THE AFFECT OF DIVERSITY AND ETHICAL PRINCIPLES IN PRIMARY AND

SECONDARY EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP: A HERMENEUTICAL

PHENOMENOLOGY STUDY

by

Charles Paul Holloway Jr.

Liberty University

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Philosophy

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Abstract

The purpose of this hermeneutical phenomenological study was to understand the experiences of diversity and ethical principles in educational leadership for teachers, administrators, and classified licensed professionals within minority school districts. Downton's (2016) theory on transformational leadership guided this study's theoretical framework for the research and ensuing findings. This research was created to answer the following central question: What are the perceived effects of diversity and ethical principles on teachers, administrators, and classified licensed professionals within minority school districts? Three sub-questions were used to understand the experiences of diversity and ethical principles in educational leadership within minority school districts. The qualitative methodology was used to capture and comprehend participants' lived experiences in underserved school districts. An underserved school district in a southeast county served as the site from which participants were selected. The study included 11 participants from underserved school districts. Data was collected from interviews, focus groups, and protocol writings. Data analysis transpired through transcribing and coding of salient keywords, with the codes becoming themes. Three themes were identified from data analysis: (a) The need for transformational leadership, (b) the impact of diversity, and (c) the lack of workforce development. Results indicated that transformational leadership contributed to minority student success. All participants agreed that the lack of diversity and the lack of workforce development and training significantly affected their ability to meet the need for minority educational success in underserved school districts.

Keywords: Transformational Leadership. Ethical worldview, Diversity, Transformative Learning, Social Cognitive Theory

Copyright Page

Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to God, my creator, whose Grace and Mercy covered me through the process.

To my father, Charles Sr, who taught me the lessons of cultivating my gift to serve in excellence and motivated me through inspiration.

To the memory of my mother, Maureen, who was an example of success through perseverance and believed in me.

To my son Isaiah and my wife Janice, whose unconditional love and prayers covered me.

Acknowledgments

I want to acknowledge Dr. Darren Howland's excellence in using his gift to create a group of leaders who will positively impact the world. Thank you, Dr. Howland and Dr. Perry, for inspiring me to write and complete the dissertation.

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List of Abbreviations

Bachelor of Arts (B.A.)

Bachelor of Science (B.S.)

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI)

Doctor of Education (Ed.D.)

Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.)

Education Specialist (Ed.S.)

Master of Arts (M.A.)

Master of Science (M.S.)

Socioeconomic Status (SES)

Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM)

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Overview

For decades, minority students have had to pursue academic achievement despite the lack of tools, resources, and educational equity due to institutional discrimination and the perceptions of inferior beliefs and capabilities about their capacity to be successful (Gordon, 2016). Historically, minority students have had to learn in school systems where there was a lack of diversity in educational leaders and teachers in a societal infrastructure where the culture of education lacked a sense of belonging (DeWitty & Murray, 2020; Hunt, 2007). In the academic infrastructure, leaders are the decision-makers who set the culture and policies in which teachers and educators serve students to meet their educational and cultural needs in underserved communities (Beck & Butler, 2022; Rivera-McCutchen, 2021). The leadership influences on student academic performance, and self-perceptions are paramount in changing an educational culture where educators need more diversity in underserved communities (Leithwood et al., 2019). Chapter One provides the background for the topic and the historical, social, and theoretical context for the significance of studying the influence of diversity in educational leadership. This chapter discusses the problem, purpose statements, and research questions.

Background

The background section traverses the historical, social, and theoretical concepts that have shaped the research and address the need to explore the socioeconomic disparity, lack of teacher diversity, and the influence of systemic barriers and perceptions. The social concept section explores minority and underserved communities, the policies, procedures, and cultural philosophies in society, and the lack of diversity in education. The theoretical concept research examines the importance of a transformational leader in educational leadership, the foundational

need for an ethical worldview in building a culture of diversity, and the affect of social cognitive theory in shaping ideologies that cultivate fair and equitable practices in minority school districts.

Historical Context

In exploring the historical context of the research, the culture of a nation's cultural influence on the success of people of color was explored. For a greater depth of leadership influence, it is essential to understand the historical context of a government and the ideology that governs the mindset of a people (Wheelan, 2018). The foundation of the current racial infrastructure began in the post-Roman Era with the age of Western colonization (Fremeaux et al., 2018; Kamtekar, 2016). The slave trade began the world's colonization and colonial migration to Western society (Rahier, 2020). Greek leadership philosophy believed that leaders are born with certain physical traits; if citizens did not have these attributes, they were considered less than others and naturally selected to serve (Kamtekar, 2016). Greek philosophy has drastically influenced the perceptions and belief systems of diversity within positions of decision-makers for people of different ethnicities (Tsirigotis, 2021).

The disparity of educational equity occurred for centuries with the colonization and enslavement of Africans in America (Bennett, 2016). Educational inequity continued after the abolishment of slavery with the thirteenth amendment of the Constitution in 1865 (Axelrod, 2018). Implementing the thirteenth amendment catalyzed the Southern mandate and law called Jim Crow (Velde, 2019). Jim Crow laws were nonjudicial mandates and statutes that legalized segregation and authoritarian rule of African Americans in southern states (Jones, 2018). The great compromise of 1877 led to the withdrawal of Union troops from southern states, which enabled the abolishment of reconstruction (Byman, 2021). The immobilization of Union troops

in southern states and the implementation of Jim Crow laws resulted in the marginalization of African Americans and the denial of voting rights, professional employment, and education (Cobb & Jenkins, 2001). The federal troop withdrawal caused the rights to fair and equitable access to resources to be threatened by discriminatory treatment (Fraser, 2022).

History has shown that systematic decisions and purposeful implementation of oppressive rules by unethical leaders affected generations of people targeted by the abuse of racial discrimination (Singer & Diab, 2021; West, 2017). After decades of racial discrimination, social justice inequities, and a lack of tools and resources in underserved communities and school districts, the Civil Rights Act of 1964 was meant to desegregate public facilities, schools, and organizations in America (Hersh & Shinall, 2015). A need for a civil rights act solidifies the ideology that the barriers to educational success in underserved communities were systematically more significant than a cultural issue but a governmental problem (Decker et al., 2021; Wilder, 2018).

The lack of diversity, inclusion, and equity limits African American and minority students' opportunities to operate in a leadership capacity in education (Green & Martin, 2018). In the current educational infrastructure, a perception perpetuates a culture of educators who act as gatekeepers in deciding who gains access to academic success (Wiggan & Watson, 2016). The lack of diversity within leadership in underserved communities has evolved due to American culture's lack of ethical worldview philosophy (Dahill-Brown, 2019).

The historical concept that sets the foundation for the need for educational reform in school districts of underserved communities is the work of Maria Montessori. Maria Montessori's ideology addressed the need for educational reform by designing a curriculum and educational infrastructure for students in underserved communities. Dr. Montessori understood

the long-term effect of equitable education on students' success in society (Montessori et al., 2017). Montessori's leadership decisions to train women and have a culture of learning and diversity created an atmosphere that empowered success despite social and political oppression (Montessori et al., 2017). Since the Civil Rights Act of 1964, more diversity and ethical educational leadership have been needed in academia (Laurencin, 2019). Civil Rights has addressed the need to create programs and opportunities through mentorship to cultivate a culture of learning and diversity in underserved minority communities (Williams, 2018). Leaders are people who, through inspiration, positively influence team members to become intrinsically motivated to meet the educational vision and mission for student needs and societal goals (Northhouse, 2019). The Bible states, "As a man thinketh, in his heart (subconscious mind), so is he" (King James Version, Proverbs 23:7). The research focuses on the historical aspect of diversity in leadership by capturing the cultural values and principles of academic leadership in education.

Social Context

The Social Context section addresses the influences of ethics and diversity in leadership in the long-term successes of a school district in underserved communities. Educational leaders who utilize ethical practices with instructional processes cultivate a learning and diverse culture by implementing teacher career development (Day et al., 2016; Venketsamy et al., 2020). Implementing strategies that cultivate the gifts of teachers and administrators by developed standards shifts the educator's commitment to student excellence (Leithwood & Saderun, 2012).

Through leadership engagement and effective communication, leaders meet the needs of administrative staff to remove paradigms and, through vision, give purpose to student success. Schools in underserved communities lack minority K-12 educators; this disparity is caused by

the lack of empowerment and mentoring at the secondary education level in developing or encouraging diversity in teacher preparation courses (Wallace & Gagen, 2020). Since the COVID-19 pandemic, the retirement and expulsion of educators have exacerbated the lack of teachers in academic infrastructures. School boards, superintendents, and principals are navigating a shortage of educators worldwide (Rhymes & Sessoms, 2021). The affects of the COVID-19 pandemic have promulgated increased stress and workloads for teachers serving in underserved school districts that have resulted in a struggle to manage the capacity of the classroom while following state guidelines that give autonomy to students through legislation (Wiggan & Watson, 2016).

To manage a culture of scarcity in school districts and a lack of funding and resources in underserved communities' superintendents must implement change strategies to meet the needs of teachers and students. (Wiggan et al., 2021) School superintendents who are transformational leaders produce better educational outcomes through teachers' satisfaction (Kuoni et al., 2018). The leader encourages and establishes cultural norms and sets guidelines through policies and procedures (Northhouse, 2019). Teachers are directly affected by the behaviors and mindset of their leadership and decisions based on ethical principles (Wheelan, 2019).

The need for Wi-Fi in low-income areas can affect student success when there is a digital inequity through county and city school districts (Quillen, 2010). Many school districts operate with a digital infrastructure enabling students to submit academic lessons due to the COVID protocol (Kornbluh, 2020). Low-income families are affected by the lack of diversity in educational leadership when their voices are not considered in the strategies to meet the needs of learners (Dahill-Brown, 2019). Through collaborative efforts, families in underserved communities are affected when a lack of digital equity in low-income residents could have

funding that would stimulate local libraries and community access to free Wi-Fi (Contify Telecom, 2020).

The research explored the influence of inequity that stems from National politics and the foundational philosophies of unethical leaders (Munroe, 2018; Aditya & Praveen, 2020). State agencies could benefit from examining political decisions by politicians who make funding decisions based on social and economic socioeconomic status (Dahill-Brown, 2019). The affects of politics on the equal distribution of tools and resources within state systems create barriers to educational success within underserved communities (Andrews & Warren, 2018). School districts are currently restricted in their capacity to implement equitable access to resources due to state legislative mandates that examine a district's academic success as a criterion for funding (Madigan, 2019). Authentic school district-community engagement has hindered student empowerment due to a lack of teacher diversity nationwide (Childs, 2019). The Bible states, "Wisdom being the principal thing; therefore, get wisdom: but in all your getting, get understanding" (King James Version, Proverbs 4:7).

Theoretical Context

The theoretical foundation for the research is the need for transformational leadership with an ethical worldview foundation. The research addressed the need for transformational leadership in secondary education. Transformational leaders create an atmosphere of trust through effective communication and by removing the barriers and obstacles to individual and team success (Jennings & Stahl-Wert, 2016).

The importance of leadership and culture fortified by implementing policies and procedures to cultivate a climate of excellence within organizations is essential for long-term student success (Bipath et al., 2021). Transformational leadership examines the importance of

decision-makers who exhibit integrity, transparency, and fairness when implementing processes that positively influence an organization (Robbins & Judge, 2017). The catalyst to the transformational leadership theory is the need for a paradigm shift that leaders must exhibit to effect real change within an organization (Kwan, 2020). A transformational leader is a leader who positively influences, encourages, and empowers team members to be intrinsically motivated and excellent in their craft (Northouse, 2019).

The research on transformative learning is another concept in the theoretical context that has been researched to address the leadership problem in education (Terblanche, 2022). Transformative learning is a process that conveys the way adult learners process information and engage with the ecological environment around them (Cranton, 2016). Transformational leadership and transformative learner theories are essential in developing a disposition that embraces cultural change and removes paradigms cultivated by lived experiences (Bush et al., 2020). Transformative learning aids adult students in removing paradigms and shifting cultural biases that are not based on ethical truths (Smith & Kempster, 2019).

The ethical worldview of the study is derived from the ideology that God has created all men in his image and likeness (Genesis 1:26-28). A leader's philosophical foundation determines how they engage and treat people (Jiang & Chen, 2018). The concept of the worldview is based on ethical principles, which enable diversity and the opportunity to recruit elite talent (Smith, 2023). In school districts with the highest levels of leader diversity at the teacher ranks, students outperformed those with the lowest levels of teacher diversity by 11% (Rummel et al., 2021). Diverse leadership in underserved schools can attract and retain top talent while improving employee satisfaction and student success (Franczak & Margolis, 2022).

The concepts of transformational leadership and transformative learning with an ethical

worldview positively influence student success, which helps qualify schools for governmental funding in underserved communities (Boberg & Bourgeois, 2016). An ethical worldview is an essential component in leadership influenced by inspiration. By modeling behavior, leaders inspire, encourage, and empower others to become intrinsically motivated to pursue their purpose and vision (Robbin & Judge, 2018). Authentic leadership allows team members to be the best version of themselves by examining their leaders' behavior (Kouzes & Posner, 2017). The Bible States, "Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity" (King James Version, 1 Timothy 4:12). The study of ethical leadership contributes to the transformative learning theory by examining the influence of transformative leadership and principles within the long-term success of an organization (Abu Bakar & Connaughton, 2022).

Problem Statement

The problem is the lack of diversity and ethical principles in educational leadership in minority school districts. (Rhymes & Sessoms-Penny, 2021). The lack of diversity within leadership affects educational equity and creates barriers to long-term success in secondary education for minorities in underserved communities (Northhouse, 2019). Servant leadership with ethical principles significantly impacts institutions and underserved communities to mitigate the lack of educational equity and resources and promote cultural empowerment (Bryan, 2017).

The study of leadership and the need for leaders with a philosophical worldview that God has created all men in His image and likeness is defined as personal progress toward understanding God's purpose for one's life (Munroe, 2018; Graf, 2019). The barrier to diversity in educational leadership is a societal foundation whose principal idea of leadership stems from a Greco-Roman philosophy (El Nabolsy, 2019). The Greek philosophers believed that leaders are

born with certain physical traits; if citizens did not have these attributes, they were considered inferior and destined to serve (Fremeaux et al., 2018).

The lack of an ethical leadership philosophy directly influences the educational success of minority students in underserved communities (Jennings & Stahl-Wert, 2016). Influential leaders motivate team success by removing barriers and instilling guidelines for success (Wheelan, 2019). The importance of leadership within an educational system in implementing civil rights in the form of diversity, equity, and inclusion for minority students in underserved communities is analyzed for organizational success. Ethical people have ideas they are willing to live by, but world changers have causes and beliefs they are ready to die for (Patricio & Kunene, 2021).

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this hermeneutical phenomenological study is to understand the experiences of diversity and ethical principles in educational leadership for teachers, administrators, and classified licensed professionals within minority school districts. At this stage of the research, diversity and ethical principles will generally be defined as leadership's aim to raise morale and self-efficacy and transform an educational community into a dynamic group aligned with a shared vision and purpose, motivated through inspiration (Roorda & Koomen, 2021). The theory guiding this study is the transformational leadership model by Bass (1990), which will assist in measuring the influence, success, and ideas of leaders transforming culture through inspiration and mentorship.

Significance of the Study

This section provided an opportunity to explain the theoretical, empirical, and practical applications guiding this hermeneutical phenomenology study and discuss their theoretical,

empirical, and practical significance. This study's contribution aimed to ensure the significance

of how diversity in leadership with an ethical worldview influences the success of minority

students in underserved communities.

Theoretical

Leadership is essential in understanding how the flow of information, content, and culture

in educational school districts. Transformational leaders with an ethical worldview create a

culture of diversity, transparency, and fairness in underserved communities (Kwan, 2020). The

foundational infrastructure of creating a learning and diverse culture utilizes the differences of

ethnicities, ages, and backgrounds to solve problems and make fair and equitable decisions

(Muller, 2021). The theory of transformational leadership and the belief in diversity in leadership

creates an environment where school districts can recruit and retain talent and, through teacher

development, have student success and employee satisfaction (Brown et al., 2019). The research

study will contribute to the influence of transformational leadership and the importance of

transformative learning in shifting perceptions of student success in organizations by

understanding the lived experiences of teachers, administrators, and classified licensed

professionals in a school district without diversity and ethical principles in leadership (Creswell

& Poth, 2018).

Empirical

The empirical significance of the study examined the importance of transformational

leadership in the educational hierarchy. Transformational leaders understand the importance of

transparency and fairness. (Northouse, 2017). The study took an immeasurable probe into the

literature and explored the importance of ethical decisions and philosophical foundations in

eliminating bias based on race and socioeconomic status. The phenomenological research

examination captures participants' lived experiences in a diverse setting with ethical leaders who model the way for team success. The ethical worldview creates an idea of personally diminishing private ambitions to elevate others to greatness (Jennings & Stahl-Wert, 2016). Community leaders promote a mindset that gives confidence and empowers implementing service over self.

Practical

The study's practical significance was the influence of diversity and ethical leadership on an organization's success. School superintendents who are transformational leaders produce better educational outcomes through teachers' satisfaction (Kuoni et al., 2018). Diversity in the academic workforce is essential for the long-term success of school districts' state, city, and county educational infrastructure (Rummel et al., 2021). The influence of teacher development and student self-efficacy on the equitable distribution of resources in underserved communities is investigated for the long-term sustainability of students. The successes and failures within an educational system are predicated on the academic outcomes of students and the commitment of qualified educators (Brown et al., 2019). The greatest attribute of a leader is the ability to cultivate the gifts of others through mentoring and succession and create other leaders (Shafai, 2018).

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Research Questions

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Central Research Question

What are the perceived affects of diversity and ethical principles on teachers, administrators, and classified licensed professionals within minority school districts?

Sub-Question One

What are the lived experiences of educational administrators and teachers in a school system without leadership support to implement a culturally related curriculum?

Sub-Question Two

What are the components within underserved school districts that impact diversity and ethical principles for minority student success?

Sub-Question Three

What are the challenges teachers and administrators face with leadership in implementing the strategies and resources required to aid minority students' educational success?

Definitions

1. *Ethical worldview* – A philosophical foundation with core values and ethical principles governed only by the word of God (Munroe, 2018).

2. *Culture* - is "a set of beliefs and values about what is desirable and undesirable in a community of people, and a set of formal or informal practices to support the values." (Motiwalla & Thompson, 2012, p.20).

3. *Diverse Culture* – The utilization of differences in ethnicities, ages, and backgrounds to solve problems and make decisions (Lordan & Almeida, 2022).

4. *Diversity* - is defined as the impact of various cultures, age demographics, cultures, and ethnicities in an organization (Birdie, 2018).

5. *Transformational Leadership* - Leadership, through inspiration, positively influence team members to become intrinsically motivated to meet organizational corporate vision and mission for individual and team goals (Northhouse, 2019).

6. *Transformative learning* is a process that shifts how adult learners think and engage with the ecological environment around them (Cranton, 2016).

Summary

Transformational Leadership theory has had a long-lasting impact on educational leadership and business infrastructures throughout society. Superintendents and educational leaders taught in the United States may be educated in classrooms where the foundation of their philosophies may not be diversity, and ethical worldview may increase outcomes where there is not a culture of diversity. The transformational leader mindset puts others first and creates an organization that embodies a learning, diverse culture, and the expectation of excellence (Jennings & Stahl-Wertz, 2016). This hermeneutical phenomenological study aims to understand the experiences of diversity and ethical principles in educational leadership for teachers, administrators, and classified licensed professionals within minority school districts. As the behavior of education leaders proves to reflect their philosophies, may the successes in minority school districts be a direct correlation of them being motivated through inspiration?

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview

The study of the absence of authenticity and diversity in educational leadership and the leader's responsibility to eliminate barriers to success for minorities in education has become an essential topic in understanding the equitable distribution of resources in underserved communities. The first section analyzes the theories related to an ethical worldview, transformational leadership, and social-cognitive approaches, followed by related literature concerning obstacles to educational success and institutional leadership. The theoretical framework addresses literature detailing the means to minority academic success and the influence of ethical educational leaders. Eventually, the theoretical framework and the literature review identify the gap in the literature and define the purpose, problem, and solution to equitable access to diverse and ethical educational leadership. The leader's influence on learning success presents an essential need for the current study to be an agent for academic and social change.

Theoretical Framework

Leadership aims to raise morale and self-efficacy and transform an unproductive team into a dynamic group aligned with a shared vision and purpose. The concepts and theoretical frameworks that helped to formulate this research are transformational leadership and transformative learning theories. Transformational leadership was founded by James Downton in 1973. Bernard Bass (1990) added to the leadership concept by measuring the influence, success, and idea of leaders transforming culture through inspiration and mentorship. Bass's concepts of transformational leadership are based on four primary tenets: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individual consideration.

The first tenet of transformational leadership is idealized influence. Idealized influence describes leaders who are charismatic, inquisitive, and influential communicators (Afshari, 2022; Raman et al., 2021). These attributes often describe a leader's ability to share a vision, actively listen to team members, and provide constructive feedback (Keyser, 2013; Al Drag & Al Saed, 2023). A leader's inquisitive nature also represents idealized influence. Being curious drives leaders' success (Kreitner & Kinicki, 2017; Khan et al., 2022). The leader is responsible for finding innovative solutions to problems and creating a learning culture to cultivate new solutions for team members (Koveshnikov & Ehrnrooth, 2018; Zdaniuk & Bobocel, 2015).

The next tenet of transformational leadership is inspirational motivation. Inspirational motivation describes leaders who serve their gift to encourage team members and commit to a vision (Kouzes & Posner, 2017; Densten, 2002). Leaders foster a sense of purpose to team members and raise a standard of excellence within a culture through effective communication (Wheelan, 2019; Kariuki, 2021). Inspirational leaders can articulate a clear vision to members and implement structure to communicate a plan and expectation to eliminate confusion (Northhouse, 2019; Jiang & Yang, 2018). The leader uses skills to have the foresight to remove potential barriers to organizational success, thus instilling trust in their team members and confidence in their leaders (Alahmad, 2016; Schuesslbauer et al., 2018).

Another tenet of transformational leadership is intellectual stimulation. Intellectual stimulation describes leaders who cultivate an environment for team members to be innovative and creative in their gifting (Robbins & Judge, 2019; Peng et al., 2016). Critical thinking and problem-solving skills improve the organization and group (Rodriguez, 2021; Bolkan et al., 2011). By creating a learning and diverse culture, leaders encourage individuals and include each team member in the decision-making process (Kouzes & Posner, 2017; Paul, 2021).

Empowerment fosters a sense of importance and purpose in the organization's overall success (Robinson & Boies, 2016; Khalil et al., 2018). In stimulating intellectual ideas, leaders are willing to take intellectual risks, be creative, curious, and open to new concepts and ideas from individual members (Birdie, 2018; Le, 2020).

The final tenet of transformational leadership is individual consideration. Individual consideration is how a leader encourages, empowers, and attends to the needs of each member (Jennings & Stahl-Wert, 2016; Arnold et al., 2016). Transformational leaders utilize and maximize the gifts of each member by focusing on how each member can contribute to the overall goal (Hundley, 2022; Hannah & Avolio, 2011). Focusing means recognizing individual members' values, desires, and needs (Arnold et al., 2016). By focusing on the individual and the organization, team members can grow and learn in an environment that will enable individual and organizational success (East, 2019; Shin et al., 2019). Emotional intelligence is the demonstration of compassion, empathizing with needs, and encouraging the continual growth of individuals (Halliwell et al., 2022; Chen & Guo, 2020). Emotionally intelligent leaders develop mentorship, succession plans, and coaching and actively listen to their team members' concerns (Tiffin & Paton, 2020; Stoller, 2021).

The influence of transformational leaders can empower team members to develop their purpose and organizational success (Northhouse, 2018). Research evidence reports that teams led by transformational leadership have higher productivity, creativity, and employee satisfaction (Van et al., 2021; Jensen et al., 2019). Transformational leaders increase the morale and motivation of an organization's team members' vision through inspiration (Steinmann et al., 2018; Afsar & Umrani, 2020). By creating a team vision and goal, leaders enhance team comradery and develop a learning and diverse culture that is equitable, diverse, and inclusive

(Jennings & Stahl-Wert, 2016; Venketsamy et al., 2020). A transformational leadership style increases the knowledge base of a team and the recruitment of talent for an organization's long-term sustainability (Andersen, 2018; Kremer et al., 2019).

Transformational Leadership concept is the foundation of diversity in leadership and positively influences learning for students in underserved communities (Zengen & Akan, 2019; Kwan, 2020). The theoretical framework addresses authentic leadership and defines administrators, teachers, and superintendents' principles, core values, and attributes for fundamental social change in education. Transformational leaders model behaviors that are examples of cultural practices for fair treatment of people and equitable treatment of people (Northhouse, 2019). Educational equity begins with leadership and their ability to motivate, educate, and empower team members through inspiration within school districts (Corneille et al., 2020; Arvin, 2010).

The Transformational leadership concept examines the core values and foundational mindset essential to authentic leadership (Prior, 2020; Freidman & Mizrachi, 2022). The foundation of a leader's philosophy will determine how a manager interacts with and treats people. The Bible states, "As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he" (King James Version, Proverbs 23:7). The origin of a leader's belief system of thinking matters. An individual's philosophical belief sets the foundation of the behaviors that team members, stakeholders, and organizations will exhibit based on the inspiration and model of the leader (Wheelan, 2021; Whitehead, 2021). The social cognitive theory founded by Bandura in 1960 reveals through examination that a portion of a student's learning can be directly related to observing others in the context of social engagement. In-depth, learning is positively influenced in school systems of unserved communities when guided by a serving leader who models acceptable behavior with

core values, beliefs, and practices not compromised by societal biases and educational inequities (Otaye-Ebede et al., 2020; Allan, 2017).

Transformational leadership theory, founded by Downton in 1973, has informed the literature by analyzing the importance of vision and higher-level ethical behavior for real organizational and social change. Downton's leadership theory is essential for implementing practical guidelines and processes for long-term success and equitable access to education in low-income communities (Collins et al., 2020; Kirimi & Minja, 2012). It is a leadership approach that positively impacts organizations by educating, empowering, and encouraging the heart of team members to become intrinsically motivated to be the best version of themselves through inspiration (Kouzes & Posner, 2017; O'Donoghue & Van Der Werff, 2022).

Authentic leaders implement practices that empower individual and organizational success through effective communication (Cavazotte et al., 2021; Winton et al., 2022). The leader's selflessness and ability to positively influence change among team members and students affect behavior and organizational success (Gardner et al., 2021; Zhang et al., 2021). Effective communication is crucial to cultivating a learning and diverse culture in educational organizations (Northouse, 2018; Mandanchian et al., 2022).

Transformational leadership theory is essential because, based on impact, the principles implemented through actions set the standards of values and practices within an organization (Bush, 2018; Chaudhary, 2021). A leader's principles and behaviors are essential to retaining experienced teachers and recruiting talent (Pearson, 2020; Bunin et al., 2021). The theoretical framework of transformational leadership highlights the importance of character, personal values, and setting personal principles by which one lives for long-term sustainability and success in education (Michaelson, 2022; Beekun, 2012).

The most crucial aspect of leadership is the leader's ability to create a culture that cultivates team members' gifts through mentorship and serving them in excellence (Jennings & Stahl-Wert, 2016; Wang & Shibayama, 2022). Engaging with team members and employees is essential to resolving conflict and implementing diversity, equity, and inclusion in a culture that may lack racial diversity within its workforce (Kim & Shin, 2019; Cavins, 2018). Paradigm change is the most challenging tool to implement in an organization (Mierzwa & Mierzwa, 2020). The unwritten but apparent culture must be managed and changed by transformational leaders whose lifestyle and character traits are most admired and respected by those under their hierarchy (Park & Kim, 2018; Herold, 2020).

By establishing the core values of integrity, service over self, and excellence in all we do, administrators can create an atmosphere where student success is cultivated by teacher example (Getu, 2018; Hamilton & Hinson, 2019). The belief system addresses the parent-child relationship and the responsibility of serving and developing the standards children should follow within the Kingdom body (Brown, 2018; Saral & Acar, 2021). An ethical leadership concept is a framework cultivated on the foundation of human development and a leader's purpose based on being a servant leader that shifts culture and fosters an atmosphere of actual change (D'Ascoli & Piro, 2023; Paltzer, 2018).

In education, the biblical worldview defines the purpose and vision for the creation of humankind and the tenets, values, and principles that Christ taught, guided by the wisdom of the holy spirit (Brown, 2018; Esqueda, 2014). Accountability is understood as a higher purpose and entity in a kingdom mindset. Leadership is not about people but purpose (Munroe, 2014; Robbins & Judge, 2019). When a leader has discovered their passion, the individual can begin to pursue who God has called them to be (Munroe, 2018). In the process of self-discovery, leaders

start to inspire students to do the same. A purpose aligned with God's vision and goals sets up the teachers, students, and school districts for long-term success (Schwartz, 2018; Taylor et al., 2019). The Bible states, "Where there is no vision, the people perish, but blessed is the one who heeds wisdom's instruction" (New International Version, Proverbs 29:18).

Related Literature

The purpose of the related literature was to gather and analyze the literature to examine the gaps in the research and take a deeper dive into the literature. The literature explored the topics that significantly influenced the phenomenological study of an authentic and diverse leader's affect in removing barriers to educational success for minority students in underserved school districts. The related literature was used to examine and analyze barriers to academic success, barriers to diversity in leadership, and keys to minority students' success in primary and secondary education accomplishment to give credibility and reliability to the research. Subsections of the study gave credibility to the related literature, analyzed the gaps in the literature, and provided context and connotation to each related subject topic.

Removing Barriers through Diversity

In establishing a healthy work environment, organizational leaders are responsible for guiding the community of change through diversity (Rhymes & Sessoms-Penny, 2021). The entire educational landscape shifted through COVID-19, coupled with the barriers of inequitable access to education and resources addressing cultural and community challenges (Turner, 2020). Within American communities, one of the hardest hit entities was the primary and secondary school districts and educational leaders in underserved communities (Census Bureau, 2019). Diversity in leadership provides a cultural perspective on social inequality, systematic barriers, and obstacles to long-term success (Wallace & Gagen, 2019). Students in minority schools

identified the importance of having open communication and a connection with faculty members and teachers who understood them culturally (Wallace et al., 2022). Effective communication with culturally diverse leaders removes barriers to the educational success of minority students in underserved communities because of the impact on student's long-term success through the creation of a learning and diverse culture that will change a system of inequality (Sawyer & Waite, 2021; White-Lewis, 2022).

The serving leader must cultivate a climate of unity and teamwork by removing obstacles and barriers to organizational success to promote individual and team success (Jennings & Stahl-Wert, 2016; Sun & Shang, 2019). The inequitable access to resources and opportunities and systemic perceptions of learners in underserved communities create barriers to educational success (Easterbrook & Hadden, 2020; Vetrone et al., 2022). Diversity in leaders creates the opportunity for various solutions based on culture, ethnicity, and student belonging and removes obstacles to success (Johnson & Fournillier, 2022).

The transformational leadership framework examines the significance of cultivating an atmosphere where establishing a learning and diverse culture is essential for knowledge sharing and team building (Murray, 2023; Super, 2020). An atmosphere of confidence is cultivated by serving leaders through effective communication and removing barriers and obstacles to individual and team success (Banwart, 2020; Jennings & Stahl-Wert, 2016). Diversity is a culture cultivated by a leadership passion for fairness that embodies the importance of transparency and equity (Feldman et al., 2022; Northhouse, 2019). A learning and diverse culture is cultivated by implementing workforce development programs. (Naqshbandi & Tabche, 2018). Workforce development programs are designed to educate, inform, and give access to computer-

based training to aid team members in shifting paradigms and achieving personal and organizational goals (Holland, 2019).

The importance of access to materials and their influence on educational success within secondary education is analyzed for individual success. The significant difference between a community's socioeconomic status and a student's participation's effect on equitable educational outcomes is access to resources (Parveen & Awan, 2019). Access to resources should not be based on socioeconomic status but on resources given to all students for long-term success (Stitzel & Raje, 2022; Tweed et al., 2021). Equitable access to good and fair education requires a shift in social policies that remove nonpartisan access to resources (Heller, 2021; Roberts & Plucker, 2022). Through ethical leadership practices, decision-makers can manage a judicial system of opportunity to legislate moral worldviews and guidelines to remove obstacles to long-term success (Dahill-Brown, 2019).

Equitable change is a catalyst to growth within business today as technology has changed how business is conducted (Kreitner & Kinicki, 2017; Preston, 2018). For long-term sustainability, change is necessary for real organizational growth (Palumbo & Manna, 2019). For organizational success, intellectual growth becomes necessary in developing society's infrastructure to change the ideologies perpetuating false notions of equality among citizens (Busch, 2021; Clark & Soutter, 2022). Equitable access to resources is obtaining permission to utilize public facilities without discrimination for long-term societal sustainability (Ross, 2019).

Access to educational opportunities within underserved communities is available to all students through state legislation (Bischoff & Owens, 2019; Duncan et al., 2018). The permissions and the credible, certified, unbiased instructions are limited to the teachers and educators who act as gatekeepers to opportunities in our school systems (Ross, 2019; Sykes &

Martin, 2019). The criminological mindset of limiting equitable access to students has been exacerbated due to socioeconomic status and racial discrimination (Pfeffer, 2018; Prieto et al., 2018). However, the limitations of digital and educational resources due to ineffective leaders perpetuating racial and unethical agendas to benefit one's communities and interests are examined by authentic culture (Alberola-Mulet et al., 2021; Dahill-Brown, 2019).

For long-term success in underserved communities, curriculum and pedagogy must embrace anti-racism and diverse culture within a school district's mission and vision (McMurtry & Williamson, 2021; Wiggan & Watson, 2016). The research tests the processes that eliminate failure and create success and the experiences of learners and administrators in high-achieving minority institutions. The perceptions of a demographic that negatively affects self-efficacy, which can hinder the opportunity for success in schools serving underserved communities, are analyzed to influence social change (Wiggan & Watson, 2016). Mitigating negative perceptions is the duty of a governing body of serving leadership that wants to enact civil rights in the education of learners in underserved communities (Kim, 2020; Robinson, 2020).

The Influence of Diversity and Ethical Principles in Leadership is a qualitative study that examines the necessity for decision-makers to implement policies that do not lower the curricula in low-income areas but raise the accountability and expectations of educator performance. However, to help the many, leaders must first serve the few (Jennings & Stahl-Wert, 2016). Negative perceptions are the direct results of systemic thinking fostered by a culture that negatively views the capacity of humanity based on social prejudice (Legette, 2018; Parker & Neville, 2019). Removing perception is about continually shifting paradigms through a renewal of leadership philosophy and the concept of equal but fair expectations for performance and challenging the status quo (Woods & Smith, 2022; Vega, 2021).

The research detailed the importance of a shift in teacher psychology on delivering diversity, equity, and inclusion in the curriculum to reach learners from various cultures within underserved communities (Doubet et al., 2016). Engaging students from a cultural perspective requires a shift in teacher training and creative autonomy in the classroom to meet the learner's needs (Andersen & Aronson, 2018; Whitaker & Valtierra, 2018). Inclusion requires teachers, administrators, and school district superintendents to implement guidelines through legislation to allow the school assessments to gauge students' abilities but allow the curriculum to shift according to the learner (Barnett, 2020; Reece et al., 2018).

Diversity in teachers and implementing assessment and cultural teaching principles, educators could include and advance all students regardless of language, culture, skill level, or socioeconomic level (Doubet et al., 2016; Kumar & Lauermann, 2018). The lack of social equity access to quality secondary education principals and teachers of diversity in minority communities where English is a second language negatively affects the educational infrastructure (Duncan & Punch, 2021; Russell, 2018).

Redefining Leadership

History takes account of the importance of succession, training, and mentorship in shifting perceptions in a culture where an ethical worldview is not the foundation of leadership (Munroe, 2018). The findings examine the lack of diversity and mentoring in the educational teacher infrastructure, which limits equitable access to academic career opportunities in professional constructs (Patterson-Stephens et al., 2017; Russell, 2018).

The most significant barrier to teacher and administration diversity is the need for scholarship and fellowship in navigating internship and career growth opportunities (Cherkowski & Walker, 2019; Patterson et al., 2017). However, without economic resources and the lack of financial

grants and support, many education leaders do not get the opportunity to operate at a level that will allow minority educators to be in positions of influence on students from various cultures (Bryan & Milton, 2017; Espino & Zambrana, 2019). Also, the lack of mentorship within school districts in cultivating the gifts and talents of minority team members can hinder educational success (Field, 2019 & Holcomb, 2022).

The most significant barrier to diversity in education is society's definition and foundational philosophical beliefs about leadership (Bohl, 2020; Erhabor, 2018). Leadership is the process of self-discovery and passionately pursuing the purpose given by God to serve their gift for the betterment of humanity (Herbst, 2020; Karadag et al., 2020). Recognizing where a leader's philosophical foundation originates will determine how they treat and engage team members from other cultures. (Baker, 1997; Gemmell, 2019). The notion that" all men are created equal" did not apply to ethnicities enslaved during the colonization period of Post-Roman Era society (Dunn, 2018; Trout, 2021).

Exemplifying Kingdom principles and ethical core values enable students to identify with relatable and admirable qualities in people of influence to affect success (Hunsaker, 2022; Yang et al., 2019). Leadership is essential in implementing change within a culture (Northhouse, 2017; Robbins & Judge, 2019). However, the transition requires leadership to mentor and train potential administrators for success with long-term sustainability (Johnson, 2019; Wheelan, 2019).

The worldview theory that has shaped the research of this phenomenological study is the ethical worldview. The ethical worldview of the study comes from the ideology that God has created all men in his image and likeness (New Kings James Version, Genesis 1:26-28). Transformational leaders see a more successful future than the present (Kwan, 2020;

Northhouse, 2019). A leader's philosophical foundation will determine how they engage and treat people (Munroe, 2018; Robbins & Judge, 2018). Influential leadership is a concept that influences social cognitive learning through other people's observations (Curioni & Sacheli, 2019; Stydom, 2021).

Influential leaders can operate with core values and principles set on a foundation rooted in truth and humanity by having an ethical worldview (Munroe, 2014). An ethical worldview is a theory that shapes behaviors and perceptions of how leaders see others and influence self-efficacy (Freidman & Mizrachi, 2022; Staples et al., 2022). Without diversity in educational leadership, many African American students and minority learners in underserved communities may never see examples of success in themselves culturally (Montessori et al., 2017; Shields & Hattingh, 2022). An ethical worldview is an essential component of leadership motivated by inspiration (Munroe, 2018; Reyes, 2020). By modeling behavior, leaders inspire, encourage, and empower others to become intrinsically motivated to pursue their purpose and vision, allowing teachers, administrators, and students to be excellent in cultivating their gift by examining their leaders' behavior (Fibuch & Robertson, 2019; Kouzes & Posner, 2017).

A true leader encourages and energizes cultural normalcy of excellence by setting guidelines and establishing policies and procedures that lift expectations within an organization (Robbins & Judge, 2017). In a biblical worldview, God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and the cattle, and all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth" (New King James Version, Genesis 1:26). Leadership is defined as the capacity to positively influence others through inspiration (Munroe, 2014; Paterson & Huang, 2019)). By operating in a diverse and learning culture, institutions and school districts in educational systems can take

advantage of ethnicities, ages, backgrounds, and cultural differences to create solutions, solve

problems, and shift the paradigms of team members within an organization (Halpern et al., 2021;

Xie, 2019)

The underlying issue of how educational entities define leadership was addressed through

extensive research. Leadership findings in academic research analyze the characteristics and

industrial paradigm to indicate a person of high position instead of character, vision, purpose,

and inspiration (Barker, 1997; Douglas, 2018). The social-cognitive aspect is the most significant

hindrance to diversity in educational leadership (Montessori et al.,2017). Teachers' perception of

minorities is demonstrated through the inequitable target and discipline of African Americans

and minorities for minor and subjective school disciplinary infractions (Bryan, 2017; Parker &

Neville, 2019).

Leadership has traditionally been associated with titles and positions of power, with

attributes such as assertiveness, control, and charisma (Douglas, 2018; Northouse, 2019).

Leadership is not an inherent attribute one is born with (Munroe, 2014). However, leadership is a

by-product of the fundamental core values, principles, and belief systems instilled through the

philosophical foundation of culture (Bahl, 2021; Rajack-Tally, 2021). An ethical belief is a

construct a leader follows that influences their behavior and how they treat and engage

humankind (Elkton-Chalcraft, 2020; McLaughlin et al., 2020). In defining leadership

qualifications to implement change, educational systems must redefine the basic definition and

paradigm of what a leader is supposed to be (Mausethagen et al., 2021).

For generations, leadership has been defined by the look of a man instead of the

characteristics that encourage, empower, and educate humanity to make a positive impact within

an infrastructure (Gray & Streshly, 2010; Rajack-Talley, 2021). Authentic leadership has become

more collaborative, relationship-driven, and a cumulative effort of effective communication to affect systemic and organizational change (Dewey, 2020; Johnson et al., 2021). Historically, authentic leaders have had a common trait that differentiates them from others; all great leaders did not seek to be leaders but were called (Gandhi, 2017; Munroe, 2018). Serving leaders operate with the philosophical belief that there were principles and values that they were willing to die for to maintain God's purpose for their lives (Bhengu & Emanuel, 2022; Jennings & Stahl-Wert, 2016).

The theoretical framework of transformative learning is the foundation for understanding the lived experiences, learning histories, and adulthood situations that influence how leaders and adults analyze, retain, and process information (Hogan, 2016; Kerins et al., 2020). In transformative learning, defense mechanisms such as denial can be addressed to recognize the emotional conflict that shapes behaviors and insights into understanding ourselves (Dirkx, 2016; McDonald, 2021). In developing the idea of implementing change within an educational infrastructure, self-formation in deceptive practices allows educational leaders to engage in conflicted behaviors (Cox & Mullen, 2023; Henderson, 2022).

In self-discovery, transformative learning causes a paradigm shift in the learned behaviors contrary to the renewed values and principles of leadership (Ghulam et al., 2021; Vesna, 2021). Transformative learning enables transitioning managers to alter individual perspectives and worldviews for career growth and development (Beard, 2018). A paradigm shift is essential for gaining the necessary tools and resources for effective leadership growth (Baldwin, 2019; Bleijenbergh et al., 2021). The theoretical framework of transformative learning addresses re-categorizing what is considered a leader during the research (Douglass, 2018; Netolicky, 2019). The transformative learning theory reshapes the leadership ideology cultivated

since the colonization of the North American and African continents (Beard, 2018). It has been the catalyst for the great racial divide and the inequitable treatment of men of color since the Roman Era (Bennett, 2021; Manning, 2021).

The barriers to diversity in leadership are based on systemic ideologies from post-Roman philosophies that influence modern-day society (Kilicoglu, 2020; Tridimas, 2019). Greek philosophers believed leaders are born with certain physical traits; if a person did not have these attributes, they were considered servants and enslaved people (El Nabolsy, 2019; Fremeaux et al., 2018). The psychology of decision-makers in education and the perceptions of African American and minority teachers in a society with a culture of oppression contribute to the barriers to diversity in educational leadership in underserved communities (Danielle, 2021; Parker & Neville, 2019).

Importance of Equitable policies and procedures.

Through equitable policies, low-income communities achieved significant success when teachers and administrators led family and community engagements (Sanders et al., 2021; Smith et al., 2022). Parent-teacher collaboration is a concept led by authentic leaders who understand the importance of implementing policies and guidelines to create a learning culture for the long-term success of the school district (Ainscow, 2020; Jeremiah, 2018). A leader creates an atmosphere where career development and knowledge sharing are imperative for the team, and individual success is essential. Leadership is the capacity to positively influence others through inspiration (Northhouse, 2019; Robbins & Judge, 2016).

A policy is a documented course or principle of action proposed by the government, organization, or individual to influence and determine decisions, activities, and behaviors (Darabi Bazvand & Rasooli, 2022; Peacock & Vecchione, 2019). Policies communicate the

connection between a school district's vision and its daily operations (Leithwood, 2021; Perna & Callan, 2014). The procedures that are designed in an educational institution convey a strategic action plan to carry out a policy (Davis, 2022; Makoelle & P, 2019). Procedures are the blueprint for how to navigate a specific situation.

Policies and procedures are essential because they communicate the workforce and student body's vision, values, culture, and needs (Arioua & Benyamina, 2022; Snook, 2021). Using policies and procedures sets workplace expectations and ensures employees precisely comprehend the expected standards and the consequences of not complying with policy and the culture within an organization (Nikam & Sharma, 2018; SHRM, 2023). Education leaders can effectively and efficiently manage time and resources with strict guidelines for a productive and fulfilling work environment (Gorard, 2018; Johnson, 2019). The development and implementation of policies and procedures aligned with the institution's mission and vision are understood by educators and leaders as tools and instruments to create a well-balanced workplace (Gorard, 2018; SHRM, 2023).

The most vital process in implementing workplace guidelines is the communication and training of employees on them (Wheelan, 2017). It is essential to the culture's success that teachers and leaders have the knowledge, comprehension, and wisdom to apply these policies and procedures in their daily operations (Leithwood, 2021; Northouse, 2018). In an organizational infrastructure, policies and procedures address employee conduct, harassment, discrimination, health and safety, and attendance to manage workplace culture effectively (Brener & Demissie, 2018; Buery-Joyner et al., 2023). However, enforcing the policies and procedures is essential for an organization's long-term success and growth (Chazdon et al., 2020; Wang, 2013). Enforcement of an institution's guidelines ensures that operational procedures and

HR decision-making processes are equitable and consistent across the organization's infrastructure (Lang et al., 2022; Ng & Sears, 2020).

Change is the most challenging system to implement in an organizational infrastructure (Northouse, 2019; Vaira, 2004). What is examined within the literature is that only some in positions of influence are true leaders. Leadership is not predicated on status but on the positive effect within an organization (Elo & Uljens, 2022; Johnson, 2021). A leader's most significant attribute is managing positive organizational change by implementing policies and procedures (Iswanto, 2021; Levesque & Wake, 2021). It is essential to have ethical leaders in the school districts of students in underserved communities to ensure equitable access to resources and implement cultural pedagogies to remove systemic biases (Ealy & Campbell, 2022; Roso, 2022). The best way to shift culture and implement new policies and procedures begins with transformational leaders who cultivate a diverse and learning culture (Johnson et al., 2021; Sayed & Ahmed, 2015).

Secondary education student success is connected to socioeconomic status and families' social and cultural capital (Flores et al., 1999; Tan, 2022). However, researchers have noted that the differences in policies and practices within the school districts are directly related to student success (Elswick, 2019; Mac Iver et al., 2019). Leadership commitment and the lack of highly qualified educators in schools with concentrations of low-income and minority students contribute to the inequities in educational success in underserved districts (Guo et al., 2019; Plucker et al., 2021). Because of the socioeconomic status in low-income communities, the resources available to devote to college planning and retaining passionate teachers and administrators are rare (Li & Ortagus, 2019; Bell & Gandara, 2021).

A school's culture depends on individual leadership in underserved school districts and

communities with a high rate of educator turnover and lack of retention (Mac Iver et al., 2019; Yang et al., 2018). Leadership is about one's attitude and belief system. As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he (King James Version, 2022). Influential leaders are forged on a foundation of character, integrity, and purpose for vision (Soderhjelm et al., 2021; Zhang & Siew, 2009). There are team leaders in a position of authority based on their job titles, and there are supervisors who emerge as leaders based on the ethics of their character traits and their influence on a team dynamic (Kouzes & Posner, 2017; Kreitner & Kinicki, 2017). Influential leaders motivate team success by removing barriers and instilling guidelines for success (Northhouse, 2019; Wheelan, 2019). Diversity in educational leadership will positively affect the self-imagery of students and empower learners to be intrinsically motivated through inspiration (Johnson & Fournillier, 2021; Wiggin & Watson, 2016).

The study explored the importance of leadership diversity in a culture of growing ethnicities among students in America. Transformational leadership was required to remove the educational inequity in students' success within underserved communities due to perceptions of inequitable distribution of resources in educational infrastructure systems (Johnson & Fournillier, 2021; Strydom, 2021). Addressing the marginalized groups and the lack of mentoring, identifiable imagery, and implementation of programs and education for leadership to examine social justice inequities in student success within underserved communities are essential in the research.

The importance of diversity, equity, and inclusion in educational leadership is its ability to enable creative thought by utilizing the many cultures within an organization (Boadi & Osarfo, 2019; Kreitner & Kinicki, 2017). Diversity affects an organization's various cultures, age demographics, cultures, and ethnicities (Birdie, 2018). Diversity in educational leadership

enables institutions to address social and world issues and labor concerns to collectively share ideas and implement practices that best serve learners in all school districts (Ng & Sears, 2020; Orrock & Clark, 2018). The lack of funding, the COVID-19 pandemic, and health communities have caused significant concerns in the education system's leadership. School boards, principals, and superintendents are navigating a shortage of educators worldwide (Rhymes & Sessoms, 2021).

Diversity, equity, and inclusion policies in educational leadership are the catalyst for the collaboration of ideas and the effective management of resources within underserved communities with individual leaders who lead with compassion, empathy, and a cultural understanding of the learners and communities directly impacted by social and educational inequities when it comes to the barriers to success (Garcia & Weiss, 2020; Parson & Ozaki, 2020). The superintendents and Board of Directors implement guidelines and mandates for educators in underserved communities to bridge the gap of equity concerns and share industry best practices to maximize diverse and equitable learning opportunities (Jones & George, 2019; Ramsey & Rutti, 2017). Without diversity in educational leadership, many of the students of underserved communities of minorities in impacted school districts would not be able to see imagery of themselves in empowering self-efficacy within a culture (Kouzes & Posner, 2017).

Understanding Purpose

Many barriers to African American success in education are a direct by-product of low self-efficacy and societal perceptions (Allen et al., 2018; Harris, 2018). The saboteur in the room is the need for real academic success in an equitable educational institution rather than a perceived expectation to only compete in professional athletics. Many perceptions portray successful black men as less than admirable in depicting what is perceived as a strong black man

(Harris, 2018; Nelson et al., 2021). Understanding one's purpose is critical to African American and minority leadership success (Patterson et al., 2017; Wiggan & Watson, 2016).

In an environment where self-efficacy is essential for long-term sustainability, African American and minority teachers have expressed being in an unsupportive environment (Brown et al., 2011; Milner & Hoy, 2003). High self-efficacy among teachers in unsupportive environments enables educators to be open to implementing changes that will meet the educational needs of students (Wiggan & Watson, 2016). A student's purpose solidifies their vision and allows them to passionately pursue their goals and objectives for a successful scholastic experience (Sun & Shang, 2019; Wallace & Gagen, 2020).

In cultivating a culture of diversity and equitable access to resources in an underserved community, leaders and teachers must define their purpose in serving their gifts in the field of education (Jennings & Stahl-Werts, 2016). The purpose is the understanding of why something was created, done, or for which something exists (Perkins, 2019). In an educational infrastructure, knowing one's purpose sets the foundation for serving in the capacity to build and define a culture that can utilize individual and collective talent for long-term success (Hong et al., 2021; Wyatt, 2021).

Understanding purpose is the catalyst for defining a vision that can enable the drive to master one's craft and pursue the excellence of serving to make a difference to humanity (Sheridan et al., 2019; Vercueil & Nicolaides, 2021). In underserved communities, successful school districts have incorporated societal purpose within the mission statement and demonstrated positive educational influence (Carter et al., 2022; Wiggan & Watson, 2016). A purpose-driven school district and individual has a single-minded focus and a vision to influence success and social change beyond profit or prosperity and to make a difference (Desimone, 2019;

Pak & Desimone, 2019). The power of self-efficacy through purpose prepares leadership to develop a mindset that creates a learning and diverse culture that encourages an atmosphere of mentorship (Kempster et al., 2011; Schunk & DiBenedetto, 2020).

Mentoring in leadership gives team members the tools and resources needed to be successful through modeled behaviors and the development of procedures that cultivate talent within an organization and develop excellence in individuals while working towards a shared vision (Colquitt & Pine, 2016; Jones & George, 2019). The Bible states, "Many are the plans in a person's subconscious mind, but it is God's purpose for them that will prevail" (New International Version, Proverbs 19:21). It is the understanding of "why" that enables the passionate pursuit of purpose. In underserved communities, educational leaders must create an atmosphere where policies and procedures are implemented to remove barriers to diversity and inequitable access to resources (Gromming, 2016; Rey et al., 2019).

An ethical worldview is set on the foundation of serving one's gift for advancing the culture of heaven here on earth (Gen 1: 26-28). It is the belief that God created man in his image and likeness to administer the principles of heaven. The ethical worldview teaches that an essential rule in leading is to treat one another as we want to be treated and to operate in a spirit of love (John 15:12). Understanding ethics, values, and principles empowers humankind to cultivate an atmosphere of love, equity, and fairness, revealing that we are all the same body working towards a common goal (1 Cor 12: 14-25; Bracht et al., 2023).

The ethical worldview theory works with the ideology of understanding one's gift and purpose, not just to make a living but to make a difference to humanity (Brown, 2018; Dutt & Grabe, 2019). Implementing ethical standards begins by mastering oneself in pursuing God's purpose and serving it in excellence (Hill, 1928; Jennings & Stahl-Wert, 2016). In education, the

ethical worldview establishes a culture of human development by administrating principles and

values through mentorship and succession (Robinson et al., 2020; Rohatinsky, 2020). It assures

equitable access to resources for all Kingdom Citizens and the opportunity for children to have

the foundation needed to cultivate their gifts to affect change in the world (Parveen & Awan,

2019; Sommer & Fallon, 2020).

Access to resources for learners in underserved communities creates a culture that allows

cultivating gifts and talents and the cognitive influence for students to fulfill God's life purpose

(Greene, 2017; Nelson, 2021). The purpose is defined for superintendents, teachers, classified

instructors, and students to create a learning and diverse culture where individual and

organizational success is essential for long-term sustainability (Haesler, 2021; Watton et al.,

2019). The sustainability of success comes from cultivating one's gifts through equitable access

to opportunity and the passionate pursuit of purpose (Miller & Wang, 2019; Singh & Segatto,

2020). To succeed in one's craft and create the habits needed to master one's gift to serve it in

excellence requires serving leaders with a purpose (Jennings & Stahl-Wert, 2016; Whalen,

2000). Also, purpose enables a focused dedication to affect the lives of learners and

organizations by giving in service to others (Cardona & Rey, 2022; Lui, 2019).

Purposed-driven success is defined in the literature as masterminds committed to serving

their gifts in excellence to achieve a common goal or vision (Hill, 1920; Northhouse, 2019). The

purpose needs to align with the occupation, and then there needs to be a realignment or shift in

training or understanding of the gifts being served (Crippen & Willows, 2019; Hylen & Willian,

2020). A person's purpose is the more significant cause of a leader's life that brings fulfillment

and joy in serving their gifts in an occupation (Flotman & Grobler, 2020; Marais & Govender,

2022). The Bible states, A man's gift makes room for him and puts him in the presence of great people" (New International Version, Proverbs 18:16).

Purpose is a significant component of defining leadership within an organization. Identifying one's leadership purpose allows the understanding of "why" actions are taken and is closely aligned with characteristics such as integrity, morality, vision, and understanding (Guthrie et al., 2021; Wyatt, 2021). Focusing on diversity and ethical leaders in underserved communities can define a school district's educational purpose (Ng et al., 2021; Susanto & Nopiyanti, 2021). Implementing a diversity and learning culture without a focus on purpose can create a culture blind to the biases within a systemic infrastructure fostered over the years. (By, 2021; Mejia-Manzano et al., 2022).

Becoming an effective and efficient manager of the tools and resources that are accessible is critical to long-term success (Reed et al., 2018). The management collaborates with systems and infrastructures to achieve organizational objectives efficiently and effectively, even in constant change (Johnson, 2019; Kreitner & Kinicki, 2017). However, the accessibility of the tools and resources necessary for success greatly depends on the decision-maker's vision in implementing social and equitable change (Hagen, 2018; Scott & Davis, 2016).

Diversity in the academic teaching and educational administrative workforce is recognized as a critical component of achieving educational equity (Cheng, 2021; Dutton, 2018). Still, change must be driven by authentic leaders who purposefully enact policies and procedures to remove social prejudices about how minority students are treated and perceived (Elk et al., 2018; Grabot, 2010). Cognitive learning attempts to shift paradigms and educational perspectives by cultivating diverse thinking by bringing various cultures and learning methods for minority students (Aboobaker & KA, 2021; Jones & George, 2019). Knowing one's purpose shapes the

way a leader thinks, and the foundation of his philosophical beliefs determines how he treats and engages team members, thus impacting Civil rights (Speranza & Peirce, 2019; Zuckerman & O'Shea, 2021).

Equitable access to Civil Rights

In educational civil rights, the standardized assessments in school districts within underserved communities with inequities in study materials and resources are the barriers implemented by social and systemic injustices (Marx & Kim, 2018; Ward, 2021). Academic success is enabled by transformational leaders who recognize the disparity in the educational system and courageously champion the cause by serving their gifts for the betterment of all student learners (Asfar & Waheed, 2020; Siswanto, 2022). There are many ways of exploring academic achievements: test performance, class performance, and performance across classes, such as GPAs (Burns et al., 2019; Madigan, 2019). The predictors are divided into learning institutions, learner interactions, learning context, and individual personalities. However, being intrinsically motivated as a student can maximize available resources but only guarantee long-term success if a digital divide adequately prepares students for future success (Brechter et al., 2021).

Civil rights in education ensure equitable rights and protection from discriminatory behaviors in accessing tools and resources for a proper education (Education Next, 2022: Julien, 2019). Civil rights guarantee equal protection under the law and implemented policies and statutes that ethical and transformational leaders must manage and carry out to ensure enforcement in educational cultures (Curbelo, 2022; Kim, 2020). These rights are laws protecting an individual's freedom and human rights from discrimination and infringement by governments, social organizations, and individual institutions (Insenstrom & Quennerstedt, 2020;

Robinson, 2018).

In educational institutions, access to civil rights increases the opportunities for students in underserved communities and school districts to utilize tools and resources available to all students (MacBeath et al., 2018; Sanders et al., 2021). Resources such as books, computers, and classrooms allow teachers to actively engage students in a productive atmosphere by utilizing modern technology to cultivate the gifts of a multitude (Bubb & Jones, 2020; Tang et al., 2020). The opportunities are given for students to be in an environment of learning and inclusion when the civil rights of all are enforced by transformational leaders who developed policies and procedures to cultivate a culture change (Anselmann & Mulder, 2020; Shields, 2019). Creating a learning and diverse culture for equitable access to jobs, resources, technology, and information is essential to school district success (Naqshbandi & Tabche, 2018).

The transformative learning theory is a learning process that shifts the way adult learners think and engage with the natural environment around them (Cranton, 2016; Terblanche, 2022). It is a theoretical framework that aids adult learners in removing paradigms and shifting cultural biases not based on Biblical truths (Biney, 2022). A thought to civil rights concept can transform an adult's ideology, philosophy, and practice in embracing continued education in diverse settings (Formenti & Hoggan-Kloubert, 2023). Civil rights concepts are critical in developing a philosophy that embraces systemic shifts in a society that can resist social change and remove perceptions impacted by life experiences (Bhatt, 2022; Robinson, 2020). Transformative learning is an ideology fortified by ethical principles guided and implemented by serving leaders (Scheele, 2015; Smith & Kempster, 2019). Serving leadership is the concept that inspires an atmosphere of success by removing obstacles and barriers by implementing guidelines for long-term success (Jennings & Stahl-Wert, 2016; Wheelan, 2019). The Bible states, "As a man

thinketh in his heart (subconscious mind), so is he" (New King James Version, Proverbs 23:7).

Transformational leaders develop a system of change cultivated in an atmosphere of racial and

social inequity to bring about civil rights in education (Kouzes & Posner, 2017; Sung & Kim,

2021). The importance of having a paradigm shift examining explores the influence of

transformative learning in implementing a culture of diversity, equity, and inclusion in

organizational leadership success (Adkins, 2015).

Cultivating an atmosphere of diversity, equity, and inclusion through modeled behavior,

setting the standard, and raising expectations enable organizational cultural change (Fullan,

2020; Kouzes & Poth, 2017). In changing a culture in an underserved community and school

district, the superintendent must exhibit characteristics and have the principles of authentic and

ethical leaders (Andersen, 2018; Simanjuntak, 2021). Transformational leadership is an integral

theory emphasizing diversity, integrity, inclusion, and social justice (Erasmus & Agboola, 2018;

Smith & DeClerk, 2022). However, policies and laws exist to give all students equal rights and

access to quality education (McBride, 2021). In the United States, ethical leaders must address

racial and socioeconomic disparities among all team members and organizational leaders where

diversity and more inclusive schools are needed (Sanders et al., 2021; Strydom, 2021).

Education in the US and access to civil rights are critical to the success of students and

the effectiveness of this country's democratic government (Parson & Ozaki, 2020; Robinson,

2018). Accessing civil rights enables leaders to create a diverse workforce and positively affect

student academic achievement by creating a safe, engaging, and learning environment (Grin et

al., 2018; Okegbe, 2021). By addressing the inequitable distribution of resources and power,

leaders can focus on creating a culture that perpetuates equity and justice (Robbins & Judge,

2018). Many policies and processes within school districts fail because of the lack of

acknowledgment of the cultural norms of exclusion and privilege within many underserved communities and school districts (Davis, 2022; Jabari et al., 2022). The concept that a more significant determinant of pupil success within areas of low-income communities within the educational institutions are the dynamics of student-to-student interactions and the policies implemented within systems to mitigate bullying and treatment of internal barriers to success (Gorard & Smith, 2012; Harris, 2018).

In an economic climate where state agencies are rebuilding secondary schools to give equitable access to resources, the hindrances to success are mitigated by access to computers, new books, and facilities (Clark, 2020; Parveen & Awan, 2019). Equitable access to resources alleviates accountability by measuring success through standardized tests and graduation rates (Richardson & Roebuck, 2022; Ross, 2019). However, the prominence of racial discrimination by faculty members whose philosophical foundations limit accurate access by subjectivity within the classroom is rarely challenged (Kim, 2018; Taylor, 2021).

These discriminatory practices empower a culture of poor leadership that addresses statewide empirical mandates instead of cultivating student learning (Li, 2020; Salisbury, 2020). However, that commitment by minority students exacerbates the mindset that the students are the problems (Brown, 2019; Long et al., 2019). Racial discrimination is a philosophy deeply rooted in the professional and social infrastructure that cultivates and drives the practices educational leaders promote to address racial disparities in education (Dixon, 2020; Salisbury, 2019). Without understanding civil rights in education, leaders continue to perpetuate a myth that anyone can succeed by working hard, even though the curricula and pedagogues never address the racial disparity and cultural knowledge of minority students (Milner, 2007; Milner & Howard, 2004).

Leaders with an ethical worldview do not ignore the societal infrastructures that affect civil rights, such as racism and nativism, that directly impact the educational opportunities of low-income students (Roksa & Kingsley, 2019; Sheth, 2019). Effective communication is a catalyst for motivating high-performance academic students to succeed in enacting civil rights (Northhouse, 2019). Through communication and genuine teacher-student exchange, African American and minority learners in underserved school districts can define their expectations and understand their intrinsic influence on academic success (Mosley et al., 2021; Thompson, 2018). Communication and enforced guidelines create an atmosphere where growth and knowledge sharing are vital for a leader's team, and individual success is essential (Alward & Phelps, 2019; Momeny & Gourgues, 2019).

Authentic leadership, learning, and diverse culture can lead to long-term sustainability in many low-income school districts (Gershenfeld et al., 2019; LaFortune et al., 2018). The literature on academic success in underserved communities involves deliberate parent-teacher engagement for long-term success. It is believed that student-teacher collaboration can lead to academic success through effective communication (Liebech-Lein & Sjolie, 2021; Noga & Argaman, 2019). The student-teacher collaboration in education is essential in assisting our youth, regardless of ethnicity, in understanding governmental policies, civil rights, and the importance of debate in creating change in a culture of educational reform (Robinson & Scott, 2019; Tamura & Uesugi, 2020).

The importance of authentic leadership in enacting long-term changes enables enforcing a culture where civil rights are accessible and a vital component of an organization's mission (Winton et al., 2022). Without ethical leadership, there is no change; without ethical principles and values, there is no equality (Abu Bakar & Connaughton, 2022). The Bible states, "So in

everything, do unto others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets" (New International Version, Matthew 7:12).

Accountability through Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

The importance of comprehending the role of each establishment in the development of the minority student in an educational institution influences student-school intervention and interaction on students' social behavior and success (D'hondt et al., 2016; Verkuyten et al., 2019). Accountability through DEI shows how families are essential to developing routines, habits, and a sense of culture set by a foundation of trust and collaboration (Adams & Olajumoke, 2021; Ntheketha, 2021). This study aims to examine the effect of student-teacher interaction on learners and their social functioning through the sharing of culture (Sheridan et al., 2019). Students with parents engaged in school activities have tremendous success because of reinforced behavior modification and input of family cultures (Levickis et al., 2022; Sheridan et al., 2019).

A parent who takes a great interest in a student's learners' education gives accountability and raises the expectation for tremendous success in a culture that may not represent them in society (Blad, 2022; Meeran & Van Wyk, 2022). By encouraging the heart, leaders can empower and promote student learners by recognizing creative and productive moments of accomplishment (Kreitner & Kinicki, 2017; Robbins & Judge, 2018). However, the direct and indirect relationship disparity regarding the fair and equitable treatment of students from various ethnic backgrounds varies based on access to resources, opportunity, and leadership (Ratner, 2022).

The cultural diversity of leadership in education within the United States is essential in cultivating an atmosphere of learning and accountability in underserved communities and school

districts (Bristol & Wilkins, 2018; Wang & Flores, 2022). The culpability of leaders sets a foundation based on the policies and procedures to embrace community diversity in a school system to create a diverse culture where knowledge sharing is essential for long-term success and sustainability (Ijalba & Crowley, 2019; Wood et al., 2018). Educational institutions at all levels aim to provide high-quality education standards through a flexible curriculum and instruction to meet students' academic requirements (French & Thomas, 2020; Pinquart & Ebeling, 2020). In learning and diverse cultures, teachers are trained and prepared to address the educational needs of all students (Duong et al., 2019).

Systematic diversity is a social approach that addresses the inequitable distribution of a viable pedagogy that supports all learners in developing their potential for social interaction and the distribution of power based on economic, social, cultural, or ethnic backgrounds (Clark, 2011; Muller, 2021; Olcon et al., 2020). In gaining equitable access to resources, school systems with diversity measure progress as schools and communities work together to create an inclusive atmosphere (Glass, 2022; Harris & Ellis, 2020). In a diverse culture, teachers and students enjoy the full benefits, rights, and access to social justice through leadership accountability (Akkari & Radhouane, 2022; Wang, 2018). In school districts, superintendents are responsible for implementing tools and resources so that teachers can utilize learning and research materials in any format and medium to serve learners of all demographics (Holmes et al., 2021; Sterrett & Richardson, 2019). Using computer network infrastructures creates a platform that can be accessed anytime, anywhere, and for everyone, including individuals from underserved communities and disadvantaged students (Chandrasekara & Yapa, 2018; Motiwalla & Thompson, 2012).

Transformative learning is the foundation for removing paradigms and learned behaviors

that hinder diversity, equity, and inclusion (Khan, 2022; Yacek, 2020). Learning

theory is essential in impacting lasting change and shifting a leader's perspective (Bleijenbergh et

al., 2021; Scott et al., 2022). In a culture lacking racial diversity within the workforce, continual

training and education can be a tool for removing stereotypes rooted in cultural upbringing and

community (Avsec & Ferk, 2021; Holland, 2019). In underserved communities, there are many

educational institutions where the racial disparity among teachers is greatly disproportioned

(Dohrmann et al., 2022; Fish, 2019). To overcome barriers to civil rights and lack of diversity,

creating a learning culture through career development and personal growth is essential for adult

learning (Kim, 2020; Riddle & Sinclair, 2019).

Supporting a learning and diverse culture through Information technology enables the

creation of accessible resource platforms but strategically considers the diversity of teachers and

learners within a school system (Capano & Jarvis, 2020; Kelly et al., 2018). Diversity in

education addresses not just students but also leaders and teachers. Educational leaders and

teachers are the gatekeepers of content and are responsible for the pedagogies and lessons

distributed to students (Mickahail & Aquino, 2019; Pollak, 2020). The teacher's philosophical

beliefs, priorities, ideas, and perceptions of students' needs in underserved communities shape

the designed pedagogy (Norenberg, 2020; Sorensen, 2019).

Teachers and educational leadership diversity is not limited to gender or race. However,

it includes culture, ethnicity, and socioeconomic background, which affects the educator's

decisions on the formulation of lesson plans (Mitchell, 2017; Schein & Schein, 2017). The

accountability of diversity in serving underserved communities in education involves the

collaboration of educators and administrators to create materials and curricula that represent

educational requirements, multiple perspectives, and a cultural understanding of a community's

beliefs, practices, and principles (Crimmins, 2020; Wheelan, 2021). Cultural, racial, and gender diversity in educational staff members enables the conversation of equitable distribution of tools and power to be addressed through policies, procedures, and behaviors within institutional infrastructures (Ahmed et al., 2017; Pudikova, 2019). Through effective communication, transformational leaders can set a standard of accountability that will shift culture and positively impact students and the workforce by empowering excellence in cultivating and serving their gifts to make a social justice change in education (Bruno, 2018; Fullan, 2020).

Students who engaged with faculty experienced more significant exposure to racial discrimination because of their race (Park et al., 2020; Verkuyten et al., 2019). Also, student-teacher engagement has resulted in substantial benefits in achieving academic success and positive outcomes for most students (Park et al., 2022; Wasserberg, 2017). However, students in racially diverse communities report a more significant incident of racial discrimination from faculty interaction and the lack of confidence in the trust of fair and equal treatment from teachers (Dixon, 2018; Kao, 2019).

Racial discrimination trend results from unethical leadership and the lack of diversity in the educational workforce tasked to educate, encourage, and empower minority students in less-than-favorable communities (Menon & Lefteri, 2021; Schein & Schein, 2017). Leaders are responsible for cultivating an atmosphere of trust and confidence in removing barriers to the educational success of minority students (Franklin et al., 2023). Teachers often act as gatekeepers to career and educational opportunities and utilize their positions to discriminate and insert their biases in the classroom (Park et al., 2022; Wheelan, 2021).

The gap in the literature was that there is a need for ethical leaders who serve their gifts with passion, instilling a philosophy of diversity, equity, and inclusion in education for African

American and minority students. The contrast in the literature highlights that without ethical and diverse leadership, it is necessary for the benefits of student-faculty interaction to diminish because of the prevalence of racial discrimination (Jennings & Stahl-Wert, 2016; West, 2017). Diversity in leadership is essential for students to experience validation and have society's stereotypes removed to cultivate the gifts and passions of learners for long-term success (Mcardle & Turner, 2021; Meng, 2022).

Authentic leadership in education is cultivated by serving leaders who remove the limits of their capacity and create opportunities for students to succeed (Jennings & Stahl-Wert, 2016). The concept and ideology that authentic and diverse leadership is essential to removing the barriers to success for African Americans and minorities in education. It is not just a need but a civil right that must be cultivated by a transformational serving leader who puts the needs of others before themselves, motivating changes for societal reform through inspiration.

Summary

The accurate indicator of an organization's success is not its business strategies but the quality of its leadership (Jennings & Stahl-Wert, 2016). Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in leadership have become essential guiding principles in the educational success of underserved school districts (Johnson & Fournillier, 2022: Nofal, 2023). The researchers of minority barriers and equitable access to educational opportunities recognize gaps in the literature and the necessity for cultural changes in perception and policies for social justice (Trieu & Jayakody, 2019). The theories and concepts that shaped this study are the Ethical worldviews of transformative learning, transformational leadership, and social-cognitive approaches.

Authentic leadership is the capacity to influence others through inspiration, motivated by a vision, generated by passion, and cultivated for a purpose (Munroe, 2018). Without diversity,

equity, and inclusion in educational leadership, students in underserved communities have no direct reflections or images of their culture's professional and academic possibilities (Eccles & Wigfield, 2020). The Biblical worldview is an ideology that God has created all men in his image and likeness and has given us dominion over the area of gifting we are to serve (New Kings James Version, Genesis 1:26-28). The gap in the literature is that diversity and ethical leadership are essential for change and implementing policies and procedures for equitable access to educational success for minority students.

Barriers to educational success have been examined and researched in doctoral studies at many universities. Still, minimal effective policy implementation has affected social change in pedagogical studies by reviewing the barriers, equitable access, and importance of leadership. The research has addressed minority students' stereotypes, perceptions, and obstacles in analyzing the steps necessary for effective change. By investigating and exploring the importance of servant leadership, literature depicts the importance of an ethical foundation that addresses principles and core values in implementing policies and procedures for social justice. The Bible states, "As a man thinketh in his heart (subconscious mind), so is he" (New International Version, Proverbs 23:7).

Within the examination of the literature in researching diversity in leadership and the educational influence on equitable changes and implementing policies for students' long-term success in underserved communities is the need for a universal shift in how agencies define academic success (Sayed & Ahmad, 2015). Influential leadership is the understanding that a leader must put others first to cultivate a serving culture within an organization (Munroe, 2018). Regarding passion and purpose, there are ideas Kingdom citizens are willing to live by, but as a serving leader, there are causes and beliefs they are willing to die for (Mandela, 1994).

CHAPTER THREE: METHODS

Overview

The purpose of this hermeneutical phenomenological study was to understand the experiences of diversity and ethical principles in educational leadership for teachers, administrators, and classified licensed professionals within minority school districts. Chapter Three describes the design to formulate and develop the process and procedure of the methodology utilized in gathering, analyzing, and developing participants' lived experiences within the study. The chapter explains the research design and the site, the criterion sampling method, and the ethical considerations used to capture the complete stories of the participants. In the method section for a qualitative study, the research gives credibility and validity to the information. It provides the reader with a chronological flow of the context and the shared lived experiences of participants. Chapter Three aims to explore and implement the processes and procedures of building a credible story while validating its authenticity with reliable data through information transcribing and interviewee review.

Research Design

The qualitative approach is a method that focuses on the described meaning and shared experiences of participants (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Qualitative research begins with assumptions and utilizes theoretical frameworks that inform the study of research problems addressing the meaning individuals and groups ascribe to a social or human problem (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The research design was chosen to describe the educational experiences of leadership regarding barriers to academic success for minority students in underserved school districts.

The qualitative design chosen for this research was phenomenology. A phenomenological

design refers to knowledge at the subconscious level and describes one's perceptions, senses, and personal experiences (Moustakas, 1994). Specifically, hermeneutical phenomenology was utilized in the research study. According to Heidegger (1975), hermeneutical phenomenology is a scientific process concerned with the life world or human experience as it is lived. The hermeneutical approach is a formation of historical experiences and is a research methodology that is focused on the subjective experience of individuals and groups (Van Manen, 2016). The hermeneutical phenomenological approach enabled the connection of a selected phenomenon to examine and address socioeconomic disparity within our modern-day culture and the influence of poverty and systemic oppression on creating barriers to minority student success in underserved school districts. (Van Manen, 2016) Limited research explores the lack of diversity and ethical leadership within underserved communities and school districts. The servant-leader mindset puts others first and creates an organization that embodies a learning, diverse culture, and the expectation of excellence (Jennings & Stahl-Wertz, 2016).

Through the interview process, the research explored the constraints and need for a paradigm shift in the educational leadership infrastructure to affect equitable changes in underserved communities (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The problem statement for the phenomenological study investigated the cultural issues within leadership and teachers that influence educational equity and barriers to long-term success in primary and secondary learning institutions for minorities in underserved school districts.

Qualitative research is a process of telling the story of people's lived experiences (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The research utilizes a literature review and data to tell the tale for transparency and credibility (Van Manen, 2016). Hermeneutical phenomenology considers the researcher's experiences to bring passion and an in-depth understanding of a phenomenon and its

potential impact on a group and society (Van Manen, 2014). Examining information in a qualitative research design captures phrases and text to give significant meaning to lived experiences. The data will be formulated into definitions and organized into themes and illustrations based on statements and topics.

Sound qualitative research is the capacity to tell a story or address a problem by utilizing the significant components of the phenomenological approach (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The stories were solidified by implementing the significant components of the phenomenological research approach: literature review, data collection, and analysis. The literature review was a significant component in designing a phenomenological research study, and it is a diverse summary of previous or legacy research on specific topics. The review examines journals, scholarly articles, and other significant sources in a particular area of research. The analysis process enables the researcher to meet the purpose of the study, which is to report the meaning of shared experiences by participants by exploring and searching for patterns and statements that present opportunities for social equity and positive change in society (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Research Questions

Central Research Question

What are the perceived affects of diversity and ethical principles on teachers, administrators, and classified licensed professionals within minority school districts?

Sub-Question One

What are the lived experiences of educational administrators and teachers in a school system without leadership support to implement a culturally related curriculum?

Sub-Question Two

What are the components within underserved school districts that impact diversity and

ethical principles needed for minority student success?

Sub-Question Three

What are the challenges administrators and educators face with leadership in implementing the strategies and resources required to aid minority students' educational success?

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Setting and Participants

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The site where the research study was conducted is Braswell High School. The location is where the study participants were centrally located and could purposely inform an understanding of the research problem and central phenomena being studied (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Participants were teachers, principals, and superintendents with firsthand knowledge of the setting and the phenomenon being studied. It was an agreed-upon, IRB- and institution-approved location, and contributors were interviewed individually or in a group and gave their testimony or shared lived experience of the event or phenomena.

Site

The site where the qualitative hermeneutical phenomenological research was conducted is Braswell High School Library in Georgia (All the names are pseudonyms to protect participants). This setting was chosen for two main reasons. First, it was chosen because it was a site where the study participants were centrally located and impacted by the phenomena being studied. The library location was chosen because I have first-hand knowledge of the setting and the confidential information to safeguard participants' identities. Braswell High School was the only high school in the Liberty County School District in Georgia, where the demographic serves a distinct minority student body. The researcher chose Braswell High School in the Liberty County School District because of its unique demographic and teachers' experiences with the prescribed phenomena. Braswell High School was one of the most diverse high schools in the

United States. The high school has over 1067 students from over 14 countries speaking 22 languages. As of 2022, the demographic of Braswell High School and the Liberty County School District is 92% minority, with 9% Hispanic, 7% Caucasian, 5% Asian, 69% African American (Somalia, Ethiopians), 6% Pacific Islander, and 4% American Indians.

The Braswell High School Library was a newly renovated facility on the school's campus with private rooms and a place where participants agreed to be interviewed for the study. The senior leadership was comprised primarily of males in the positions of Superintendent, Chief Academic Officer, and Human Resources Director, who were the decision-makers within the school district. There were several principals within the school district and several women. Most teachers were White women and men, and a few minority para-educators and minority-certificated teachers.

Participants

The qualitative research participants were individuals selected by the criterion sampling method. The criterion sampling method is the selection of participants that meet a predetermined criterion of importance (Patton, 2001). The researcher recruited 11 participants who agreed to participate in the study. Recruitment continued until saturation was reached. Saturation is defined as the degree to which new qualitative data repeats what was expressed in previous data with little change (Hennink & Kaiser, 2022). The participants were teachers and administrators with five years or more of teaching experience and classified licensed professionals such as educational psychologists, school nurses, and educational counselors with more than six years of expertise in their career field. The selected participants worked in the school district for at least five years to meet criterion method standards. These participants volunteered to share their testimonies in private interviews and open forum discussions exclusively for the contributors.

Recruitment Plan

Recruitment began after IRB approval of the proposal and site permission was received. A Recruitment Flyer document contained identifying information about participants and recruitment criteria of leaders and educators. The recruitment criteria were teachers and administrators with five years or more of teaching experience and classified licensed professionals such as educational psychologists, school nurses, and educational counselors with more than six years of expertise in their career field and who have worked in the school district for at least five years. An email was sent to the underserved school district's teachers, leaders, and educators. Recruitment was continued until saturation (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

The goal was to recruit ten to fifteen volunteer participants who could adequately meet the criteria and holistically share their experiences in a safe and secure environment. The participants were teachers, classified professionals, principals, and superintendents, active and retired from the school district. Participants were elicited through word of mouth, social media posts, contacts, and personal connections. The method used to recruit personnel was the criterion sampling method. It is the method used to give a description and specific criteria to the volunteers who meet the criteria to recall and give recollection about an event adequately. Once I had a list of possible participants, I contacted volunteers via electronic mail or personally through professional relationships with an invitation to participate in the study. The email explained the nature of the study, and if interested, the participants were emailed recruitment letters and consent forms to be signed and returned based on preference of contact. The Bible states, "My people are destroyed from the lack of knowledge" (New International Version, Isaiah 5:13).

Researcher's Positionality

The transformative framework was the theoretical framework that has guided the decision to pursue the research on the selected topic. The transformative framework is a process that utilizes principles and procedures to guide the research in implementing a paradigm shift that will catalyze leadership development and social justice change within society. The philosophical assumptions that have guided qualitative research are ontological, axiological theories, and ethical worldviews. These assumptions were the theoretical framework the researcher used to collect, analyze, and interpret the data gathered in this qualitative phenomenological study. The assumptions were essential in formulating a viable and credible study that gave a rich and holistic point of view of the participants' lived shared experience of phenomena.

Interpretive Framework

The interpretive framework, or research paradigm, must be clarified for scholars new to scholarly research. Essentially, the interpretive framework identifies the lens through which research will conduct the study. Although perspectives may change depending on the study or the desired approach, an interpretive framework will be the same throughout any study. The interpretive framework that I used to influence the study was the transformative framework. A transformative framework addresses societal issues and brings social change through research (Mertens, 2009). The framework is focused on helping affect and influence social justice change within education in underserved communities (Studer, 2022).

Philosophical Assumptions

The philosophical assumptions that affected the research were the ontological, epistemological, and axiological assumptions. The assumptions in this hermeneutic

phenomenological study rested on the concept that values the personal stories of lived experiences (Van Manen, 2014). It is the belief that authentic leadership is the foundation for implementing diversity, equity, and inclusion within an organization. These assumptions make known my biases on how I view the world and the values and principles that I believe affect how I serve my gifts to humanity. Transformational leaders enable and empower a team to have the autonomy to operate within their gifts, and effective communication must exist for high-performing teams. Influential leaders are forged on character, integrity, and purpose for individual and team success (Munroe, 2018). Leadership influence is cultivated by the leader's core values and philosophy, which determines how a supervisor treats and engages team members. Influential leaders motivate team success by removing barriers and instilling guidelines for success (Wheelan, 2019).

Ontological Assumption

The ontological assumption is characteristic of reality from various viewpoints (Creswell & Poth, 2018). I view the world as a culture that lacks true ethical leadership. It is my assumption and understanding that authentic leadership is generated through inspiration. True leaders are purpose-driven to accomplish a vision and goal that empowers excellence with members. By modeling behavior, leaders inspire, empower, and encourage students to become intrinsically motivated to pursue their purpose and vision (Kouzes & Posner, 2017). The reality that influences social change is overcoming systemic biases that have permeated American culture since the beginning of colonialism (Hannah-Jones, 2021). My assumed reality of the world is understanding that authentic change begins with the foundation of a leader's principles and core values.

The Ontological assumptions address the importance of knowing one's motivation and

becoming what God has a purpose for one to be. The assumption permits the researcher to identify the nature of reality by allowing various aspects experienced by the participants (Patton, 2015). The Bible states, "Many are the plans in a man's heart, but the purpose of the Lord will prevail" (King James Version, Proverbs 19:21). When a decision-maker has discovered their purpose, the individual can begin to pursue who God has called them to be. In self-discovery, leaders can begin to inspire through becoming and vision.

Epistemological Assumption

The foundational theory that shaped my epistemological assumption was the ethical worldview. The ethical worldview is a foundational truth that God has created all men in his image and likeness (New King James Version, Genesis 1:26). Ethical worldview is the epistemological assumption that leaders and decision-makers in positions of influence ought to exercise. It is the practice of fair and equitable access to tools and resources for success for all students. Ensuring success is an inherent ethical principle that must be part of a school system's culture by utilizing the participants' voices regarding the lived experiences of diversity and ethical principles in underserved schools.

Another epistemological assumption is the importance of ethical principles. Ethical principles enable the implementation of concepts and philosophies where leaders maintain the values and principles that will empower students and bring about social justice and renewed thinking for all team members. I sought to understand how knowledge of the phenomenon was created and communicated through interviews, focus groups, and journaling by capturing direct quotes from each participant. The assumption includes the expectation of transparency and diversity in a systemic culture that lacks equitable access to resources for underserved communities. In this assumption of ethical principles is the belief of Christian values in shaping

the understanding and rationality of the essential mindset to accomplish fair and equitable decision-making in underserved communities and school districts.

Axiological Assumption

The Axiological assumption examines the philosophies and beliefs that influence a study. The axiological assumptions will establish my values of character, integrity, and service before self. It is the assumption that where a leader gets the foundation of their philosophy will determine how they engage and treat people. This assumption discusses that leadership is about one's attitude and belief system. Another affect of the assumption is the expectation that those participating in the study will be honest and courageous in their representation of educators and leaders in underserved communities. It is the assumption that leadership principles and values are essential for long-term success in affecting social justice and equitable educational infrastructure changes. Character is essential to sustaining trust, and how one thinks matters as a leader. The axiological assumptions that are a part of the values and biases, as well as the value-laden nature of information gathered from the field, are the values of transformational leadership. Transformational leadership values are forged on integrity, service before self, and excellence in serving their gifts (Northhouse, 2017). This view will be the foundation of impacting social change through ethical leadership in underserved communities.

The Bible states, "As a man thinketh in his heart (subconscious mind), so is he" (New King James Version, Proverbs 23:7). The culture and belief system in which a man is shaped determines the destiny of the people in which he leads. This axiological assumption includes the importance of foundational values and principles in positively impacting educational success in underserved communities. I believe that my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, has died for the sins of all. I believe that he created all men in his image and likeness and that his message of love is

the foundation for the equitable treatment of all men.

Researcher's Role

The role of a researcher, through a qualitative phenomenological approach, was to address social inequity and constraints to the educational success of minorities in underserved communities. As a high school student, I attended a private Catholic school designed to prep students for college and equip them with the tools and resource knowledge for collegiate success. In that experience, I learned that decision-makers had autonomy over critical information and how it would be disseminated.

Guidance counselors choose who would qualify for aid in college applications, scholarships, grants, and monies for tuition. Although many poor, underserved minorities qualified for grants, none of us received them due to unethical practices. Life has prepared me as a student to be a catalyst for ethical and social change in education. I have learned the importance of being a man of biblical principles and cultivating and serving their gift in excellence. Understanding the importance of serving leaders in the educational success of minorities and students in underserved communities is essential for long-term success.

Serving leaders are empowered individuals who serve others before themselves and operate with God's purpose to enact social change. In this qualitative phenomenological approach, I operated with integrity in gathering, analyzing, and disseminating information. By utilizing data collection methods such as interviews, field notes, and focus groups, the research impacts social justice in education while safeguarding the participants by giving a transparent and honest depiction of the shared lived experiences of contributors. The site that was utilized has been granted access by the superintendent and Chief Operator of Academics permission.

Procedures

Before data collection could begin, step one was to gain IRB approval (see Appendix A). I submitted a proposal for the study to Liberty University's Institutional Review Board (IRB). This proposal included the permissions, site, setting, methods of data collection, and data analysis. Once IRB approval was obtained, step two comprised of collecting data. Participants were elicited through word of mouth, social media posts, contacts, and personal connections. The recruitment process utilized a criterion method of sampling participants, and consent forms were given to participants for credibility and permission. Step three was the member checking process to ensure trustworthiness and enabled researchers to triangulate data and the active permissions of participants' occurrence of shared events as relevant, credible, and an accurate indication of the intended message.

Data Collection Plan

The most critical aspect of qualitative research inquiry was the rigorous and varied data collection methods. The phenomenological approach explored the influence and individual experiences surrounding the phenomenon or event. The research focused on chronicling the meaning of shared lived experiences by participants (Creswell & Poth, 2018). In this research, the methods used to collect credible and holistic data were interviews, focus groups, field notes, and journaling. Data collection enabled the participants to express themselves and share their voices in a confidential and secure atmosphere. Information dissemination allowed participants to express emotions, passions, and philosophy about the phenomenon (Van Manen, 2016). It was the primary source of knowledge for a credible and realistic illustration of a past event. However, interviews were essential for collecting data in the phenomenological study.

Individual Interviews

The interview was the primary method of collecting information in a qualitative

phenomenological study (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The interview sought to obtain information through oratory responses to verbal inquiries. Using interviewing techniques, researchers gathered data, established credibility, and captured the collective lived experiences for accurate information commentary. The interview process collected viable data through several methods.

With advancements in technology, I utilized a digital iPad to record and transcribe information with the implementation of data transcription software so that information could be reproduced and analyzed accurately. The data transcription software I utilized was Transkriptor. Transkriptor was a speech-to-text app that transcribed interviews, meetings, groups, and video audio to text. The transcription app was used to take meeting notes and dictate interviews. The audio-to-text converter took meeting notes for the researcher. During the interview procedure, interviews were conducted face-to-face and via Zoom for volunteer participants who had health and safety concerns since the pandemic. During the interviewing process, the strategy utilized approximately ten open-ended questions to provoke deeper comprehension of the reverberations and influences of the phenomenon. It allowed the researcher to establish trust and comradery with the participant and observe the contributor in a natural state of engagement. However, the most critical thing was that interviews were conducted, and data was collected in a safe and ethically regarded location agreed upon by the participants and approved by the IRB. Table 1 Individual Interview Questions are in Appendix D.

Table 1

Individual Interview Questions

1. Describe your educational background and career in working in underserved school districts and communities. CQ

2. Describe the challenges of working with minority and multicultural learners with lower socioeconomic status in the classroom. SQ1

3. Describe successful cultural practices when working with minority and multicultural students in the classroom. SQ1

4. What professional development experiences have you had that prepared you to work with English Language Learner students as a teacher? SQ1

5. What professional development experiences have prepared you to implement diversity, equity, and inclusion in the classroom as a teacher? SQ2

6. Describe the teacher/workforce development training in developing diversity, equity, and inclusion practices in your school district. SQ2

7. Describe the challenges when working with principles of diversity and equitable access to resources within the classroom as a teacher or administrator. SQ2

8. Describe successful practices for implementing diversity, equity, and inclusion working with team members in the school districts as a teacher or administrators. SQ2

9. What professional development experiences have you had that prepared you to implement leadership practices with peers and multicultural students as a teacher? SQ2

10. Describe successful practices you use when working with lower socioeconomic status (SES) students in your classes. SQ2

11. What professional development experiences have prepared you to implement diversity, equity, and inclusion practices within the school district as a leader? SQ2

12. What else would you like to add to our discussion of your experiences with diversity, equity, and inclusion in the classroom that we still need to discuss? SQ2

13. What professional development experiences have prepared you to implement transformational leadership skills within the school district as a leader? SQ3

14. Describe the teacher /workforce development training used in developing transformational leadership skills in the school district. SQ3

15. Describe your challenges when working with multicultural students in your classes. SQ3

16. What professional development experiences have you had that prepared you to work with multicultural staff and administrators as a teacher? SQ3

17. What else would you like to add to our discussion of your experiences with Leadership development within the school district that we still need to discuss? SQ3

18. What else would you like to add to our discussion of your experiences with African American and minority students that we have not discussed? SQ3

The interview was the primary method of collecting data in a qualitative phenomenological study (Creswell & Poth, 2018). During the interview process, participants were interviewed face-to-face. The process utilized open-ended research questions so the contributors could give personal testimonies of their shared experiences with the phenomenon. The interview questions were based on the theoretical framework of transformative learning and transformational leadership. Through the interview process, the research explored the constraints and need for a paradigm shift in the educational leadership infrastructure to affect equitable change in underserved communities. Questions one through four focused on building rapport with participants while introducing minority and multicultural topics. Questions five through thirteen focused on the topic of diversity, equity, and inclusion and its practices within the school district. Finally, questions fourteen through eighteen focused on the topics of leadership and workforce development and the opportunities to meet the educational needs of multicultural

students in a minority school district.

The interview process enabled the researchers to answer questions about ways to influence social justice and equitable change within school districts and underserved communities through effective leadership. The questions examined and analyzed teachers' and administrators' training and experiences on diversity, equity, and inclusion when serving minorities in underserved communities. The interview questions also approached the topics of transformational leadership development and diversity in the workforce to meet the needs of minority and low socioeconomic learners in the school district. Before implementing interview questions, Committee members and the Committee Chair reviewed the questions to ensure clarity and viability of formulated questions.

Focus Groups

Focus group was a method of collecting data in this phenomenological study. A focus group is a qualitative data collection method that attracts a small group of volunteer contributors with cooperative exposure to discuss in an unassailable and exclusive setting (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The individuals were chosen by the criterion sampling method and were volunteers who agreed to share their experiences collectively and individually about a specific phenomenon. The focus group participants were gained from the selected interview candidates within the chosen school district. There were five participants in the focus group meeting at the selected site for personal and information protection.

Several methods were used to collect the data during the focus group. In a focus group study, the advancement of technology allowed the collection of information using digital platforms such as iPads and video recorders, which enabled the researcher to observe an individual's emotions, passion, and philosophical beliefs in an exclusive and ethically safe

environment. The focus group encapsulated information through notetaking and by asking a few focus questions while observing cognitive reactions and body language to direct further study on the phenomenon. The researcher captured data and grasped the event's magnitude and effect on social inequity in education through the focus group and analysis of the participants in a naturalistic environment. Table 2 Focus Group Questions are in Appendix E.

Table 2

Focus Group Questions

1. What were the challenges of implementing diversity, equity, and inclusion in a school district with few minority teachers and administrators? RQ1

2. What leadership principles do you believe are essential to be adequate to affect change within the school district? RQ1

3. What does teacher development mean to you as an individual working in Liberty County? RQ1

4. What is your lived experience in meeting the cultural and educational needs of minority students in underserved communities? RQ1

5. Describe the challenges when working with limited resources to meet the educational needs of students in the classroom. RQ1

6. Describe the challenges of being an educator or administrator in an underserved school district. RQ2

7. What thoughts and feelings come to mind when you think about diversity, equity, and inclusion within the school district? RQ2

8. What professional workforce development courses have you had that prepared you to work in a multicultural school district? RQ2

9. Describe successful practices you use when working with diversity, inclusion, and equity values as a teacher. RQ3

10. What influence do leadership diversity and cultural awareness have on student and teacher success within the school district? RQ3

11. What professional leadership experiences have you had that prepared you to work with a multicultural workforce as a teacher or administrator? RQ3

12. Describe your challenges when working with diversity, equity, and inclusion values in your school district. RQ3

The focus group allowed participants to express their emotions and passion about the phenomena in a safe and holistic environment. It was an atmosphere cultivated through transparency and effective communication to influence social justice and equitable educational change through research. The questions selected were formulated to address the need for transformational leadership and a learning and diverse culture to meet the needs of low socioeconomic learners in education. Questions one through five focused on the topic of change and meeting the educational needs of students. Questions six through eight focused on the topic of workforce development and DEI in an underserved school district. Finally, questions nine through twelve focused on the leadership experiences and challenges of implementing diversity, equity, and inclusion as an educator within the school district.

Journal Writing Prompt

The final data collection method that was utilized for collecting data in this qualitative phenomenological research approach was the journal writing prompt. Journal writing prompts added depth to interviews by capturing participants' philosophical beliefs and values during a specific event or phenomenon that the researcher can utilize (Van Manen, 2016). The journal

writing prompt was essential in capturing data within phenomenological research because it enabled the researcher to capture all participants' authentic and real-time emotions in natural settings and categorize the many perspectives gained through note-taking (Van Manen, 2016).

The data collection methods for journal writing prompts were amassed by laptops during the field process and collected by email in a secured laptop. During the data collection process, participants reviewed a writing prompt to create a 300-word response to an experience, feeling, or describing the influence of diversity and ethical principles within primary and secondary school leadership within the school district. The journal writing prompt is located below, and in Appendix F. It was an atmosphere initiated within the participants to cultivate a cultural understanding, trust, and a fully immersed contributor experience impacted by the phenomena (Vagle, 2018).

Table 3

Journal Writing Prompt

Please write in 300 words or more an event you experienced with diversity and ethical principles within primary and secondary school leadership within the school district. Describe your feelings, emotions, and any noticeable impact on the students.

Data Analysis

The Data analysis followed the steps for hermeneutical phenomenology and used the hermeneutical circle by modifying the nature of understanding with a constantly renewed understanding of the phenomenon (Van Manen, 2016). The same analysis steps were utilized for all three data collection methods: interviews, focus groups, and journaling writing prompts. The first step in the analysis process was the epoch, in which all preconceived judgments and beliefs

were set aside. Mitigating preconceived judgments and biases was done through journaling and bracketing my experiences throughout the research process.

After journaling and bracketing to record and revise experiences, biases, and assumptions, the next step was to read and delete irrelevant information. In this process, the purpose was to read the individual interview transcript in its entirety to discern the participant's complete story. Step two consisted of deleting any information that was irrelevant or unnecessary, like repetitive statements or filler linguistics like "um, uh, well," or "you know." To accomplish step two, I printed out each interview transcript, read it, and highlighted the significant words. In the detailed reading approach (Van Manen, 2016), data collected from the interview were analyzed by reading, coding, and transcribing the lived shared experiences of the participants of the phenomena. The data was dissected and examined using thorough transcription of conversations. Transcribing is the word-for-word, written documentation of a recorded conversation or interview. Examining transcripts multiple times allowed the researcher to capture significant phrases and statements relevant to the phenomena studied.

The next step in the hermeneutical method was to create preliminary meaning units or themes while concentrating on the research topic. The preliminary theme was the allocation piece of data that revealed a feature or trait of the phenomenon being investigated. Data analysis took an in-depth examination of all the documents and transcripts. The next step was to develop final meaning units. In this step, preliminary meaning units or themes were broken down into themes, which were informed by the deep understanding of each participant's description through thematic analysis. Thematic analysis refers to the process of recovering structures of meanings that are embodied and dramatized in human experience represented in a text (Van Manen, 2016). Once the identified themes were formulated, the information was validated

through a second interview. These steps enabled the researcher to operate within the designed

purpose, which described the meaning of shared experiences by participants and analyzed and

found patterns and statements of observations that depicted barriers to success and social justice

issues (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

The next step in the data analysis process was situated narratives. The situation narrative

reiterated each contributor's story, where I organized specifics and experiences thematically

under the specific interview questions. The meaning of each participant's experience was

highlighted thematically through direct interview quotes. The next step in the data analysis

process was general narratives. I created general narratives from the situated narratives, unifying

participants' accounts into a general description of all the participants' narratives. The goal was

to organize the data from the situated narratives while highlighting all the participants' meanings

of their experiences. Analyzing collected information from the interview through recording

/coding and accurately transcribing the conversation enabled the formulation of meaning and the

effect of phenomena on the contributors and underserved students in the affected school districts.

The final step of the analysis was the general description, which moved themes away

from the participant's everyday perspectives. The aim was to discuss the themes that were

implicit in all or most of the participants' descriptions of their experiences. The goal was to unite

the major phenomenological themes into a cohesive general description. Interviews were

transcribed for clarity, real-time feedback, and a viable data perspective. In the data analysis

process, a hermeneutical circle was utilized to modify the nature of understanding by constantly

renewed understanding of the phenomenon. When finalized, each participant evaluated and

scrutinized the data for accuracy, context, and transparency (Van Manen, 2016). The data

analysis was not done through qualitative data analysis software. Rather, it was done through the

researcher linking responses to appropriate research questions and literature describing the phenomenon through these means. The data was critically examined by participants reviewing, reading, and listening to interviews by giving real context to their captured information. The participant, committee member, and researcher review technique gave data transparency and trustworthiness.

Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness in qualitative phenomenological research is the process of developing a study that has, through various procedures, created data reliability and credibility. It is a tool that fosters engagement and collaboration to enable confidence in the data collected within the study. The study revealed the methods explored to achieve the trustworthiness of the research and validate the participants' shared lived experiences. The three techniques used in this phenomenological research to achieve trustworthiness and minimize faulty conclusions were credibility, dependability, and transferability (Stahl & King, 2020).

Credibility

Credibility refers to the confidence in the reality or truth of the finding. Credibility helps ensure that the researcher's data representation accurately reflects the participant's views. The first method used to ensure credibility was data triangulation, using numerous sources of information and methods of data collection (interviews, focus groups, and journaling) to provide corroborating evidence. The different findings created a broader and deeper understanding of the phenomenon. Another method for increasing credibility was member checks. In this method, transcripts were reviewed by participants who provided the information for accuracy. In member checking, participants were expected to review the interpretation of their experience to determine if the data accurately depicted their responses to interview questions and agreed that the

conclusions were credible (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

The last method of credibility employed was the explanation of researcher bias and detailed descriptions. Journaling, data analysis protocol, and field notes revealed personal biases and preferences. Detailed descriptions provided a detailed account of the participant's experiences where patterns and themes were contextualized. Context was essential in rich descriptions showing the complexity of the lived world of the participants. Phenomenological studies should always end with a discovery to be credible. Authentic validation was paramount to the credibility of the research because the study's trustworthiness brought the participants' holistic points of view and shared lived experiences from an unfiltered perspective.

Transferability

Transferability highlights that the findings may have applicability in other contexts (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), primarily achieved through thick descriptions when describing research findings (Geertz, 2008). Transferability refers to the ability for findings from the context of the study to be applied to another context or may be generalized to other studies, sites, or participants at another time (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). It was essential to acknowledge that the researcher could only create the conditions for transferability but could not assure transferability. The reader could only make this judgment of the research. Also, I inspected for variation in the participants themselves in terms of age, background, and educational leadership positions.

Dependability

Dependability illustrates that the findings are consistent and could be repeated (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), which can be demonstrated through a practical description of the procedures undertaken for the study. Dependability in the qualitative study focused on the research study process and ensured that the process was logical and consistent and that the information was

reliable (Janis, 2022). Dependability was accomplished through an inquiry audit and a thorough review of the research process and the research products by the dissertation committee and the Qualitative Research Director.

Ethical Considerations

The ethical considerations aim to safeguard all participants' professional and personal well-being. Data collection and analysis must be ethical in all aspects to avoid the misuse or mistreatment of the participants. With permission from the Liberty University Institution Review Board (IRB) and ethical considerations of participant protection, conducting research was an ethical process.

Permissions

Conducting research was an ethical process. Before the commencement of data collection, permission was needed from the Liberty University Institutional Review Board (IRB). Permission was also obtained from the institution. IRB has been formally designated to monitor and review research involving human subjects. Also needed were the request letters with the consent from site gatekeepers and consent forms from the participants understanding their rights and full disclosure of the ethical considerations taken in conducting the study.

The permission letters were submitted with the proposal when it was ready for the mentor to conduct a formal review. Next, the procedure was to submit interview questions for review to ensure transparency, clear purpose, and objective in conducting the process. Eighteen open-ended questions were formulated to invoke thought, passion, and emotion and to engage participants who share their lived experiences with the phenomena accurately and without restriction. I included a copy of the IRB approval in the Appendix. Participants comprehended and signed the consent form prior to participating in the research data collection. Upon receipt of

approval and consent forms, data collection commenced.

Other Participant Protection

One of the ethical considerations in participation protection in phenomenological research was the location. It was purposeful to gather at a location where every participant felt safe and had a sense of privacy and respect for their lived experiences. Each participant was given pseudonyms to divulge their personal stories and experiences to ensure equitable treatment (Van Manen, 2016). This research study maintained high standards and respected the volunteer rights of the participants to withdraw at any time.

For ethical considerations of transparency, issues were addressed by allowing each participant to review their information for clarity and context (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Another ethical consideration was the potential for conflict of interest. Also, the researcher asked members for permission and informed consent to transcribe information so that data was not lost and the context was transparent. Data protection was managed using a secure location to safeguard and protect data and materials. Using InfoSec and CompuSec protocols, data security was maintained by having two-way authentication, which was password and encryption key protected, and during the qualitative research. The researcher was the only person with access to the data and research information. With computer programming software and encrypted databases, intellectual property and personal information were secured, and ethical privacy standards were met (Mauthner, 2019). The names of the participants and the specific locations were shared or published, and the data was password-encrypted and protected.

Summary

Chapter Three provides an overview of the methods utilized to conduct the research study. Data collected through a hermeneutical phenomenological approach was the most critical aspect

of the research because it was where data was collected, analyzed, and validated, and questions specific to the research were answered. This qualitative hermeneutic phenomenological study was conducted using interviews, observations, and focus groups to investigate the central research question: What are the perceived affects of diversity and ethical principles on teachers, administrators, and classified licensed professionals within minority school districts? The phenomena were defined and organized into categories during the research process to learn and discern. The research was obtained from credible and trustworthy subjects using dependable and ethical research methods. This study eliminated bias from the researcher and the discussions.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

Overview

The purpose of this hermeneutical phenomenological study was to understand the experiences of diversity and ethical principles in educational leadership for teachers, administrators, and classified licensed professionals within minority school districts. Chapter Four presents the results of the data analysis of the participants' experience of the affect of diversity and ethical principles on the success of minority students in underserved school districts. The data collection methods were formal interviews, a focus group, and writing prompts. This Chapter begins with a brief description of the eleven participants. Participants were initially recruited through criterion sampling and then snowball sampling. Data from the participants were collected via the completion of formal interviews, focus groups, and writing prompts. Data analysis occurred through transcribing and coding emerging keywords, with codes becoming themes using van Manen's (2016) hermeneutical phenomenological circle. Three themes were identified from data analysis: (a) The need for transformational leadership, (b) the impact of diversity, and (c) the lack of workforce development. Participants describe the perceived affects of diversity and ethical principles as the foundation for a learning and diverse culture created by transformational leaders that model behavior for organizational success in minority school districts. Chapter Four briefly describes the participants and presents the data in narrative form with themes and tables, followed by a thematic continuity of the research questions.

Participants

The study's participants were all educators and administrators and classified licensed professionals with five years or more experience in primary or secondary schools in an

underserved minority school district. The participants ranged in age from 30 to 79 years. All eleven participants completed graduate-level degrees and graduated with degrees in education. Four of the eleven participants completed Doctor of Education (Ed.D.) degrees, while one participant completed a Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) degree in theology, and three participants have completed an Educational Specialist (Ed.S.) degree in educational leadership. All eleven participants held previous or current employment in the field of education in multiple underserved school districts. Participants were given pseudonyms, which are described in the following sections.

Allison

Allison is a seasoned educator, age 50-59, and holds a Bachelor of Science in Health and Physical Education. Unique achievements mark her journey in education. After a successful tenure in K thru 12 teaching, she furthered her education with a Master of Science in Educational Leadership. Her career in the education sector spans over 30 years, during which she served as an assistant principal for a decade and later as a principal, showcasing her unwavering commitment to educational leadership.

Benjamin

Benjamin is a married man aged 60-69 with a Bachelor of Arts degree in political science. He began his teaching career in K thru 12 in an underserved school district. After eight years, Benjamin furthered his education with a Master of Arts degree in educational leadership and began his administrative journey as an assistant principal for six years. His relentless pursuit of knowledge and professional growth led him to complete his Education Specialist (Ed.S.) degree and become a principal in an underserved school district. Benjamin's career path, from classroom teacher to special education supervisor, assistant principal, principal, and finally headmaster at

an alternative school, is a testament to his dedication and the endless possibilities for growth in the education sector. He has served in the school system for 34 years and continues to mentor new administrators in the school district.

Calvin

Calvin is 70-79 years old and has a Bachelor of Arts in Mathematics. He is married, has taught K thru 12 in multiple school districts, and received a Master of Science degree in Computer Science. His unwavering passion for education led him to dedicate his career to teaching in underserved school districts for over 35 years. He has significantly impacted countless students' lives as he continues to tutor them in mathematics.

Christian

Christian is aged 40-49, has a bachelor's degree in political science, is married, and started his career in K thru 12. He taught special education and United States History for six years, and his dedication to learning led him to receive a Master of Art in Education teaching History and a Doctoral degree in Education (Ed.D.). With his advanced degrees, he ascended to the principal role and excelled in the school system for 18 years. His commitment to educational leadership and his diverse qualifications are a testament to his ability to lead and inspire others in the field of education.

David

David is a seasoned educator aged 50-59 and holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Early Childhood Education. After teaching K thru 12, he pursued a Master of Arts degree in education administration and later earned a specialist degree in educational leadership. With his advanced degrees, David became an assistant principal and then a principal; after over 20 years as a teacher and lower-level administrator, he earned his doctoral degree in educational leadership

(Ed.D.). Finally, he became a school district superintendent and worked for the school system for over 30 years.

Jacob

Jacob is a seasoned administrator aged 70-79, with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Education, married, and started his career in K thru 12. He pursued a Master of Arts degree in educational leaders/administration and worked as a principal and then a Deputy superintendent. Later, he got accepted into a doctorate program. After completing his Doctoral degree in educational leadership (Ed.D.), he became a superintendent with over thirty-five years of teaching and administrative experience in underserved school districts. Currently, Jacob mentors assistant principals and principals in the school system.

Jennifer

Jennifer is 50-59, holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in mathematics, is married, and began a career teaching K thru 12 in an underserved school district. She began her career as a longtime substitute teacher and volunteer. Once a position was available, she became a Title One math teacher serving in lower-level tier school districts. She continued teaching mathematics at the elementary and high school levels and has worked in the school system for over 34 years.

Lawrence

Lawrence, who is 60-69, received a Bachelor of Science degree in Biology, married, and began a career teaching K thru 12 in an underserved school district. After eight years, he pursued his Master of Arts degree in Education and worked as a principal. Later, he earned an Education Specialist (Ed.S.) degree in curriculum and school supervision. He became a superintendent in an underserved school district and worked for the school system for over 35 years.

Louise

Louise is single, age 40-49; she holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in early childhood and elementary education. She began her career in K thru 12, teaching in a Title One school. After a few years, she pursued her Master of Arts degree in Mathematics. During her educational career, she was nominated and won the prestigious National Teacher of the Year award, which honors exemplary educators in the United States. After 20 years of service, Louise continues to positively impact the educational school system by teaching theatre and arts in an underserved school district.

Sheryl

Sheryl is a seasoned educator, age 70-79, with a Bachelor of Arts degree in English. She began her career in K thru 12, teaching in an underserved school district. Sheryl received her Master of Arts degree in education. She began teaching journalism and English at the high school level. After 30 years, she pursued and acquired her Doctoral (Ph.D.) degree in Theology. She has taught for 40 years in the school system, both at the high school and collegiate levels.

Theodore

Theodore is an educator and counselor, age 50-59, with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Communicative Arts, and began teaching career in K thru 12 in underserved school districts. After a few years, he returned to school and pursued his Master of Arts Degree in Education school counseling. He then acquired his Education Specialist degree in counseling education and school counseling. From there, Theodore began his education journey as a school counselor intern, and then he completed his Doctoral Education degree (Ed.D.) in educational administration/higher education. Theodore has been teaching and counseling in the educational

school system for over twenty-seven years, where he has worked as a paraprofessional, teacher, and counselor in underserved school districts.

Table 4

Educator Participants

Educator Participant	Years in Education	Highest Degree Earned	Teacher/Administrator	Certified/Classified
Allison	30	M.A.	K-12/Principal	Certified
Benjamin	34	Ed.S.	K-12/Principal	Certified
Calvin	35	M.S.	K-12	Certified
Christian	18	Ed.D.	K-12/Principal	Certified
David	30	Ed.D.	K-12/Superintendent	Certified
Jacob	36	Ed.D.	K-12/Superintendent	Certified
Jennifer	34	B.A.	K-12	Certified
Lawrence	35	Ed.S.	K-12/Superintendent	Certified
Louise	20	M.A.	K-12	Certified
Sheryl	40	Ph.D.	K-12	Certified
Theodore	27	Ed.D.	K-12/Ed. Counselor	Certified/Classified

Results

The purpose of this hermeneutical phenomenological study was to understand the experiences of diversity and ethical principles in educational leadership for teachers, administrators, and classified licensed professionals within minority school districts. The study's data collection methods were individual interviews, a focus group meeting, and participant

writing prompts in the form of a lived experience description. Using Van Manen's (2016) hermeneutic circle, I conscientiously analyzed each participant's responses. Participants provided profound, rich, and wise descriptions of their experiences, enabling several themes and subthemes to transpire from the data collection. A total of three themes, six subthemes, and one outlier were procured from the analysis of the data collection.

Need for Transformational Leadership

The need for transformational leadership was the first theme that developed from data analysis. The theme was derived from participants' experiences related to the effect of diversity and ethical principles on learners in underserved school districts. The codes "ethical principles" and "fostering collaboration" were clustered to form the theme of the need for transformational leadership. These codes appeared 147 times in participant interview transcripts, the focus group transcript, and writing prompts. Jennifer captured the experiences of the participants when she stated, "We need leaders who care, leaders who are there for the real reason for the real work to want to help children." All eleven participants, including Allison, Benjamin, Calvin, Christian, David, Jacob, Jennifer, Lawrence, Louise, Sheryl, and Theodore, described " transformational leadership" as the foundation for meeting the needs of students and teachers in underserved school districts. Lawrence stated, "You need leadership to set expectations and then inspect those expectations." Louise declared, "Leaders need to see other leaders in action."

These eleven participants delved into the idealogy "It is the leaders" that set the foundation of a culture in a school system. Lawrence shared that in a minority and underserved school district, "you need leadership to set expectations, and then you inspect those expectations." Benjamin shared similar sentiments when asked about the successful practices when working with minority and multicultural learners: Benjamin stated, "As a school leader,

you must create a vision, and this vision is called a mission statement." Calvin indicated "that he believed that leadership sets the culture within a school district. Whether it was minority lower socioeconomic students, diversity practices, or workforce development issues, participants had the same foundational beliefs." Allison shared that to effect real change, "You have to be a transformational leader; you must have leadership skills that include everyone." Jacob suggested how it was not just about the leader but the principles in which they demonstrated impacted success within a school district. Jacob stated, "I believe it is my job to teach my assistant to become an effective leader by observing what I do and how I do it. I must set an example as the leader." Allison said, "Leaders have to be transformational, and that is very important for change,"

Ethical Principles

The subtheme that contributed to the understanding of diversity in the implementation of culturally related curriculum was ethical principles. Ethical principles act as the foundation and backbone of organizations. During the focus group, Benjamin said, "It is important that the principal has to show ethical behaviors through his actions." Jennifer stated, "We should allow our morals and values to prevail and treat all children fairly." still, consistency influences behaviors and raises standards so that every team member has reachable goals and comprehends their responsibilities. The codes of modeling behavior, empathy, and challenging the process were clustered to create the subtheme of ethical principles. In total, these codes appeared 73 times in participant interview transcripts, focus group interviews, and journal writing prompts. Many participants recognized that the principles that the leader exhibits through behavior make the role of a leader essential for student success in underserved school districts. David stated, "I think it is important as the leader on that educational journey to show themselves to be on the

same journey by modeling behavior regardless of where they are. I think you permit others to do the same." Other participants believed that modeled behavior set the standard of expectation in creating a culture for student and educator success. Jacob declared, "It is my job to teach my assistants to become an effective leader by observing what and how I do." Sheryl stated, "Students do not care how much you know until they know you care." Lousie concurred, stating, "If a teacher does not care, then the child will never experience a representation of themselves in our classroom."

Jennifer also described the experiences of demonstrating compassion and its impact on students, stating, "So, you have to find out what really works, not only for the children but for yourself too, so that you will be able to capture and keep the child's attention." The concept of transformational leadership and principles was further developed in these participants, as many of them experienced significant leadership influence either as primary and secondary educators, administrators, or both. The influences included principles of empathy, compassion, and high values. The Focus Group participants and Louise both experienced empathy and the impact of high values in serving underserved learners in the classroom. Sheryl stated, "Instilling in them the feeling of hope is most important. Letting them know that if somebody else can do something, I can do it too." Allison declared, "I think people are so busy trying to give our children and our teachers discipline that they fail to give them guidance." They both shared that they were motivated by a sense of duty and love for the children they began to call their own. Jennifer stated, "All I can tell you is that you just love them." The focused group highlighted:

> We must allow our morals and values to prevail and treat children fairly. It does not matter where they come from or what they look like; just be fair, and whatever it takes to help them meet their goals, you must be willing to love them.

In highlighting the compassion needed to impact lower socioeconomic status minority children in underserved school districts, Louise stated, "If a teacher does not care, then a child will never experience a representation of themselves in our classrooms." Other participants, including Christian and Theodore, both speak about the need for leaders to implement principles and philosophies that address the total needs of the students to change the culture of underserved school districts. Christian suggested, "As a leader, we have to shift paradigms to provide the necessary services and the right combinations to not only teach students on grade level but also to fill in those gaps that should have laid the foundation to a prosperous life." Also, Theodore stated, "we must address not only the academic needs but also the social, emotional, and cultural needs of those students."

All participants in this study suggested that a leader's ethical principles set the foundational infrastructure needed to address the educational needs of minority students. David states, "A leader must be courageous enough to have his top teachers educate his most vulnerable students." Also, Jacob declared, "You must have honest and caring teachers working with poor children. Then you will see a big change in how well they do." During the focus group, Benjamin said, "Leaders must have an ethical belief system of equity."

Fostering Collaboration

Another leadership factor that contributed to the understanding of diversity and ethical principles in leadership was the subtheme of fostering collaboration. The subtheme occurred 74 times in the codes of building relationships, teacher/parent engagement, and parental involvement. According to the participants, "building relationships" was essential to minority student success in underserved school districts. Christian stated, "As teachers, we would meet

and talk about how to benefit kids and what worked with the children." During the focus group, Allison said, "The most important leadership principle is building relationships."

Ten of the eleven participants stated that fostering collaboration was a significant challenge in the educational success of minority and multicultural learners in underserved school districts. Calvin declared, "Without parents and administrators collaboration, it was nearly impossible to adequately serve the students." Allison stated, "The challenge is getting parental involvement." Jacob also described the best process for creating a learning and diverse culture: "First develop a relationship with the parents, your students and then work with your teachers." David agreed, stating, "Teachers must really build on cultural elements and create a classroom structure in which students can thrive."

Theodore indicated that he understood the challenges and importance of building relationships. He stated, "The challenge I faced was getting them to trust me so that we could develop a good working relationship." However, Louise and Benjamin believed that in lower socioeconomic households, many of the barriers to success are lack of parent /teacher engagement due to household financial responsibilities. Louise stated, "A challenge is that parental involvement was not always great, but the more engaged the parents are with their children's academic success, the more it shows in the classroom." Also, Benjamin stated, "Through building relationships, we not only address the academic needs but also the social, emotional, and cultural needs of those students." According to the focus group participants, fostering collaboration enables the building and development of teacher and student relationships. David said during the focus group:

Relationship building is a way to bring about change or at least to understand that we are all different yet have many similarities and commonalities to help teachers understand

that building a relationship with the students that you are educating is the way to be
successful in the classroom.

Calvin stated, "I always try to establish a relationship with all my students because once you
form that relationship, you can connect."

The Impact of Diversity

The second theme that emerged was the impact of diversity. The theme was derived from
participants' experiences related to the effect of diversity and ethical principles on learners in
underserved school districts. The participants expressed differences in absence in educational
leadership and school districts regarding diversity. The codes "diversity of workforce" and
"Inequitable access to resources" were clustered to form the theme of the impact of diversity. In
total, these codes appeared 153 times in participant interview transcripts, the focus group
transcript, and writing prompts.

All eleven participants noted that "diversity in leadership and a culturally flexible
pedagogy" is essential for the success of minorities and multicultural learners in underserved
communities. David states, "So, we must be more intentional in our curriculum offerings in the
professional development space." Jacob shared, "Diversity enables a culture of belonging, which
infers that an equitable structure is in place and functions to make all students feel welcome, no
matter their differences." Jennifer declared, "Effective teachers meet children where they are
regardless of ethnicity, socioeconomic status, or educational aptitude and treat all children
fairly." The challenge stated by most of the participants was the removal of implicit bias and
stereotypical perceptions. Theodore stated, "It is my responsibility to learn the cultural norms of
the students that I was working with." Calvin affirmed, "When there was no diversity
infrastructure in place, the prejudice was horrible because of racial bias."

Participants addressed the possibility of systemic racism. Sheryl and Lawrence saw these implicit biases as a legacy problem cultivated by a racial infrastructure impacted by socioeconomic status. Sheryl states, "In the education culture predominantly in this area, it is hard to deal with racism because of the way that some people are reared," Also, Lawrence stated, "The most arduous challenge was built-in biases within the student body and faculty." Participants noted the components that impact diversity in an underserved school district: negative perceptions of minority learners in underserved school districts, inequitable access to resources, and lack of diversity in educational leadership. Jacob shared, "Educators must teach each student individually; you cannot have a prejudicial mindset that minority or multicultural students cannot learn." During the focus group, Lawerence declared, "When there is no diversity, then everybody is harmed by the experience."

Diversity of Workforce

Diversity of the workforce emerged as a subtheme as all participants mentioned the significance of understanding the impact of diversity needed for minority student success. The subtheme centers around the impact of diversity within the school districts. The codes of "lack of minority educators," "the culture of belonging," and "Implicit biases" were clustered to form the theme of diversity in the workforce. In total, these codes appeared over 87 times in participant interview transcripts, focus group interviews, and journal writing prompts. Ten of the eleven participants have experienced the impact of diversity within the school district. Theodore stated, "The majority of the students and faculty that I worked with were not accustomed to dealing with or had not experienced prior to me, a black man." During the focus group, David stated, "Diversity is not considered necessary or anything that school leaders feel the need to work towards changing,"

Most participants spoke of the importance of needing more minority educators in underserved school districts to impact the social cognitive behaviors of learners. David and Lawrence believed that diversity in the classroom leadership would positively impact student learners in underserved school districts., David states, "One of the biggest challenges I have seen working with multicultural students in the classroom space is our inability to pit models and mental models in front of them." Also, Jacob stated, "You have to have somebody who has the right mindset as it relates to what you are looking for as far as diversity in the classroom."

Participants noted that diversity in the workforce mitigates the ability to communicate effectively if there is ever a language barrier. Allison stated, "The challenge in educating multicultural students was getting interpreters to the school relatively quickly." Also, Louise reiterated, "Sometimes the language barrier is a factor, and you do not always have an interpreter." A few of the participants acknowledged that diversity is essential but not more important than competency. Jacob shared, "I wanted a diverse faculty. However, more importantly, I wanted education teachers who are competent at their job and love children." However, the majority consensus among the participants was the need for more diversity in the classroom. Benjamin and Calvin passionately spoke of these subthemes as a component of the educational success of minority and cultural learners. Benjamin stated, "There are not enough diversity teachers in the classroom in underserved school districts." Also, Calvin stated, "I would love to see more minorities enter the educational field, especially young minority men." Lawrence stated, "Diversity would give the students a personal model. However, every black teacher is not a model for every black student."

Inequitable access to resources

Inequitable access to resources emerged as a subtheme as participants specified diversity as a component of minority student success. The codes "lack of DEI in the classroom," "the culture of inclusion," and "limited resources" were clustered to create the subtheme of Inequitable access to resources. In total, these codes appeared 63 times in participant interview transcripts, focus group interviews, and journal writing prompts. Ten of the 11 participants acknowledged that access to resources has been vital to mitigating educational success in underserved school districts. During the focus group, Benjamin said, "The greatest challenge to meet the educational needs of students is money, and that money is always the end game." Also, Louise declared, "There needs to be resources out there to be able to teach effectively to different cultures." Jacob explained, "You have to provide all of the resources in an equitable way and not just for my white teachers or my male teachers."

However, participants noted that the distribution of resources depends on the socioeconomic status of the school's demographics. Lawrence stated, "The school's difficulty was that they had limited resources in the school districts of students of lower socioeconomic status." Theodore and Allison highlighted that the inequitable access to resources is not just about money but also about materials and equipment. Theodore stated, "I found that there were very few sources, and when I say resources, I am talking about financial resources as well as equipment and technology." Christopher stated, "Most administrators have and use legacy relationship bonds to provide resources within school districts." During the focus group, Lawrence declared, "When there is a lot of money, the underserved get less of the money."

Lack of Workforce Development and Training

The lack of workforce development and training was the final theme that emerged from data analysis. The theme was derived from participants' experiences related to the effect of

diversity and ethical principles on learners in underserved school districts. The codes "need for diversity, equity, and inclusion training" and "need for transformational leadership training" were clustered to form the theme of the lack of workforce development and training. These codes appeared 100 times in participant interview transcripts, the focus group transcript, and writing prompts. All eleven participants discussed the lack of workforce development and training as a challenge leadership faced in implementing the strategies and resources required to aid students' educational success. Allison stated, "There has been no diversity or transformational leadership training." The participants acknowledged that leadership training was lacking for teachers and administrators in underserved school districts and nonexistent for diversity, equity, and inclusion practices training within the school system. David declared, "When it comes to developing transformational leadership skills in the school districts, it does not exist." Jennifer stated, "Regarding continued education, due to budget restrictions and lack of tuition assistance, educators have lost interest in the academies or the extra training." Also, Calvin stated, "to positively impact minority and multicultural students, I hope we can get more teacher development into these lower schools in underserved school districts."

Participants expressed a skeptical sentiment about the effectiveness of workforce development training in meeting the educational needs of minority and multicultural learners. David stated, "There seems to be much investment in leadership development to still predict by area code which students will succeed and which ones will not. That tells me the initiative is not paying off equitably for all children." During the focus group, Lawrence stated, "As a leader, you need staff development and to try and maximize everyone's potential."Also, Jacob stated, "As an administrator, if you are not providing the resources to all of your teachers, you better provide professional development."

Need for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion training.

The subtheme of the need for diversity, equity, and inclusion training in the participants' lived experiences significantly impacted leadership's ability to implement the strategies and resources required to aid student educational success. The codes "lack of DEI training," "educator diversity," and "professional development in DEI" were clustered to create the subtheme, the Need for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. These codes appeared forty-eight times in participant interview transcripts, focus group interviews, and journal writing prompts. Allison stated, "There has been no teacher/workforce development training in DEI in the school." Louise declared, "It is hard for me to answer some of these questions because the training is lacking due to our environment, which is still very segregated."

Ten of the 11 participants stated that the need for diversity, equity, and inclusion principles was a significant challenge in implementing the strategies and resources required to aid minority and multicultural students' educational success. Jennifer stated, "There was no teacher/workforce development training in Diversity, equity, and inclusion practices within the school districts, and some people just do not want to understand children of different ethnicities." Also, Benjamin stated, "There is no teacher/workforce development training in diversity, equity, and training practices in the school district." Lawrence declared, "There was no training on DEI specifically but a workshop on understanding poverty. Children are in poverty regardless of race."

Every participant uttered the same sentiment regarding the availability of diversity, equity, and inclusion practices training within the school districts. During the focus group, Benjamin said, "There was no workforce development to prepare educators to work in a multicultural school district besides on-the-job training." Calvin declared, "There was no

diversity training in the school district and no resources or diversity infrastructure." Louise stated," Diversity, equity, and inclusion is definitely something I wish was embedded more in the curriculum." Theodore said, "I received all the training for diversity or multicultural students during my graduate-level studies."

Need for Transformational Leadership Training

The subtheme, the need for transformational leadership training, was acknowledged by participants as a significant component impacting a leader's ability to implement the strategies and resources required to aid minority students' educational success. The codes "leadership training," "the need for transformational principles," and "the lack of teacher development" were clustered to create the subtheme of the need for transformational leadership training. In total, these codes appeared fifty-two times in participant interview transcripts, the focus group interview transcript, and journal writing prompts. Sheryl stated," Many of the leadership practices I have come from personal experiences, not from a book or class." Lawrence asserted, "Leadership training programs are only available to senior-level administrators when it comes to leadership in the school district."

All eleven participants, including Allison, Benjamin, Calvin, Christian, David, Jacob, Jennifer, Lawrence, Louise, Sheryl, and Theodore, noted that "it is the leaders" that are the foundation of a culture in a school system. David articulated, "Transformational leadership training is essential for creating a culture where all children are equitably served, and their needs are met." During the focus group, Benjamin stated, "Teacher development gives educators new knowledge, teaches them new skills, and embraces their needs." However, David stated, "I do not know anything the school administrators are doing to bring to the schoolhouse door transformational leadership skills to teachers and staff."

All the participants acknowledge that no teacher /workforce development training exists in the school district of underserved and lower socioeconomic status students due to inequitable access to resources. Theodore stated, "There was a lack of teacher/workforce training in the school district, but as an administrator, you could purchase your leadership course." The participants acknowledged the need for leadership training, but school districts are not giving it to all employees. Lawrence, a seasoned administrator, stated, "The leadership programs only apply to senior-level administrators when it comes to workforce development training in the school district." Jennifer stated, "Unfortunately, I have not had the training where they train specific teachers." Also, Louise, an exemplary teacher who has been a National Teacher of the Year Award recipient, stated, "It is hard for me to answer some of these questions without emotion because the training is lacking due to our environment, which is still very segregated."

Outlier Data and Findings

Throughout data collection and analysis, an outlier finding diverged from the research questions and stood out apart from the emerging salient themes. This finding was unique not only from a contextual point of view but also from the understanding of the challenges described in the perspective of educating and equitable access to resources for minority and multicultural students in underserved school districts. This finding provided a unique and unforeseen element in the research.

It is all about the Money

It is all about the money that emerges as an outlier theme based on participants acknowledging the challenges of working with minority and multicultural learners and limited resources. The outlier theme occurred 42 times in the codes "limited resources" and "no money." During the focus group, Benjamin stated, "We must address not only the academic

needs but also the social, emotional, and cultural needs of those students." However, when it came to resources, the participants suggested that resources seemed to be about the capacity of the school district to provide the basic needs of books, technology, facilities, and excellent teachers. Louise stated, "There needs to be resources out there to be able to teach effectively to different people."Benjamin and Lawrence offered insight to the group, and the participants agreed, " It is about money, money, money, and money." Lawrence stated:

Diversity is a financial thing. Diversity does not show up in the color of your skin; it shows up in the form of financial resources. It is a resource-based problem and not a cultural one. If you have much money, all of your habits would be indicative of other wealthy people, no matter their race.

Unfortunately, the participants who acknowledge working in underserved school districts are limited in their capacity to adequately meet the needs of students of lower socioeconomic status in a school system with limited resources. Louise stated, "It is those resources we lack that I feel like my kids are not getting everything that they need." During the focus group, Benjamin declared, "Without money, you end up with marginal teachers in underserved schools."

Research Question Responses

The purpose of this hermeneutical phenomenological study was to understand the experiences of diversity and ethical principles in educational leadership for teachers, administrators, and classified licensed professionals within minority school districts. The research questions shaping the study were focused on the lived experience of diversity and ethical principles in educational leaders. Predicated on data provided by participants through individual interviews, a focus group, and journal writing prompts, three major themes were identified: The need for transformational leadership, the Impact of diversity, and the lack of

workforce development. The relationship between the research questions and corresponding

themes featured in Table 5 and Appendix G is discussed in the narrative.

Table 5

Research Questions and Themes Alignment

Research Question	Theme
Central Research Question	The Need for Transformational Leadership
Central Research Question	Lack of Workforce Development
Sub-Research Question 1	The Need for Transformational Leadership
Sub-Research Question 2	The Impact of Diversity
Sub-Research Question 3	The Impact of Diversity
Sub-Research Question 3	Lack of Workforce and Development training

Central Research Question

The Central Research Questions asked, "What are the perceived affects of diversity and

ethical principles on teachers, administrators, and classified licensed professionals within

minority school districts?" Participants describe the perceived affects of diversity and ethical

principles as the foundation for a learning and diverse culture created by transformational leaders

that model behavior for organizational success in minority school districts. Lawrence stated, "As

leaders, we teach through modeled behavior. What I say, what I do, and how I behave impacts

how things go in the classroom." All the Participants acknowledged the need for

transformational leadership and their impact on student success. Benjamin stated, "As a leader, I

needed to be a supporter, a servant, and a provider of resources." Loise declared in her interview,

"It has been difficult for me to engage with multicultural students because the training is lacking, and we are limited by the policies in an environment that is still segregated." During the focus group, David said, "Teacher development gives educators new knowledge, teaches them new skills, and embraces their needs."

Sub-Question One

The sub-question asked, "What are the lived experiences of educational administrators and teachers in a school system without leadership support in implementing a culturally related curriculum?" The Need for Transformational Leadership theme primarily addresses this question, along with its two subthemes focusing on (1) Ethical principles and (2) fostering collaboration are the answers to sub-question one. Participants recognized that transformational leaders cultivate a learning and diverse culture by modeling behavior. Jacob stated, "As a leader, it is my responsibility to set expectations by setting the example and mentoring my principals for student success." Participants agreed that transformational leaders can help implement a diverse curriculum by having a shared vision and purpose. Benjamin stated, "As a school leader, you must create a vision that encourages, connects, and accepts all students the way they are, who they are, and where they are, and educating them at that level requires a diversified program." David states, "I think it is important as the leader on that educational journey to create an atmosphere of camaraderie by modeling behavior regardless of where they are. I think you permit others to do the same."

Sub-Question Two

The Sub-Question asked, "What components within underserved school districts impact diversity and ethical principles needed for minority student success?" The impact of diversity as a theme addressed this question through its two subthemes: (1) diversity of the workforce and (2)

inequitable access to resources as an answer to sub-question two. Participants acknowledged that diversity, when embraced, fosters a culture of inclusivity, ensures equitable access to resources, and enables innovative and creative thinking by leveraging the many cultures and demographics within an organization. David shared, "The greatest hindrance to educational success is the inability to allow minority students to see themselves in our teachers and our curriculum." Jacob stated, "You have to have somebody who has the right ethical principles as it relates to what you are looking for as far as diversity and resources." Also, Lousie stated, without diversity, the language barrier becomes a factor, and you do not always have an interpreter."

Participants noted that prevalent were the negative perceptions of minority learners, inequitable access to resources, and the lack of diversity in educational leadership. Lawrence stated, "The most arduous challenge was built-in biases with the student body and faculty." During the focus group, Benjamin declared, "If you are not the school system superintendent, you are limited in what you can do when it comes to diversity and inclusion." However, Calvin stated, The successful practice with minority students with lower socioeconomic status is having a relationship with them to meet their needs."

Sub-Question Three

The Sub-Question asked, "What are the challenges administrators and educators face with leadership in implementing strategies and resources required to aid minority students' educational success?" The lack of workforce development and training as a theme addresses this sub-question along with the two sub-themes of (1) the Need for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion training and (2) the Need for Transformational leadership training. The participants acknowledged that leadership training was lacking for teachers and administrators in underserved school districts and nonexistent for diversity, equity, and inclusion practices training

within the school system. Calvin declared, "It is my hope that we can get more teacher diversity and leadership development into underserved schools and underserved school districts." David stated, "The best schools attract the best and most qualified educators." Educators articulated that transformational leadership and DEI training is essential for creating a culture where all children are equitably served, and their educational needs are met. Christopher stated, " Teacher development gives educators new knowledge, teaches them new skills, and embraces their needs." Lousie stated, "I have had literally one training session about diversity and ethics at the beginning of the school year, and that was it.

Summary

The purpose of this hermeneutical phenomenological study was to understand the experiences of diversity and ethical principles in educational leadership for teachers, administrators, and classified licensed professionals within minority school districts. Chapter Four provides an overview and description of the research participants and briefly details the data analysis results. For this study, a qualitative hermeneutical phenomenological approach was used, and data was collected through interviews, a focus group, and journal writing prompts from eleven educator and administrator participants. Utilizing Van Manen's (2016) hermeneutical circle, three predominant themes emerged from the data: the need for transformational leadership, the impact of diversity, and the lack of workforce development training. These themes were aligned with the research questions and described the affect that participants experienced with diversity and ethical principles in primary and secondary educational leadership in underserved school districts.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

Overview

The purpose of this hermeneutical phenomenological study is to understand the experiences of diversity and ethical principles in educational leadership for teachers, administrators, and classified licensed professionals within minority school districts. The problem addressed in this study was the impact of the lack of transformational leadership and the ethical principles needed to establish a learning and diverse culture where workforce development is a part of the overall infrastructure for educational success in underserved school districts (Wheelan, 2019; Kariuki, 2021). Investigation of this phenomenon encompassed data collection from 11 educator and administrator participants through individual interviews, a focus group, and journal writing prompts. Data was collected utilizing the research framework for hermeneutical phenomenology van Manen (2016). From this method, Data analysis transpired through transcribing and coding of emerging keywords, with the codes becoming themes. Research was conducted using Downton's (1973) Transformational leadership theory as a theoretical framework. Chapter Five consists of five discussion subsections: (a) interpretation of findings, (b) implications for policy and practice, (c) theoretical and methodological implications, (d) limitations and delimitations, and (e) recommendations for future research.

Discussion

The purpose of the discussion section is to summarize the thematic findings of the research investigated in Chapter Four. Data analysis revealed that teachers and administrators recognized the effect of diversity and ethical principles in primary and secondary leadership. The data is presented thematically through the need for transformational leadership, the Impact of Diversity, and the lack of workforce development training. The discussion section has five major

subsections, including (a) Interpretation of Findings; (b) Implications for Policy or Practice; (c)

Theoretical and Empirical Implications; (d) Limitations and Delimitations; and (e)

Recommendations for Future Research.

Summary of Thematic Findings

This research identified three themes: the need for transformational leadership, the impact

of diversity, and the lack of workforce development and training. Data analysis was collected

from the interview, utilizing Van Manens's (2016) hermeneutical phenomenological research

framework; as a focus of theme one, transformational leadership was perceived by educators and

administrators as a necessity to create a team vision and goal while enhancing team camaraderie

and developing a learning and diverse culture that is equitable, diverse, and inclusive. For theme

two, participants discussed the impact of diversity as an opportunity for leaders to provide a

cultural perspective on implementing assessment and cultural teaching principles to advance all

students regardless of language, culture, skill level, or socioeconomic level. The third and final

theme, the lack of workforce development and training, was recognized by participants as an

opportunity for educators and administrators to acquire new knowledge, teach new skills, and

give access to computer-based training to aid team members in shifting paradigms and achieving

personal and organizational goals and visions. An interpretation of the findings is identified and

discussed using the themes and associated subthemes identified.

Interpretation of Findings

Investigation of the salient themes contributed toward a deeper understanding of the

affect of diversity and ethical principles in underserved school districts when primary and

secondary educational institutions lack transformational leadership and their perceived influence

on minority and multicultural student educational success. Data analysis generated three salient

themes, and after analyzing these themes, I distinguished three thematic findings. My

interpretations of those findings are (1) transformational leadership influence, (2) Diversity as a

culture, and (3) Workforce development. In exploring the affects of diversity and ethical

principles on educational leaders, these thematic findings are dissected and explicated in the

subsequent sections.

Transformational leadership Influence

The educators and administrators acknowledged that this study substantiated Downton's

(1973) transformational leadership theory and its effect on diversity and ethical principles within

the school district. However, a significant issue is a lack of formal training in developing

transformational leadership skills. Participants acknowledged how the absence of training

impacted a culture that reinforced negative stereotypes and contributed to inequitable access to

resources for underserved school districts. These findings corroborate the research of Jennings &

Stahl (2016), which found that teachers who manage the classrooms and are gatekeepers to

minority and multicultural students are not given any leadership training. The only leadership

development programs that exist are for senior-level administrators. According to

superintendents, their most significant influence in a school district without teacher workforce

development is for transformational leaders to model behavior through mentoring. Advocating

for implementing transformational leadership training, diversity initiatives, and workforce

development programs in underserved school districts is crucial, as these are the keys to their

improvement (Corneille et al., 2020; Arvin, 2010).

From the data findings, the participants declared that transformational leadership, not

fully embraced within the educational infrastructure, is nonetheless recognized as a crucial

foundation for change. The participants felt that the positive change from the leader gave a

positive outcome within the classroom. However, participants shared that leaders can set examples of cultural practices that promote fair and equitable treatment of all students in a school district and are essential in underserved school districts with a history of segregation. Teachers believed that the absence of such leaders could hinder the necessary changes, but the potential for their presence to bring about positive transformation is equally significant.

Diversity as a culture

Continuing from the importance of transformational leadership, the urgency of diversity in underserved school districts cannot be overstated. It is not just a matter of value or belief but a necessity for the student's success. Participants in the study concurred with the literature in that the observed significant cause and effect of the failure of minority and multicultural learners in the school district is the inability of teachers and administrators to relate to the students. The findings reveal that the most significant barrier to educational diversity is the school system's definition and foundational philosophical beliefs about leadership. Diversity in leaders creates the opportunity for various solutions based on culture, ethnicity, and student belonging and removes obstacles to success (Johnson & Fournillier, 2022; Feldman et al., 2022).

According to superintendents, the absence of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) practices and principles within underserved school districts has led to a lack of minority teachers. The findings reveal that the absence of DEI has exacerbated the lack of multicultural teachers in the school district. It gives credence to why there are few minority educators in the school system. Administrators have stated that due to inequitable compensation practices, many multicultural educators have chosen to become administrators to earn a decent wage. However, the participants revealed that many minority administrators live with the idea of not having job security because there is no due process given to the release of administrative positions.

Workforce development.

According to administrators, the continual development of its workforce is essential for the growth and change of an educational infrastructure. The findings revealed that there was no leadership or diversity training for teachers within the entire school district, which was indicative of the culture within the educational infrastructure. Research has shown that teacher and workforce development training is designed to educate, inform, and aid education learners in shifting paradigms and to achieve organizational visions and goals (Holland, 2019; Naqshbandi & Tabche, 2018). Participants' views align with the literature declaring that not having teacher or workforce training in leadership and diversity was a failure by educational leaders and indicated the need for transformational leadership within underserved school districts.

There must be a process to implement the concept of transformative learning to aid leaders and teachers in removing paradigms and shifting cultural biases that are not based on ethical truths (Smith & Kempster, 2019; McMurtry & Williamson, 2021). What findings have revealed within the research and in alignment with the literature is that without transformational leadership, the development of diversity and ethical principles within a culture does not exist. Consistent with the teaching of Downton (1973), transformational leadership increases the knowledge base of a workforce and the recruitment of talent for a school district's long-term success and sustainability. However, participants have acknowledged that the underserved school district has not demonstrated a sense of urgency to implement development training such as transformational leadership and diversity, equity, and inclusion. According to the participants, the lack of workforce development has hindered educators' development and shifted a culture of educating minority and multicultural learners.

Implications for Policy or Practice

The purpose of this hermeneutical phenomenological study is to understand the experiences of diversity and ethical principles in educational leadership for teachers, administrators, and classified licensed professionals within minority school districts. The findings in this qualitative hermeneutical phenomenological study revealed the impact of diversity and ethical principles in primary and secondary educational leadership. The findings had significant implications for both policy and practice concerning various educational leadership stakeholders, underscoring the need for immediate action. The implications may improve the educational success of minority students and teacher satisfaction and development in the classroom.

Implications for Policy

The results of this study carry significant implications for policymaking. In investigating the affect of diversity and ethical principles in secondary and primary educational leadership, a gap emerged between culture implementation and practical application for teacher-student success. The findings of this study underscore the importance of a transformational leader's role in enacting change to develop a learning and diverse culture while increasing teacher and student satisfaction in underserved school districts. An opportunity to legislatively redress the lack of diversity, equity, and inclusion practices in education may be to legislate a policy mandating the development of a diversity, equity, and inclusion committee with implementing and providing feedback. However, the successful implementation of policies and guidelines that regulate districts would be to address the idea of an impartial distribution of educational resources as opposed to being based on the terminology of diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Using quantifiable information, senior-level administrators could ensure equitable rights and protection from discriminatory behaviors in accessing tools and resources for proper

education while continuing to equip teachers and administrators. Besides the need for diversity, equity, and inclusion policies within the educational infrastructure, education administrators cannot provide institutional-level feedback on teacher or workforce curriculum development. A state-level policy will revitalize a stagnant infrastructure, enable equal protection under the law, and implement policies and statutes that ethical and transformational leaders must manage to ensure enforcement in an educational culture.

Implications for Practice

From data collection, analysis, and findings, the study results offer consequential implications that impact administrators, teachers, and students. A study on the affect of transformational leadership on underserved school districts can have implications for administrators and educators on the importance of teacher /workforce development in leadership and diversity, equity, and inclusion. The study finds that continued education improves teachers' and administrators' knowledge base and skills. Superintendents can incorporate workforce development and training into their practice, and policymakers can allocate more resources in underserved school districts to improve student learning outcomes. In addition to continued education, new practices ensure equitable access to resources to purchase computer-based technology to eliminate lack and allow for continual growth by teachers in all school settings. Such changes in practice would directly mitigate the common feedback in educators reporting inadequate access to technology to complete simple computer-based training lessons.

In enhancing the practices of equipping educators and administrators with continued education in leadership and diversity, school districts may consider mandating the practice of authorizing senior-level administrators to be trained on transformational leadership skills and principles. Principals and teachers benefit when led and mentored by senior-level administrators

with diverse skills and ethical core values. Mastering oneself enables educators and leaders to operate in best practices, equitable access to resources, and ethical principles. Instituting a policy requiring teachers, administrators, and classified professionals to experience workforce development in diversity and transformational leadership principles could positively impact student success in all school districts.

Empirical and Theoretical Implications

The themes that emerged through the study reflect the importance of transformational leadership practices and the influence of diversity on an organization's success. In corroborating the teaching of Downton's (1973) transformational leadership theory, the extent to which leaders perceive the impact of diversity and ethical principles directly correlated with ethical decisions and the philosophical foundation of transformational leaders in eliminating bias based on race and socioeconomic status. Empirical and theoretical implications for this study are discussed.

Empirical Implications

The systematic review of current research revealed a gap in understanding the affect of diversity and ethical principles in secondary and primary leadership. The literature corroborates the importance of understanding a transformational leader's influence on diversity and the impact on minority and multicultural students in the classroom. (Asfar & Waheed, 2020; Siswanto, 2022; Zengen & Akan, 2019; Kwan, 2020; Michaelson, 2022; Beekun, 2012). Participants in this study substantiated the previous research by divulging experiences of the perceived effect of diversity and ethical principles on minority students in underserved school districts. A transformational leader increases a team's knowledge base and talent recruitment for an organization's long-term sustainability (Andersen, 2018; Kremer et al., 2019). The depth of the literature is the complexity of the gap in understanding the lack of diversity, equity, and

inclusion practices and teacher/workforce development training within underserved school districts (Erasmus & Agboola, 2018; Smith & DeClerk, 2022; Feldman et al., 2022 Morthhouse, 2019).

Students in minority schools have identified the importance of open communication and connecting with faculty members and teachers who understand them culturally (Wallace et al., 2022; Fullan, 2020; Kouzes & Poth, 2017). Participants described similar experiences in underserved school districts where the nature of the experiences was significantly influenced by the lack of viable leadership in implementing the necessary tools to empower educators in the classroom. The data sources revealed by the foundational research were corroborated in this study, with educator and senior-level administrator participants from several underserved school districts within the same county offering comparable answers to the interview questions. The gap exposes the susceptibility of senior-level administrators not to acknowledge the need to accommodate and sow directly into minority and multicultural student success by implementing diversity practices and workforce development based on dependable information. Participants reflected that foundational principles such as integrity, fostering collaboration, empathy, and continuous learning in educational positions have prepared them to be influential leaders to impact minority student success positively.

Theoretical Implications

This study, which explores the impact of diversity and ethical principles on primary and secondary educational leadership, is unique in that it contributes to the expansion of Downton's (1973) transformational leadership theory. The theory explores leadership by measuring the influence, success, and idea of leaders transforming culture through inspiration and mentorship. Transformational leadership theory aims to raise morale and self-efficacy and transform an

unproductive team into a dynamic group aligned with a shared vision and purpose. The four tenets of Downton's transformational leadership are idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individual consideration. Educator participants who were part of the study described leadership's influence on the need for transformational leadership, the impact of diversity, and workforce development as essential to the educational success of minority students in underserved school districts. The findings of this study assisted the participant's need for transformational leaders as it pertains to the success of minority educational success and teacher satisfaction.

Participants articulated the need for transformational leadership as it pertains to the leader's ability to create an innovative and creative learning culture, which aligns with Downton's tenet of idealized influence. The insights gathered from the study demonstrate a clear causal relationship between ethical principles within leadership and a vision, directly influencing educator satisfaction and the academic success of minority and multiracial students in underserved school districts. Benjamin stated that his school's morale improved by setting expectations and implementing a vision for organizational success. The study's findings underscore the pivotal role of transformational leadership in promoting diversity and ethical principles, thereby influencing educator satisfaction and student success.

Participants discussed their experience with the lack of diversity and its impact over the years within the underserved school district. All participants acknowledged the impact of diversity in a school district without resources and the need for leaders who can foster a sense of purpose and raise a standard of excellence through effective communication, which is in corroboration with Downton's tenet of inspirational motivation. Calvin shared how the impact of diversity enabled the opportunity for effective communication so that leaders could remove

potential barriers to organizational success. He could see the impact of effectively communicating a vision on student success and teacher satisfaction.

Participants acknowledged empowerment as a principle needed in developing a learning and diverse culture, which aligns with Dowton's tenet of Intellectual stimulation. All participants voiced the need for leaders who cultivated an environment for team members to be creative and foster a sense of belonging. Leaders who operated with ethical principles and implemented diversity practices, such as promoting inclusivity, understanding cultural differences, and fostering a sense of belonging, realized tangible results beyond educator satisfaction and minority student academic outcomes, offering hope for positive change. Jacob shared that it was most important to give teachers the tools and resources to be excellent and instill confidence to elevate themselves and meet the school's needs.

Participants discussed the need for workforce development within the school as a major implementation and acknowledged that without an effective leader, there is no change. All participants spoke of the need for additional professional development courses to effectively serve their gifts as leaders and educators in a multicultural school, which supports Dowton's tenet of individual consideration. Individual consideration is the tenet that speaks to the leader's ability to focus on how each member can contribute to the overall goal. Louise reflected on the situations when she was enabled to develop through mentorship and the positive effect of being recognized and valued as an educator. This study's findings offered immeasurable insight into a transformational leader's impact on diversity and ethical principles in leadership on developing a learning and diverse culture for student success and its alignment with the study's theoretical variables. The study expanded the scope of the theory to consider the impact of workforce

development on leadership influence on the school district's overall success, offering a promising path for future research and practice.

Limitations and Delimitations

Recognizing and addressing this study's limitations and delimitations is crucial for a comprehensive understanding of the research process. This section meticulously discusses the two significant limitations: a limited target population and geographic location. The transparent approach, coupled with the thoroughness of the research, instills a strong sense of confidence in the validity of the findings.

Limitations

The first limitation was that the study only included educators from underserved school districts with a healthy, diverse population of minority and multicultural students while omitting educators in hundreds of institutions within the regional county. Limiting the investigation of the study to an underserved school district undoubtedly provides immeasurable insight into other underserved school districts affected by the lack of diversity and ethical principles in leadership. Limiting the study to one type of school district weakens the finding as there is seemingly no way to compare the effect of leadership practices and principles between school districts.

A second limitation of the study was the geographic location, as it was relegated to educator participants from a minority and multicultural student-driven underserved school district in the Southeastern part of the United States. By conducting the study at an underserved school district, educational leaders at predominately white and socioeconomically affluent school districts were excluded from inclusion. This exclusion diminishes the study's findings regarding the applicability and portability of findings when applied across primary and secondary education platforms.

Delimitations

The study contained a few delimitations, primarily the way parameters set by the researcher intended to safeguard the scope and focus of the research. The first was the criteria predetermined for participant eligibility for inclusion in the study, with teachers, administrators, and classified licensed educational professionals who had spent more than five years in an underserved school district. The selected participants would have worked in the school district for at least five years. This delimitation ensured that participants could respond based on the broadness of their experiences as educators. A second delimitation was the selection of a county and region for study in a heavily minority and multicultural student-driven underserved school district. Researching in a notably more segregated environment than a traditional school district ensured educators came from a more diverse and lower socioeconomic environment conducive to leadership impact.

Recommendations for Future Research

Although this hermeneutical phenomenology investigation provides cognizance into the affect of diversity and ethical principles in primary and secondary leadership, more research is needed to comprehend the influence of transformational leadership skills in improving minority and multicultural student success outcomes in underserved school districts. Considering the study findings, limitations, and delimitations present in the study, it is recommended that future research expand its purview to include an expanded range of school districts, participants, and stakeholders encompassing varying geographic locations. This expansion could lead to a more comprehensive understanding of the influence of diversity practices and transformational leadership principles on teacher satisfaction and the educational success of all students. To gain a deeper comprehension of the affect of diversity practices and ethical principles in leadership and

their influence on the educational success of all minority and multicultural learners in underserved school districts, a quantitative approach should be used as a study design. Completing this approach could enable the research to include more definitive and indicative indicators of a leader's influence, such as test score improvements, increased workforce diversity, and school graduation rates. Lastly, future research may benefit from having data collected over a greater geographical region and more prominent socioeconomic status to gain a more diverse perspective from more leaders from different cultures and ensure the most significant diversity in the data set possible. These recommendations promise to significantly advance our understanding of diversity and ethical principles in educational leadership, offering hope for more effective practices and policies in the future.

Conclusion

The purpose of this hermeneutical phenomenological study is to understand the experiences of diversity and ethical principles in educational leadership for teachers, administrators, and classified licensed professionals within minority school districts. Van Manen's (2016) hermeneutical phenomenological research design was used to gain insight into the affect of diversity and ethical principles on leaders and the influence on the educational success of minority and multicultural students. As a theoretical framework for the study, Downton's (1973) transformational leadership theory supported theme identification and development. Data collection occurred through the administering of individual interviews, a focus group, and a journal writing prompt with 11 educator participants who served in an underserved school district. Data analysis identified the need for transformational leadership, the impact of diversity, and the lack of workforce development, where teacher satisfaction and minority and multicultural students' success cannot be achieved without leadership. Within this

construct, educators provided an immeasurable perspective into the influence of diversity and

ethical principles in underserved school districts. The findings affirmed the importance of

transformational leadership and the influence of diversity practices and ethical principles in

facilitating the success of minority and multicultural students in underserved school districts,

thereby fulfilling the purpose of this study.

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Appendix A: IRB Approval

Appendix B: Informed Consent

Title of the Project: The impact of diversity and ethical principles in primary and secondary educational leadership: A Hermeneutical Phenomenology Study
Principal Investigator: Charles Holloway, Student, Liberty University

Research Study

You are invited to participate in a research study. To participate, you must have been a teacher, administrator, and a classified licensed school professional who has worked with minority students in underserved communities and school districts. 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.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this hermeneutical phenomenological study is to understand the experiences of diversity and ethical principles in educational leadership for teachers, administrators, and classified licensed professionals within minority school districts.

Research Procedures

If you agree to be in this study, I will ask you to do the following things:
1. Interview: The interview will consist of 18 questions pertaining to the specific study. The study will be recorded with an audio device and should take approximately 30-45 minutes.
2. Focus Group: The session is an informal setting where participants discuss how those shared lived experiences. This session will be no longer than 75 minutes and will not be taped.
3. Journal Writing Prompt: .

Participants should not expect to receive a direct benefit from taking part in this study.

Benefits to society: This is to examine the barriers to the educational success of minority students and the importance of ethical leadership in mitigating the systematic constraints to long-term student success. Also, it addresses the socio-economic disparity within modern-day culture and the impact that poverty and systematic oppression have on creating barriers to success in underserved communities.

Risk

The investigator perceives that there is no risk in conducting this research. The risks involved in this study are minimal, which means they are equal to the risks you would encounter in everyday life.

<u>Confidentiality</u>

Published reports will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a subject. Research records will be stored securely, and only the researcher will have access to the records. 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 data is shared.

- Participant responses will be anonymous. Participant's responses will be kept confidential using pseudonyms and aliases. Interviews will be conducted in a location where others will not easily overhear the conversation.
- Data will be stored on a password-locked computer and may be used in future presentations. Data security is maintained during the qualitative research using InfoSec and CompuSec protocols. After three years, all electronic records will be deleted.
- Interviews will be recorded and transcribed. The recording will be stored on a password-locked computer for three years and then erased. Only the researcher will have access to these recordings.
- Confidentiality cannot be guaranteed in focus group settings. While discouraged, other members of the focus group may share what was discussed with people outside of the group.

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 not to answer any questions or withdraw at any time.

<u>Withdrawal Procedure:</u>

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 the focus group data, will be destroyed immediately and will not be 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.

<u>Questions/ Concerns:</u>

The researcher conducting this study is Charles Holloway. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, you are encouraged to contact him at ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮. You may also contact the researcher faculty sponsor, Dr. Darren Howland, at ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮.

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 Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd., Green Hall Ste. 2845, Lynchburg, VA 24515 or email at ▮▮▮▮▮▮.

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.

<u>Giving of Consent</u>

By signing this document, you agree 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(s) will keep a copy of the study records. If you have any questions about the study after you sign this document, you can contact the study team using the information provided above.

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

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

_____
Printed Subject Name

_____
Signature & Date

Appendix C: Research Questions

Central Research Question

What are the perceived affects of diversity and ethical principles on teachers, administrators, and classified licensed professionals within minority school districts?

Sub-Question One

What are the lived experiences of educational administrators and teachers in a school system without leadership support to implement a culturally related curriculum?

Sub-Question Two

What are the components within underserved school districts that impact diversity and ethical principles for minority student success?

Sub-Question Three

What are the challenges teachers and administrators face with leadership in implementing the strategies and resources required to aid minority students' educational success?

Appendix D: Individual Interview Questions

Table 1

Individual Interview Questions

1. Describe your educational background and career in working in underserved school districts and communities. CQ

2. Describe the challenges of working with minority and multicultural learners with lower socioeconomic status in the classroom. SQ1

3. Describe successful cultural practices when working with minority and multicultural students in the classroom. SQ1

4. What professional development experiences have you had that prepared you to work with ELL students as a teacher? SQ1

5. What professional development experiences have prepared you to implement diversity, equity, and inclusion in the classroom as a teacher? SQ2

6. Describe the teacher/workforce development training in developing diversity, equity, and inclusion practices in your school district. SQ2

7. Describe the challenges when working with principles of diversity and equitable access to resources within the classroom as a teacher or administrator. SQ2

8. Describe successful practices for implementing diversity, equity, and inclusion working with team members in the school districts as a teacher or administrators. SQ2

9. What professional development experiences have you had that prepared you to implement leadership practices with peers and multicultural students as a teacher? SQ2

10. Describe successful practices you use when working with lower socioeconomic status (SES) students in your classes. SQ2

11. What professional development experiences have prepared you to implement diversity, equity, and inclusion practices within the school district as a leader? SQ2

12. What else would you like to add to our discussion of your experiences with diversity, equity, and inclusion in the classroom that we still need to discuss? SQ2

13. What professional development experiences have prepared you to implement transformational leadership skills within the school district as a leader? SQ3

14. Describe the teacher /workforce development training used in developing transformational leadership skills in the school district. SQ3

15. Describe your challenges when working with multicultural students in your classes. SQ3

16. What professional development experiences have you had that prepared you to work with multicultural staff and administrators as a teacher? SQ3

17. What else would you like to add to our discussion of your experiences with Leadership development within the school district that we still need to discuss? SQ3

18. What else would you like to add to our discussion of your experiences with African American and minority students that we have not discussed? SQ3

Appendix E: Focus Group Questions

Table 2

Focus Group Questions

1. What were the challenges of implementing diversity, equity, and inclusion in a school district with few minority teachers and administrators? RQ1

2. What leadership principles do you believe are essential to be adequate to affect change within the school district? RQ1

3. What does teacher development mean to you as an individual working in Liberty County? RQ1

4. What is your lived experience in meeting the cultural and educational needs of minority students in underserved communities? RQ1

5. Describe the challenges when working with limited resources to meet the educational needs of students in the classroom. RQ1

6. Describe the challenges of being an educator or administrator in an underserved school district. RQ2

7. What thoughts and feelings come to mind when you think about diversity, equity, and inclusion within the school district? RQ2

8. What professional workforce development courses have you had that prepared you to work in a multicultural school district? RQ2

9. Describe successful practices you use when working with diversity, inclusion, and equity values as a teacher. RQ3

10. What influence do leadership diversity and cultural awareness have on student and teacher success within the school district? RQ3

11. What professional leadership experiences have you had that prepared you to work with a multicultural workforce as a teacher or administrator? RQ3

12. Describe your challenges when working with diversity, equity, and inclusion values in your school district. RQ3

Appendix F: Journal Writing Prompt

Table 3

Journal Writing Prompt

Please write in 300 words or more about an event you experienced with diversity and ethical

principles within primary and secondary school leadership within the school district. Describe

your feelings, emotions, and any noticeable impact on the students.

Appendix G

Table 5

Research Questions and Themes Alignment

Research Question	Theme
Central Research Question	The Need for Transformational Leadership
Central Research Question	Lack of Workforce Development
Sub-Research Question 1	The Need for Transformational Leadership
Sub-Research Question 2	The Impact of Diversity
Sub-Research Question 3	Impact of Diversity
Sub-Research Question 3	Lack of Workforce and Development training

Appendix H: Individual Interview Transcript Example

Transcript

CH.

Question #1

Describe your educational background and career in working in underserved school districts and communities.

ST

Well, my educational background began with high school Central High School in Sylvania, GA. Graduated there, 3rd Honor went on to Georgia Southern College in 1969, went from there to Savannah State, and graduated in 1973 cum laude.

After that, I started teaching in 1973 at Central High School. I started with 7th grade, moved up to 9th grade, and then they transferred me to the high school, where I taught journalism in English. From there, I went on to get my master's degree from Georgia Southern College, and I pursued my doctoral degree in ministry in 2013.

I graduated in 2015 and have been on the road to education ever since. I taught for 40 years in the school system, both at the high school and collegiate levels.

CH.

Question #2

Describe the challenges of working with minority and multicultural learners with lower socioeconomic status in the classroom.

ST

My experience working with socioeconomically challenged students was that many of them had low self-esteem. They felt that they were not good enough to compete with other students in their class who were of different cultures, etc.

But instilling in them the feeling of hope is most important. Letting them know that if somebody else can do something, I can do it too. Maybe even better, but I've got to give it a chance. I've got to try.

CH.

Question #3

Describe successful cultural practices when working with minority and multicultural students in the classroom.

ST

I have had several students in my class who have had problems at home financially. Parents were not educated, etc., and some of my students are. I had taught their parents, and then I learned that because you are of a social culture or you are of a specific ethnicity does not grant you the opportunity to do as others have done. I have had students who got in trouble repeatedly but ended up graduating high school, going to college, and becoming attorneys and doctors. These are the students that I have touched in my classes. Students don't care how much you know until they know you care. And when you show them that you care, they will grasp you and be open to what you have to give them.

CH.

Question #4

We're professional development experiences have you had that prepared you to work with ELL students as a teacher?

ST

Well, when I attended college and Graduate School, I took several courses that prepared me for this endeavor. And I noticed that they were procedures that were taught, but you really don't get the essence or the feel of it until you begin to teach students themselves. Because what's written in the book sometimes is not applicable to what you see in the classroom.

CH.

Question #5

What professional development experiences have prepared you to implement diversity, equity, and inclusion in the classroom as a teacher?

ST

Ethics was one course that I thoroughly enjoyed, and it helped me to understand that there are diverse students in all cultures. There are students who are may not be

accepted because of who they are. But when you give them the feel of OK, you are important. And then they will open up to you.

CH.
Question #6.
Describe the teacher/ workforce development training and developing diversity, equity, and inclusion practices in your school district.
ST
We have been taught to. Treat all students equally. No one is better than the other. No one is less than the other, so when you show that the students know whether you are genuine or not, that can make the difference whether your teaching comes across to them or not. But the classes that I took and the experiences that I have felt in the classroom have provided me with the implementations and the knowledge to deal with students on their own level and to become inclusive of all of them. They are all important.

CH.
Question #7
Describe the challenges when working with principles of diversity and equitable access to resources within the classroom as a teacher or administrator.
ST
Working in the classroom sometimes did not provide the necessary tools, but I'm very resourceful, and as a result, I looked for ways to implement inclusivity with my students. I looked for ways to reach them by talking to them and making them a part of the whole picture, and that proved to be very helpful.

CH.
Question #8.
Describe successful practices for implementing diversity, equity, and inclusion, working with team members in the school district as a teacher.
ST

That's a good question too. Working with other staff members sometimes posed a difficulty because many of them were of different cultures and ethnicities and beliefs and ethics and moral compasses, etcetera. But I learned to get along with all of them and to let them know where I stood. As far as my job was concerned and to let them know that, come on, we've got to be, we've got to be real with the children. We've got to show them that we are honestly there for them and not just for a paycheck, and I would let them know that and have no doubt about it. Some of them did listen to me.

CH.
Question #9
What professional development experiences have you had that prepared you to implement leadership practices with peers and multicultural students as a teacher?
ST
Many of those practices came from personal experience, not necessarily from a book or a class, but from interacting with others and getting a feel for who they were. And then getting a feel of who I am. It's just one of those things that the connection everybody's not going to agree on the same subject. Everybody's not going to agree on the same issues, but we can agree to disagree in a cordial manner.

CH.
Question #10
Describe successful practices you use when working with lower socioeconomic status students in your class.
ST
Many times, I would stay over in the afternoon to work with specific students, making certain that they had a way to get home in the afternoon. Many times, I would ask other students to help their classmates reach their goal. We never left anybody behind. We always found a way to reach them, to help them, and to make them feel successful.

CH.
Question #11

What professional development experiences have prepared you to implement diversity, equity, and inclusion practices within the school district as a leader?

ST

The one word that comes to mind is love. Understanding is another word. Compassion is another word, and the most intricate word is patience. We have to be patient with our students. Many do not reach the level at the same time, but the fact that you stay with them and help them to get where others have reached is most rewarding as a teacher.

CH.

Question #12

What else would you like to add to our discussion of your experiences with diversity, equity, and inclusion in the classroom that we still need to discuss.

ST

One of the things that is a very touching subject and that is racism. We find that in some cultures and some areas, it is hard to deal with racism because of the way that some people are reared. It's hard to deal with it because some people feel that they may be better than others because of their socioeconomic status. Some people may feel that they're better than others because of their educational status, but we've got to realize everybody's not at the same level. But the fact still remains that we are still human beings, and we are here to help students and that's one issue that I have had problems with through the years.

CH.

Question #13.

What professional development experiences have prepared you to implement transformational leadership skills within the school district as a leader?

ST

As far as transformational skills are concerned, I have learned that if you're not comfortable in a setting, then you don't need to be there. If you are not comfortable in a setting, then you need to either get with the program or excuse yourself and sometimes that is a problem with some people. They are there just to be there and not to really. Change Sometimes, you just have to change along with the times everything

changes, so we've got to be able to implement that change in our lives and in the student's lives and make things better for them if we can.

CH.

Question #14.

Describe the teacher /workforce development training using developing transformation leadership skills in the school district.

ST

Developmental skills. Wow, having been in the school system for so many years, you get to know people, and you get to know the students, and you get to know the parents and all of the people in the community. However, some things need to be transformed. It's just a given. If you can't work with transformation in helping students to get where they need to be, then there is a problem. We've had courses to help us with transformation, but first of all, it must come from within the teacher aderhimself or herself.

CH.

Question #15.

Describe your challenges when working with multicultural students in your classes.

ST

That's a good one. Working with multicultural students is a challenge, but it's rewarding at the same time because you get to know them, and they get to know you, and you get to exchange ideas within the culture, and it makes you a better person. It just brightens who you are and the world around you. And once we get to know each other, we can communicate more effectively.

CH.

Question #16.

What professional development experiences have you had that prepared you to work with multicultural staff and administrators as a teacher?

ST

Again, I go back to those words, understanding, and patience. Once we understand an individual, that means so much; you've got to get to know the people that you work with. You've got to get to understand them. You just don't look at them and say, well, they're different than I am. So therefore, I'm not going to have anything to do with them, but in order to work together, you've got to get to know people.
You've got to accept them. You may not accept everything that they do, but you've got to accept them as a person. Sometimes, it takes the tenacity to go to that person and speak to them one-on-one. I have had that opportunity as well, and it's been very effective. It may not have been accepted each time, but it caused them to think, to meditate, to contemplate on what I said.

CH.
Question #17
What else would you like to add to our discussion of your experiences with leadership development within the school district that we still need to discuss?
ST
The one thing that I would say is that we need to get to open up more to the problems that are present. We need to not only open up to them; we need to address them in a way that will be effective for all. Sometimes, we think that we know all of the answers, but we don't. Sometimes, you have to go outside of the box in order to find answers and be willing to accept what others say. Sometimes people have great ideas, but they don't give them because they are reluctant that they're going to be ostracized for what they say. Openness is important.

CH.
Question #18
What else would you like to add to our discussion of your experiences with African American and minority students that we have not discussed?
ST
I can go on and on with that one, but I will just say that. Give them a chance. Let them know that you accept them for who they are. The backgrounds, they're like of whatever it is that's missing in their lives and try to promote. Helping them, more so than looking

at them with turned-up noses. And they'll never learn anything.

They'll never get it. Some of them will get it, but you've got to be able to reach them. Whatever means necessary, you've got to reach them. You can't just let them be out there by themselves. You have a clear: you must be willing to go the extra mile. And that's what some educators are not willing to do. They just do the minimum, but then the teaching profession. You've got to go beyond and above that which is required.