the HHS regulations for the protection of human subjects. [45 CFR 46.101\(b\)\(2\)](#) and (b)(3). This listing refers only to research that is not exempt.)

For a PDF of your approval 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 stamped consent form(s) and final versions of your study documents can be found on the same page under the Attachments tab. Your stamped consent form(s) should be copied and used to gain the consent of your research participants. If you plan to provide your consent information electronically, the contents of the attached consent document(s) should be made available without alteration.

Thank you for your cooperation with the IRB, and we wish you well with your research project.  
Sincerely,

G. Michele Baker, PhD, CIP

Administrative Chair  
Research Ethics Office

## Appendix B

### Informed Consent

**Title of the Project:** Ethnic-Racial Socialization and Educator Practices: A Hermeneutic Phenomenology Qualitative Study

**Principal Investigator:** Cyntrenna C. Palmer, Doctoral Candidate, School of Education, Liberty University

#### Invitation to be Part of a Research Study

You are invited to participate in a research study. To participate, you must be a teacher of adolescent students in secondary education in the United States. 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 discover and interpret the educator's experience as an ethnic-racial socialization (ERS) agent with adolescent youth.

#### 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. Individual Interview. The participant will be scheduled for a 30-45 recorded audio/video interview through Microsoft Teams, which will be transcribed.
2. Focus Group Interview. Four individual interview participants will be asked to participate in a 30-45-minute focus group discussion. Focus group participants will be randomly selected following the interview. The focus group participants will be randomly selected following the interview. The focus group discussion will be audio/video recorded and transcribed via Microsoft Teams.
3. Protocol Writing. Participants will be asked to complete a 250-300 word writing prompt following the acceptance of the informed consent.

#### How could you or others benefit from this study?

Participants should not expect a direct benefit from participating in this study. However, if the findings of this study prompt change in educator practices and professional development, educators may experience positive change and strategic changes in educational leadership and administration to ensure inclusive practices in curriculum and instruction.

Benefits to society include understanding the experiences of educators of adolescent youth in secondary education in the United States as ethnic-racial socialization transmission agents. The study will assist educators, educational leadership, and administration in strategically developing and devising curriculum and instruction with adequately trained educators to provide diversity, equity, and inclusion into their practices for an increasingly multicultural student body.

#### **What risks might you experience from being in this study?**

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?**

The records of this study will be kept private. Research records will be stored securely, and only the researcher will have access to the records. Data collected from you may be shared for use in future research studies or with other researchers. If data collected from you is shared, any information that could identify you, if applicable, will be removed before the data is shared.

- Participants' responses to questions, focus groups, and protocol writing will be kept confidential using aliases for names. Confidentiality cannot be guaranteed in focus group settings. While discouraged, other focus group members may share what was discussed with people outside the group. Individual interviews will be conducted via secured visual media, and the researcher will utilize headphones to protect the privacy of the conversation, which will be anonymous by replacing names with pseudonyms. The interviews will be conducted in a location where others will not easily overhear the conversation.
- Data will be stored on password-protected encrypted hard drives and may be used in future presentations. After three years, all electronic records will be deleted.
- Confidentiality cannot be guaranteed in focus group settings. While discouraged, other focus group members may share what was discussed with people outside the group.
- Recorded data from individual interviews and focus groups will be transcribed and stored on a password-encrypted hard drive for three years before deletion. Only the researcher will have access to the recorded data.

#### **How will you be compensated for being part of the study?**

Participants will be compensated for participating in this study. Participants selected for this study will receive a \$25.00 Visa gift card or secured Zelle or Apple Pay money transfer. Participants not asked to participate in the focus group will be compensated after collecting the individual interview data and protocol writing data. Participants selected to participate in the focus group will be compensated after the focus group data collection is completed. Monetary benefits are not pro-rated for a subject that elects not to complete the study. Email addresses will be requested for compensation purposes.

### Is study participation voluntary?

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision 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 questions or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

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

If you choose to withdraw from the study, please contact the researcher at the email address/phone number included in the next paragraph. Should you choose to withdraw, data collected from you, apart from focus group data, will be destroyed immediately and not included in this study. Focus group data will not be destroyed, but your contributions to the focus group will not be included in the study if you choose to withdraw.

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

The researcher conducting this study Cyntrenna C. Palmer. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact Cyntrenna C. Palmer at [REDACTED] and via email a [REDACTED]. You may also contact the researcher's faculty sponsor, Dr. Darren Howland, at [REDACTED].

### 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](mailto: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

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/video-record me as part of my participation in this study.

---

Printed Subject Name

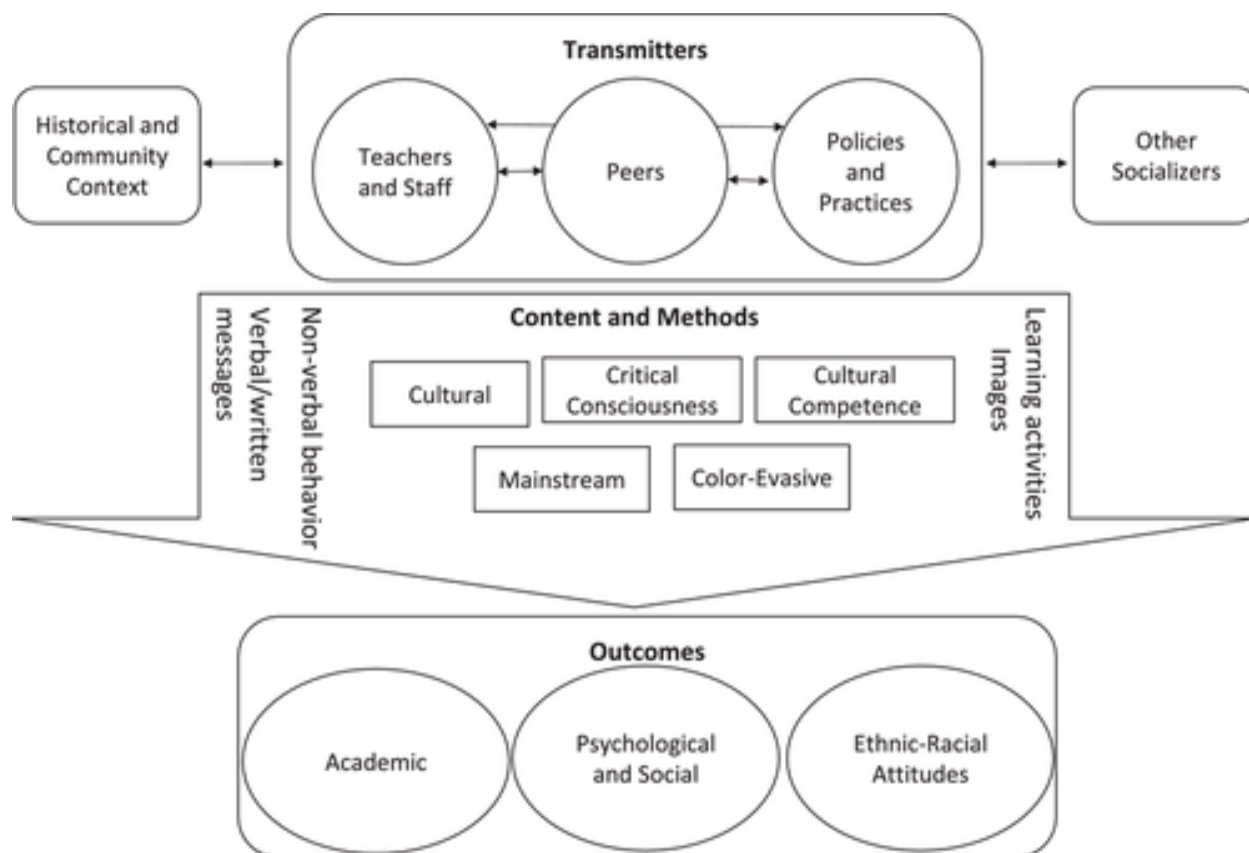
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Signature & Date

## Appendix C

## School ERS Transmission Model

Figure 1



## Appendix D

### Student Enrollment Racial Demographics

**Table 1**

*Student Enrollment Racial Demographics*

Race/Ethnicity	Student Total	Percent
White	22.4 million	45%
Hispanics	14.1 million	28%
Black	7.4 million	14%
Asian	2.7 million	5%
Two or more races	2.3 million	4%
Native Indian	.5 million	1%
Pacific Islander	.2 million	>1%
Total	49.5 million	



## Appendix E

### Race and Ethnicity of Public School Teachers

**Table 2**

*Race and Ethnicity of Public School Teachers*

Educator by Race/Ethnicity	Percentage
White, non-Hispanic	79.3%
Black or African American, non-Hispanic	6.7%
Hispanic	9.3%
Asian, non-Hispanic	2.1%
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	.2%
American Indian/Alaska	.5%
Two or more races	1.8%

## Appendix F

### Individual Interview Questions

**Table 3**

*Individual Interview Questions*

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Questions

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*Introduction and Background Questions*

1. Please tell me your name and about yourself.
2. How did you choose to become an educator?
3. Please describe your current position.

*Questions Relating to Cultural Socialization*

4. Please describe your challenges in establishing ethnic-racial socialization messages through curriculum and instruction with underrepresented minority students in your class. (CQ 1)
5. Explain how this makes you feel as an educator of adolescent youth of color and the perceived student impact. (CQ 1)

*Questions Relating to the Promotion of Cultural Competence*

6. Please describe successful pedagogical practices establishing ethnic-racial identity development when working with underrepresented minority students in your classes. (SQ 2)
7. Explain how this makes you feel as an educator of adolescent youth of color and the perceived student long-term impact. (SQ 2)

8. Describe the professional development experiences that have prepared you to work with underrepresented minority students as a teacher. (SQ 1)
9. What would you like to add to our discussion of your experiences with underrepresented minority students that we have not discussed? (SQ 1)
10. Explain the professional development experiences that have prepared you to work as a teacher with adolescent youth of color. (SQ 3)
11. What else would you like to add to our discussion of your experiences with lower SES students that we have yet to discuss? (SQ 3)

*Questions Relating to Critical Consciousness Socialization*

12. Describe your challenges in educating underrepresented minority students after the social protests in 2020. (SQ 1)
13. Describe successful practices you used when educating underrepresented minority students after the social protests in 2020. (SQ 2)

*Questions Relating to Color-Evasive Socialization*

14. Please describe how avoiding topics of race and the role of race with your students made you feel. (SQ 3)

*Questions Relating to Mainstream Socialization*

17. What professional development experiences prepared you to work with underrepresented minority students after the social protests in 2020? (SQ 3)
  18. What else would you like to add to our discussion of your experiences with ethnic-racial socialization that we have yet to discuss? (SQ 3)
-

## Appendix G

### Focus Group Interview Questions

**Table 4**

*Focus Group Interview Questions*

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*Questions*

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*Introductory and Background Questions*

1. What are the reasons you all decided to become educators?
2. Explain in detail the reason you all chose to become educators.
3. Discuss the individual who influenced you to pursue education.

*Questions Relating to Cultural Socialization*

4. Please describe your biggest challenge in establishing ethnic-racial socialization messages through curriculum and instruction with underrepresented minority students in your class. (CRQ)
5. Describe how this makes you feel as an educator of adolescent youth of color and the perceived student impact. (CRQ)

*Questions Relating to the Promotion of Cultural Competence*

6. Please describe successful instructional practices establishing ethnic-racial identity development when working with underrepresented minority students in your classes. (SQ2)
7. Describe your feelings when you are tasked with presenting multicultural lessons. (SQ2)

*Questions Relating to Critical Consciousness Socialization*

8. Describe how the social protests of 2020 affected the ethnic-racial socialization of underrepresented adolescent minority students in your class. (SQ3)
9. Explain how the school can improve the ethnic-racial socialization practices for adolescent minority youth. (SQ3)

*Questions Relating to Color-Evasive Socialization*

10. Please explain how avoiding topics of race and the role of race with your students affected you all. (SQ3)

*Questions Relating to Mainstream Socialization*

11. What professional development experiences prepared you to work with underrepresented minority students after the social protests in 2020? (SQ1)
  12. Explain your feelings as an educator of minoritized adolescent youth during the social protests of 2020. (SQ1)
  13. What else would you like to add to our discussion of your experiences with ethnic-racial socialization that we have yet to discuss? (SQ1)
-

**Appendix H**  
**Writing Prompt Protocol**

**Table 5**

*Writing Prompt Protocol*

---

Please write in 250-300 words or more an event you experienced an ethnic-racial socialization (ERS) incident with minority adolescent students within the school context. Describe your emotions, feelings, and any noticeable impact upon the student(s).

---

## Appendix I

Table 6

*Participant Demographics*

Name	Age	Education	Grade Level	Subject	Experience	State
Alex	40-50	Bachelor's	Middle	Math	15 years	New Jersey
Dakota	30-40	Master's	Secondary	Math	7 years	New Jersey
James	50-60	Ed.S. <sup>a</sup>	Secondary	English	20+ years	California
Ainsley	20-30	Ed.D. <sup>b</sup>	Middle	LA <sup>d</sup>	4 years	Florida
Campbell	30-40	Ph.D. <sup>c</sup>	Middle	CE <sup>e</sup>	14 years	Texas
Noah	50-60	Bachelor's	Middle	PE <sup>f</sup>	15 years	Texas
Riley	40-50	Master's	Secondary	Spanish	14 years	New Mexico
Adrian	60-70	Ed.D. <sup>b</sup>	Secondary	Social Studies	16 years	Washington
Blake	20-30	Ed.S. <sup>a</sup>	Secondary	English	4 years	Arkansas
Cameron	30-40	Master's	Secondary	CW <sup>g</sup>	5 years	Maryland
Drew	30-40	Master's	Middle	English	12 years	New York
Ellis	50-60	Bachelor's	Secondary	Math	21 years	Maryland
Finley	20-30	Master's	Middle	CIE <sup>h</sup>	6 years	Washington

*Note:* The abbreviations for the subscripts are <sup>a</sup> Education Specialist, <sup>b</sup> Doctor of Education, <sup>c</sup>

Doctor of Philosophy, <sup>d</sup>Language Arts, <sup>e</sup>Career Education, <sup>f</sup>Physical Education, <sup>g</sup>Creative

Writing, <sup>h</sup> Civic Education

## Appendix J

**Table 7**

*Primary Themes and Sub-Themes*

Themes	Sub-Themes
Addressing Feelings of Discomfort and Exclusion	Addressing Race and Ethnicity
Commitment to Equity and Inclusion	Support Among Peers
Challenges in Educating About Black Issues	Challenges in Addressing Racism
Desire for Awareness and Change	
Racial Profiling and Social Challenges	
Educator's Approach	
Facilitating Learning and Understanding	
Parental Engagement	Building Relationships
Importance of Cultural Education	
Impact on Mental Health	
Teacher Perceptions	
Resistance and Pushback	



## Appendix K

**Table 8**

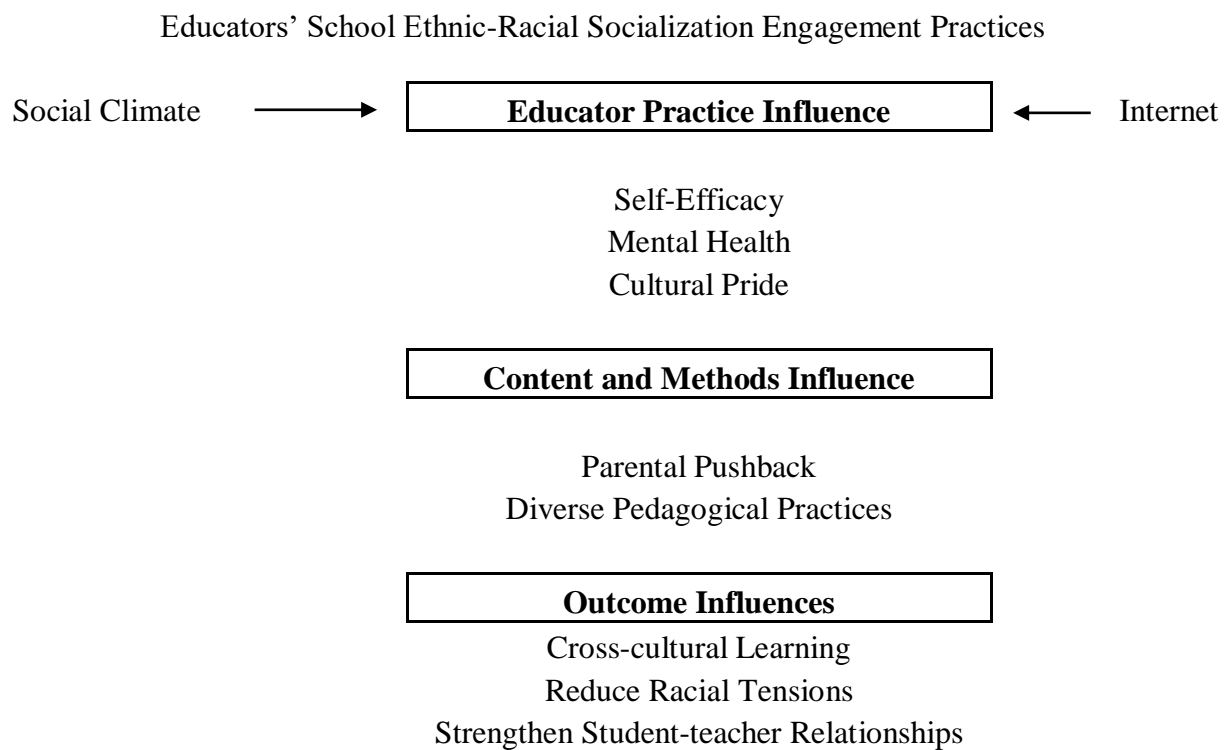
*Primary Themes and Sub-Themes Alignment*

Themes	Sub-Themes	Research Question
Addressing Feelings of Discomfort and Exclusion		Central Question
Addressing Race and Ethnicity		Central Question
Commitment to Equity and Inclusion	Support Among Peers	Central Question
Challenges in Educating About Black Issues	Challenges in Addressing	Sub Question 1
Desire for Awareness and Change		Sub Question 1
Racial Profiling and Social Challenges		Sub Question 1
Educator's Approach		Sub Question 2
Facilitating Learning and Understanding		Sub Question 2
Parental Engagement	Building Relationships	Sub Question 2
Importance of Cultural Education		Sub Question 2
Impact on Mental Health		Sub Question 3

## Appendix L

**Figure 2**

*Theoretical Applications*



## Appendix M

### Miscellaneous

To: [REDACTED]

Tue 4/18/2023 12:47 PM

Dr. Byrd,

I hope this email finds you in the best health, spirit, and mind. I am a Doctor of Philosophy candidate in Curriculum and Instruction at Liberty University. I have read your work on ethnic-racial socialization and have been inspired by your expertise and research. I am currently in the dissertation phase and researching ethnic-racial socialization practices of educators of adolescent youth in the United States. I use the ERS conceptual model as my theoretical framework to evaluate educators as ERS transmitters. I humbly request permission for the use of Figure 1 of

Saleem, F.T. & Byrd, C. (2021). Unpacking school social ethnic-racial socialization: A new conceptual model. *Journal of Social Issues*, 77, 1106-1125. <https://doi.org/10.1111/josi12498>

I would love to include the chart in my dissertation to provide readers with a clearer understanding of the ERS conceptual model. If you are available, I would love to discuss further the use of the ERS model. I may be reached at this email address and by phone at [REDACTED]. Thank you for the work you have done to add to the field of ethnic-racial socialization.

Kindest Regards,  
Cyntrenna C. Palmer

Some content in this message has been blocked because the sender isn't in your Safe senders list.

CB

Christy Byrd [REDACTED]  
To: Palmer, Cyntrenna C

Tue 4/18/2023 11:01 PM

[ EXTERNAL EMAIL: Do not click any links or open attachments unless you know the sender and trust the content. ]

---

Hi Cyntrenna,

Yes, absolutely you can use the figure, and I'd be happy to chat. Please use this link to find a time that works for you: <https://calendar.app.google/gGYd3yAEj13JGRQR8>

-Dr. Byrd