

Perceptions of Teachers of Color in Independent Schools: Factors Associated with Teacher
Retention

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ABSTRACT

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by

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The purpose of this qualitative, phenomenological study was to explore the lived experiences of faculty of color in K-12 independent schools in the United States with particular attention to either supportive or non-supportive factors in their work. This study was designed to explore strategies for school leaders to retain faculty of color. This study was composed of the interviews of 12 faculty of color working at independent schools. Although there has recently been more attention given to the need to diversify the student body in independent schools, these schools still face challenges in diversifying the faculty population.

The findings indicate that there are many factors associated with faculty of color feeling supported at independent schools including general job satisfaction, support from school administration, diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives at the school, emotional and psychological impacts, internal and external social issues, and support from colleagues, parents, and alumni of the school.

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DEDICATION

To my husband, Abdelhaq, who always believed in me, encouraged me, and never let me give up. You spent many hours taking care of our family while I completed this arduous journey, and I am so grateful to you for your support in helping me achieve my goals. I could not have done this without you.

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To all the students past, present, and future who have inspired me to fight for the right of every human being to a high-quality education no matter their background. I am blessed to have been led down the path of being an educator because so many students have touched my life.

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Chapter 1. Introduction

As the demographics of the United States change, there are increasingly more students of color in American schools. According to the National Center for Education Statistics (2020) between 2000 and 2017, the percentage of White students in public schools has decreased from 61% to 48% percent and the number of Hispanic students has increased from 16% to 27%. The teacher population in US public schools has not seen the same shift in demographics. In the 2017-2018 school year, 21% of teachers were people of color whereas in the 1999-2000 year that number was only 14% (2020).

Independent schools in the United States have seen similar changes in their student demographics. The National Association of Independent Schools (2020) reported that in the same time frame (2000-2017) students of color in independent schools have increased from 17% to 30% of the student population. Teachers of color in independent schools have changed in that same time period from making up only 8% to 17% percent of the total teacher population (2020).

Throughout the history of the United States, there have been inequities in schooling between White students and students of color (Williams, 2011). The biggest indicator of this inequity is the achievement gap which has shown consistently for many years that minority students have lower achievement in school than their White counterparts (Howard, 2019). One key to closing the achievement gap is to create an environment where students believe in themselves and feel valued. This does not happen for many students of color who feel that the classroom setting is oppositional for a variety of reasons (Williams, 2011).

This is an especially emergent issue given the Black Lives Matter movement, the incidences of police brutality toward people of color in recent years, and the general political rhetoric of dismissing the unconscious bias and racism that still exist today in the United States.

The Black Lives Matter movement is inextricable from the fight for educational equity in American schools today (Dixson, 2018). These issues are symbols that pay lip service to providing an equitable education to all American students and are no longer acceptable. Schools must start the work of change in order to serve the new students of the 21st century.

One potential source of eradicating these challenges is by matching the race or ethnicity of the teacher with that of the student. Studies have shown that students of color have higher levels of achievement when they are taught by a teacher of the same race (Boser, 2014; Carver-Thomas, 2018; Egalite et al., 2015; Goldhaber et al., 2019; Redding, 2019; Yarnell & Bohrnstedt, 2017). Furthermore, teachers of different backgrounds are able to use their own cultural knowledge and experience in determining appropriate teaching and disciplinary strategies for all students and serve as positive role models for students (Goldhaber et al., 2019). Teachers of color specifically challenge White values and culture in schools and thus “aid in the transition to culturally responsive pedagogy suitable for the new America” (Kane & Orsini, 2003, p. 12).

Studies on organizational research show that diversity, in general, fosters greater creativity, innovation, and can change the way people think (Foma, 2014; Phillips, 2014; Roberge & Van Dick, 2010). This is true in collaborative teams in professional fields as well as educational settings (Phillips, 2014). The same is true for having a diverse student body in the classroom as well as for having a diverse population of teachers teaching students in schools. Students of color and White students alike benefit from having a teacher of color (Kane & Orsini, 2003).

While studies (Boser, 2014; Carver-Thomas, 2018; Egalite et al., 2015; Goldhaber et al., 2019; Redding, 2019; Yarnell & Bohrnstedt, 2017) have shown the benefits of having a diverse

faculty, and despite current efforts in diversity, equity, and inclusion strategies, teachers are still predominantly White in American K-12 schools. The National Association for Educational Statistics (2019) reported that in 2018 84% of public school teachers were still White. The conditions were not much different in independent schools with 82% of teachers being White (NAIS, 2019). This is due to barriers in the recruitment of teachers of color and issues in retaining teachers of color once they have entered the field of education (Ingersoll et al., 2019). The main contributor to teachers of color leaving the classroom or the field of education, as with all teachers, is the support received from the school administration (Boyd et al., 2011; Hollinside, 2017). This research study will identify factors that may contribute to the retention, and, in juxtaposition, the attrition of teachers of color in member schools of the National Association of Independent Schools based on the lived experiences of these teachers.

Research Topic and Background

The main research question studied was: What are the lived experiences of faculty of color in independent schools? The research was focused on the perspectives of faculty of color working in independent schools, the factors that faculty of color considered supportive of their work in independent schools, and the factors that they considered unsupportive of their work in independent schools.

The study focused specifically on independent schools as the existing body of research is light regarding the retention of teachers of color outside the sphere of public education and because independent schools are sometimes perceived as elitist harborers of institutionalized racism (Moscote Basney, 2019; Pérez del Toro, 2017). Independent schools have this reputation because they serve only 1% of American schoolchildren, frequently charge high tuition rates, and have educated some of the wealthiest and most well-known Americans, including John F.

Kennedy, Bill Gates, Condoleezza Rice, Barack Obama, and George W. Bush, among many others (Ortega Dolan, 2015). More research is needed to specifically address the issues that independent schools face with regard to the retention of teachers of color.

While the history of independent schools shows them to be institutions for the ultra-elite and wealthiest of white Americans (Ortega Dolan, 2015) many independent schools are working to become more inclusive learning communities for the benefit of all students. These schools would greatly benefit from having a faculty that is reflective of the student population in order to provide quality education to all students (Eshoo, 2015). Another change agent for these schools has been the National Association of Independent Schools, which has recommended that all independent schools with NAIS membership work to diversify their faculties (National Association of Independent Schools, n.d.-a).

Statement of the Problem

American public and private schools face challenges in retaining teachers of color which is a problem given the need to close the achievement gap and provide a quality education for all students. Many studies show that a diverse faculty improves achievement for students of color (Boser, 2014; Carver-Thomas, 2018; Egalite et al., 2015; Goldhaber et al., 2019; Redding, 2019; Yarnell & Bohrnstedt, 2017). Independent schools operate differently than public schools and therefore should be studied in isolation to ensure that their unique situations are fully understood for teachers working in these schools. Some critical differences between independent schools and public schools are that many times teachers are not required to have a teaching license from a state board of education and independent schools use school-specific means of teacher evaluations rather than frameworks required by the state board of education (Balossi & Hernández, 2015). Independent schools also charge tuition and have the ability to be selective

with the students that they accept into their institutions (Ortega Dolan, 2015). These factors make studying independent schools in isolation a necessary field of research. In order to understand this phenomenon, it is important to learn from the personal experiences of teachers of color who have worked or are currently working in independent schools. In order to retain teachers of color school leaders need research-based strategies.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative, phenomenological research study was to understand the lived experiences of faculty of color working in K-12 independent schools in the United States in order to illuminate the factors that contribute to faculty of color either continuing to teach at an independent school or leaving an independent school for another position in another independent school, public school, or a position outside the field of education.

Furthermore, based on the results of this research, the researcher provided a series of actionable steps, strategies, and considerations for school leadership in order to retain faculty of color within their schools.

Limitations and Delimitations

Limitations

The design of the study was to conduct interviews and, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, all interviews were conducted via Zoom, an online conferencing platform. The researcher acknowledges that these online interviews may not provide the same depth of information as face-to-face interviews.

Delimitations

The researcher does not identify as a person of color and therefore does not have personal, first-hand experience of the phenomenon that they are studying. While the researcher

sincerely attempted to put aside their own personal beliefs through reflexivity and epoch, the researcher believed that it was important to note their own racial background and its potential impact on the study.

The focus of this research is on race and ethnicity specifically. The researcher firmly believes that intersectionality is a crucial component to understanding oppression in all forms, but for the sake of specificity within this research, the researcher chose to focus only on people of color and not other factors associated with intersectionalities such as gender or sexual orientation. When participants discussed intersectionality as important in their experience, their comments were noted and considered when organizing the research into themes and subthemes.

Research Questions

The following research questions used in the completion of this study focus on the lived experiences of faculty of color who teach or taught in at least one independent school within the United States for at least three years. The overarching research question studied was: What are the lived experiences of faculty of color working in independent schools? The focus questions to guide this research were as follows:

1. What are the perspectives of faculty of color working in independent schools?
2. What experiences helped faculty of color feel supported while working in independent schools in the United States?
3. What experiences did faculty of color feel were unsupportive of them while working in independent schools?

Significance and Rationale

Understanding the lived experiences of faculty of color in independent schools may help school leaders understand the practices, policies, and school culture that allow for faculty of

color to remain in the school. This enhanced understanding will aid educational leaders in their work to diversify the faculty population of the school and, ultimately, create a faculty population that mirrors the student population of their schools. This increased faculty diversity could lead to improved academic achievement and satisfaction from students of color in K-12 independent schools in the United States, and in increased faculty morale and happiness (Moscote Basney, 2019). This increase in satisfaction and academic achievement from students in independent schools is an important step in closing the achievement gap for students of color in the United States.

Definition of Terms

Academic Achievement

Academic achievement will be defined as reaching one's academic goals, which could include, but is not limited to, graduation from high school and reaching the minimum standardized test scores or GPA for admittance into a United States university or college.

Administrators

The term *administrator* refers to school leadership including the head of school or school president and their associates or assistants, principals or division directors and their associates or assistants, and those serving as deans or directors such as a dean of students, dean of diversity, equity, and inclusion, and dean of student life. *Administrator* will be used interchangeably with *school leadership* and *school leaders*.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI)

Diversity refers to the representation of a variety of identities and backgrounds including racial or ethnic background, sexual orientation, gender identity, nationality, socio-economic status, and disability, among other factors Equity is the drive to treat all individuals equitably in

regard to equality of opportunity and access to resources. Inclusion is the work to build a culture that is welcoming of difference and understanding of the value of every person (“Diversity, equity, and inclusion,” 2016).

Independent Schools

Independent schools will be defined by their membership in the National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS).

Private schools will refer to schools that function outside of the realm of public education and operate with an independent board of trustees. Independent schools are one type of private school, therefore the term private school will serve to encompass independent schools among other private schools.

Public schools are those that are operated by a state board of education under the leadership of the United States Department of Education.

Institutionalized/Systemic Racism

Systemic racism refers to the idea that racism persists as a foundational component of American society through ideology, practice, habit, attitude, and the institutions of Whites in the United States (Feagin, 2013). It will be used interchangeably with the term *institutionalized racism*.

People of Color

People of color will refer to any people residing in the United States who do not self-identify as White. This could include people who self identify as Black or African-American, Hispanic, Latinx, Arab or Middle-Eastern, Asian, Asian-American, or Pacific Islander, Jewish, and Native American, among other possibilities. This is a list of examples and does not intend to be all-encompassing.

The term *people of color* refers to what have in the past been called *ethnic and racial minority groups* and refers to a social relationship between the two. The term *people of color* is slowly replacing previously used terms such as *ethnic and racial minorities* most significantly in activist groups and popular culture within the United States. Part of the popularity of this term is precisely the nature by which it is delimiting as it is a term used to move away from racial and ethnic categories as set by the government of the United States (Vidal-Ortiz, 2008).

For the purposes of this study, faculty of color and teachers of color will be those who meet the definition of teachers who also self-identify as people of color.

Satisfaction

Satisfaction is defined as being more happy than unhappy in a given situation.

Teachers

For the purpose of this study, the term *teacher* will be used interchangeably with the word *faculty* and include direct classroom teachers instructing students and other adults in the school who serve in an educational capacity with students including guidance or college counselors, teaching assistants, academic coaches, and athletic coaches.

Organization of the Dissertation Chapters

Chapter 1 contains an introduction to the research that covers the background for why more faculty of color are needed in K-12 independent schools in the United States. It includes the statement of the problem that exists which is that K-12 independent schools do not have a faculty population that mirrors the population of the students at any given K-12 independent school. Chapter 1 includes the purpose statement, limitations and delimitations, research questions for the study, the significance and rationale, and a definition of terms relevant to the following chapters.

Chapter 2 is a review of the most relevant literature pertaining to the experience of faculty of color in K-12 independent schools in the United States. Chapter 2 begins with an overview of the epistemological foundations of the study. Next is an analysis of Critical Theory and Critical Race Theory, which is the theoretical foundation of the research. Then it includes research related to the need for teachers of color in American schools and information about the differences between public and independent schools which helps justify the need to study independent schools in isolation. The final section is composed of research related to the causes of teacher attrition and teacher retention in both public and independent schools and among White teachers and teachers of color.

Chapter 3 contains the research methodology for the study. This section discusses the research questions, the role of the researcher, and the ethical considerations taken. It continues with the detailed steps of the interview process, how data were managed, the measures of rigor, and information about the analysis of the data.

Chapter 4 is the presentation of findings from the research. It begins with the data analysis methods used, the emergent themes found through interviews with participants, and the data results.

Chapter 5 lays out conclusions based on the findings of the research. It includes a discussion of the research findings, recommendations for practice, and recommendations for further research.

Chapter 2. Review of the Essential Literature

Introduction

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to understand the lived experiences of teachers of color who are currently working in or have left independent schools in order to give school leadership strategies to retain these teachers. This literature review begins with a review of the epistemological foundations for the study. It continues with a discussion of Critical Theory and Critical Race Theory which is the theoretical framework upon which the study is based. Next is an analysis of the need for teachers of color in all U.S. schools and a review of the key differences between public schools and independent schools in order to explain the need for more research relating specifically to the independent school sector. The review will then cover the relevant research related to teacher attrition and teacher retention in the United States in general and specifically in independent schools.

Epistemological Foundations

Introduction

This is a phenomenological research study based on narrative interviews about the lived experiences of teachers of color who are working currently or have previously worked in an independent school that is a member of the National Association of Independent Schools for at least three years. A phenomenological study is one in which the essence of an experience is the information sought by the researcher (Cresswell & Poth, 2018). The participants described their lived experiences through a narrative interview and the researcher looked for commonalities in their stories in order to grasp the universal essence of the topic. A narrative interview is an interview focused on the stories of the participant from their own point of view. One benefit of a

narrative interview is that participants guide the interview and can share information that the researcher had not expected (Stuckey, 2013).

Qualitative Research

Central to the researcher's effort to analyze issues facing faculty of color working in independent schools was to collect authentic data reflecting the depth of their personal experiences and then utilizing that data to hypothesize strategies school leaders could use to maximize retention for faculty of color. Cresswell and Poth (2018) defined qualitative research as beginning with theoretical frameworks that allow meaning to be generated from a social or human problem. The research findings may support efforts to retain teachers of color in independent schools.

Phenomenology

Phenomenological research is based on the philosophy of 18th-century German philosopher Edmund Husserl. Husserl was concerned with returning to the primary roots of philosophy which he believed were lived experiences. Other philosophical presuppositions that underlie this research method are that the researcher suspends their own judgments about what is real. Phenomenology posits that reality is in the eye of the beholder. Reality is the experience of the participant and the aim of this type of study is to develop a description of these experiences (Cresswell & Poth, 2018, Groenewald, 2004).

Typical features included in phenomenological research are a focus on a single concept or idea among a group of people who have all experienced that phenomenon (Cresswell & Poth, 2018). For the purpose of this research that central idea will be the experience of working in an independent school as a faculty member of color. In a phenomenological study, the researcher aims to describe the experience of the participant as accurately as possible without the influence

of pre-existing frameworks clouding the description (Groenewald, 2004). Phenomenological researchers may also include a discussion of the subjective aspects unique to the research participant and the objective aspect of having that same lived experience in common with the other research participants in the study. The researcher is removed from the research in order to focus on the experiences of the participants. Most phenomenological research centers around interviews; however, it may involve document analysis which is the collection of data from artifacts such as poems, observations, meeting minutes, videos, or other documents. Data analysis focuses on both the what and the how of the experience. The culminating aspect of this type of study is a rich and deep understanding of the essence of the experience based on the data (Cresswell & Poth, 2018). This research study was focused solely on the interviews given by participants.

Conclusion

In order to conduct this research, it is necessary to understand the underlying societal foundations that have led to having a disparity in the numbers of students of color and teachers of color in all American schools, but specifically in K-12 independent schools. In order to understand the status quo, this research is based upon the theoretical understandings of Phenomenology which aims to describe the lived experiences of teachers of color working in K-12 independent schools (Cresswell & Poth, 2018; Ledesma & Calderón, 2015; Tyson, 2012).

Theoretical Framework

Introduction

The theoretical framework of this research is based on Critical Theory, the belief that the basic ideas, principals, and beliefs that guide modern society should be constantly critiqued in order to reconstruct society upon more equitable and just practices (Freeman, 2010), and Critical

Race Theory (CRT), which is the belief that race is a primary basis upon which people are oppressed in this country (Sleeter, 2017). This section will discuss CRT, intersectionality, and CRT in schools.

Critical Theory

Critical Theory is a means by which people critique the world around them in order to reflect and learn new things. It is a means by which to bring the social sciences together with philosophy and is concerned with the way things are and how they have come to be this way (How, 2017). It is a theory that encourages constituents to participate in reflective and critical reassessment of the social, economic, and political structures that form modern society. This includes overarching belief systems such as capitalism all the way down to the minute, everyday practices of people in their lives. It is an inquiry approach to understanding the systems that have caused modern society to be unjust and inequitable. It is also considered a pedagogical approach because in analyzing the system that surrounds people in their lives, they are learning new ways to understand and potentially change these factors that have created systemic injustices in modern society (Freeman, 2010). Critically examining art, literature, political ideologies, pop culture, educational methods, social structures, or myriad other categories is one way that human beings discover new knowledge and provoke change in the views of others and in the world around them (Tyson, 2012).

Critical Race Theory

Introduction

Critical Race Theory (CRT) is the grounding theoretical framework for this research study. Critical Race Theory posits that racism is endemic and systemic in the United States. Racism is the fundamental ideology guiding the way that society is organized (Ledesma &

Calderón, 2015; Sleeter, 2017). CRT issues are concerned with many of the same issues as traditional civil rights concerns but are founded in the critique of the essential, foundational elements that make up modern social structures (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). It is a method of explaining the supposition that race is used to keep people of color oppressed in American society. There are two main components of CRT: understanding the relationship between oppressed people of color and Whites, and understanding the historical connection between Whites and the law, which is theorized to have resulted in the prevalence of institutionalized racism in the United States today. CRT is the lens through which many people of color interpret social phenomena and “naming one’s reality” is a key component. CRT moves away from the idea of cultural deficits within people of color, shifting the focus to the cultural assets and wealth held by the people (Ortega Dolan, 2015). CRT is more than just an academic notion as it is deeply rooted in the need for social change and implies a call to action on the part of all Americans. Proponents of this ideology aim to expose the way racialized inequity presents itself in society and the way in which this inequity must be studied as a means for change (Dixson, 2018).

CRT has its roots in the civil rights movement of the 1960s and is built on feminist philosophies constructed on the hermeneutic of relationships between power, social roles, and the invisible patterns that maintain patriarchal control in the United States. Critical race theorists built upon this framework to build upon the ideas of group empowerment and critique the invisible patterns of injustice that keep people of color out of positions of power in society (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017).

Intersectionality

Intersectionality is an important component of CRT as race, class, gender, sexual identity, marital status, and citizenship status, among other social identities, serve to marginalize people. These categories are inextricably related and important for understanding marginalization. Struggles for equality have always been intersectional. Examples like Ella Baker, John Brown, Bayard Rustin, among others, present the coalition of Whites, people of color, women, LGBTQBT people, people with disabilities, the impoverished, and other oppressed groups fighting together to end injustice (Dixson, 2018).

CRT in Schools

Allen (2016) posited that schools have always operated from the understanding that the experience of White people is the default experience. Thus, curriculum, pedagogy, policy, and decisions made do not take into account the experiences of people of color, putting Whites at an advantage in school that propagates the problem of institutionalized racism. Critical Race Theory calls for these assumptions to be questioned in schools and for educators to make changes so that all students have engaging learning experiences (Allen, 2016).

Ortega Dolan (2015) concluded that it is critical that teachers, school leaders, and the larger community engage with the issues of race and racism in the United States if there is hope to create a more equitable school experience for all American children. The idea of post-racism is propagated by “colorblind” schools that aim to treat every student the same, ignoring institutionalized racism and furthering the oppression of people of color (Ortega Dolan, 2015). In order for change to happen educators must confront the reality of the negative experiences of students of color in the education system (Allen, 2016). CRT scholars posit that race continues to be an immensely important factor in the education of American K-12 students. Despite

desegregated schools and the seeming improvement in equity among different racial groups with respect to education, there continues to be oppression in the educational experiences of students of color in schools today (Lynn & Dixon, 2013).

Conclusion

This study aims to give independent school leaders strategies for retaining teachers of color. Therefore it is foundational that leadership understands the experience of people of color. Critical Race Theory provides a means of understanding institutionalized racism and the default “Whiteness” of American society and serves as the theoretical framework for this research.

The Need for Teachers of Color

Introduction

There has been a wealth of research related to the changing demographics of school-age children and the demographics of current teachers in the United States (Bireda & Chait, 2011; Boser, 2014; Ortega Dolan, 2015; Sleeter, 2017; Villegas & Irvine, 2010). There is currently a shortage of teachers of color and of teaching candidates of color in teacher education programs across the United States that exacerbates the issue of the disparity between students of color and teachers of color in schools (Aragon, 2016). Teachers of color are important because they serve as role models for students, improve the experience of students of color in schools, provide preparation for students to thrive in diverse communities after school, improve the achievement of students of color, and serve as resources for hard to staff schools (Bireda & Chait, 2011; Carver-Thomas, 2018; Egalite et al., 2015; Eshoo, 2015; Goldhaber et al., 2019; Hollenside, 2017; Ingersoll et al., 2019; Kane & Orsini, 2003; Moscote Basney, 2019; Ortega Dolan, 2015; Redding, 2019; Villegas & Irvine, 2010; Yanell & Bohrnstedt, 2018).

Disparity Between Student and Teacher Demographics

The school-age population of the United States has seen a rapid change in demographics in recent decades. By 2048 it is estimated that the majority of students in U.S. schools will be students of color (Ortega Dolan, 2015). Almost every state has a significant difference between students of color and teachers of color. The Hispanic teacher population has the largest disparities relative to the Hispanic student population. Many times the gaps are largest within large school districts (Boser, 2014). Furthermore, the numbers are not even across demographic groups. The numbers of Native American and Black teachers in the United States are declining, while the numbers of Asian American and Hispanic teachers are increasing, but not quickly enough to match the changes in student demographics (Carver-Thomas, 2018). State policy makers realize the need for increasing the diversity of teachers and, since the 1990s, 36 states have adopted goals aimed to recruit more teachers of color (Villegas & Irvine, 2010). This lack of teachers of color has resulted in the majority of Black and Hispanic students never having a teacher of the same race during their school experience (Hollenside, 2017; Redding, 2019).

The Teacher Shortage

Introduction

There is a teacher shortage in the United States that some have called the biggest issue facing American schools today (Aragon, 2016). While there is a shortage of all teachers facing schools, there is an even greater shortage of teachers of color (Bireda & Chait, 2011; Boser, 2014; Carver-Thomas, 2018; Egalite et al., 2015; Hollenside, 2017; Ortega Dolan, 2015; Villegas & Irvine, 2010). There are many reasons that this shortage exists. One issue that begins in K-12 education that continues into universities is the achievement gap (Bireda & Chait, 2011; Ladson-Billings, 2013). The achievement gap results in fewer students of color graduating from

high school and entering colleges and universities (Williams, 2011). This furthers the issue of having too few teacher candidates of color in teacher education programs (Patton, 2015). Finally, while many teachers are unhappy with the low compensation for their work, this too disproportionately affects teachers of color (Bireda & Chait, 2011).

The Achievement Gap

The achievement gap is a well-known issue in American education. The achievement gap is the finding that students of color achieve lower results on standard measures of academic achievement than White students. Williams reported that White students outperform students of color in many traditional assessments of student achievement such as grade point average and standardized tests during their time in primary and secondary school. There are also differences in graduation rates, most notably for Black students who are three times more likely than White students to drop out of school before graduating from high school (Ladson-Billings, 2013).

Fewer high school graduates create a shortage of students of color in American colleges and universities (Patton, 2015). Bireda and Chait (2011) agreed that low rates of academic achievement for students of color, including lower high school graduation rates and lower college attendance rates, lower the number of qualified teaching candidates. Fewer teacher candidates of color could also be the result of fewer people of color being interested in teaching or that fewer people of color have the skills and qualifications to enter the profession (Ingersoll et al., 2019; Moscote Basney, 2019).

Ladson-Billings (2006) said that the focus on the achievement gap is misplaced and that instead, we need to understand the educational debt incurred by students of color. She continued that what is traditionally called the achievement gap is actually the result of a series of historical factors that lead students of color to have lower performance in traditional measures of

achievement. This includes the historical debt faced by students of color who, due to slavery and other forms of oppression, have significantly lower rates of educational attainment within families. For the same reasons, Ladson-Billings (2006) said that students of color face an economic debt as their families do not have the same levels of generational wealth as their White counterparts. There are two other types of educational debt discussed in her work; sociopolitical debt, which is the historical exclusion of people of color from civic matters, and moral debt, which is the struggle between doing what one knows to be right and what one finds to be easy which have both led to societal policies and practices which are disadvantageous to people of color. This educational debt must be addressed in order to serve students of color in American Schools (Ladson-Billings, 2006).

These issues facing students of color, whether it be called the achievement gap or educational debt carry over into university enrollment. While the statistics are improving, as 45% of undergraduate students nationwide are people of color (Espinosa et al., 2019). The graduation rates for students of color, with the exception of Asian students, is lower than White Students; with percentages of 74% for Asian students, 64% for White students, 64% for students of two or more races, 54% for Hispanic students, 51% for Pacific Islander students, 40% for Black students, and 39% for American Indian and Alaska Native students (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2019). Fewer college graduates mean that there are fewer teaching candidates available in the workforce.

Teacher Education Programs

Teacher education programs play a large role in the shortage of teachers of color in the United States. These programs regularly graduate cohorts of beginning teachers that are composed of 80% or more White teachers. This is because many teacher education programs

have not reflected upon and dismantled the policies and practices that have continued to serve mostly White students (Sleeter, 2017). Many programs still operate with a philosophy of color blindness that does not take into account what Ladson-Billings (2006) called the educational debt that students of color face (Sleeter, 2017). To operate a teacher education program as if all students started on the same level playing field is a disservice to students of color and is one reason why there are fewer teaching candidates of color in teacher education programs (Ladson-Billings, 2006, Sleeter, 2017).

Financial Considerations

For the students of color who do graduate with a 4-year degree, the high price of attending many colleges and universities in the first place puts a disproportionately difficult burden on students of color. Many people of color may not have the same financial means as White students to attend expensive universities (Ladson-Billings, 2013). Furthermore, students of color, with the exception of Asian students, are more likely than White students to attend for-profit universities (Espinosa et al., 2019). This is most prominent among Black, American Indian or Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander students. At all degree levels (undergraduate, graduate, and postgraduate) and within almost every racial or ethnic group, students who attended for-profit universities borrowed more money in order to pursue their degree and left universities with higher levels of debt than those who attended non-profit colleges and universities (Espinosa et al., 2019).

Having a heavy financial burden to bear after graduation leads some students to pursue majors in fields other than education due to the low salaries that teachers are paid. Students of color who have student loans are attracted to more lucrative careers that will allow more financial security in the future (Bireda & Chait, 2011).

Conclusion

The teacher shortage is an important issue facing American schools and it is even more pronounced for teachers of color (Aragon, 2016; Bireda & Chait, 2011). One reason for this shortage is the achievement gap which leads fewer students of color to enroll in university studies (Bireda & Chait, 2011; Ingersoll et al., 2019; Moscote Basney, 2019). Furthermore, teacher education programs need to evaluate their programs to better serve students of color, and more financial support is needed for students of color to pay for the costs of attending university (Bireda & Chait, 2011; Espinosa et al., 2019; Ladson-Billings, 2013).

Role Models

Introduction

There is a wealth of research showing that teachers of color serve as role models to students of color (Bireda & Chait, 2011; Carver-Thomas, 2018; Egalite et al., 2015; Goldhaber et al., 2019; Hollenside, 2017; Ingersoll et al., 2019; Kane & Orsini, 2003; Moscote Basney, 2019; Redding, 2019; Villegas & Irvine, 2010). Students of color, and Black students even more so, are more significantly impacted by teacher expectations than White students (Goldhaber et al., 2019). Having role model teachers of color impact students of color in schools such as improving academic achievement and improving behavioral outcomes, fighting racist stereotypes about people of color, and helping students of color learn to navigate the difficulties of being a person of color in a White dominant culture (Bireda & Chait, 2011; Carver-Thomas, 2018; Egalite et al., 2015; Eshoo, 2015; Goldhaber et al., 2019; Hollenside, 2017; Ingersoll et al., 2019; Kane & Orsini, 2003; Moscote Basney, 2019; Redding, 2019; Villegas & Irvine, 2010).

Academic Expectations

Many studies have shown growth in academic achievement when students of color are taught by teachers of color (Carver-Thomas, 2018; Goldhaber et al., 2019; Kane & Orsini, 2003). Goldhaber et al. (2019) found that students of color are impacted more significantly by teacher expectations than White Students. Students of color also reported feeling more cared for and academically challenged by teachers of color (Carver-Thomas, 2018). This difference is most profoundly noted in studies of Black students with Black teachers when compared to Black students with White teachers in elementary school (Kane & Orsini, 2003; Redding, 2019). Beyond serving as role-models and implementing high expectations for students of color, teachers of color also implement culturally responsive teaching which uses the students' cultural experiences and background to enhance their learning (Hollenside, 2017).

The benefits of having a Black teacher during at least one year in elementary school has positive effects on Black students' academic achievement many years afterward (Carver-Thomas, 2018). Hollenside (2017) called Black teachers "warm demanders" because her research has shown them able to push Black students toward the highest levels of achievement and growth.

Behavioral Expectations

Expectations held by teachers are largely influenced by culture and deeply impact the experience of students of color in schools (Goldhaber et al., 2019; Redding, 2019). Beliefs and values held by the teacher influence the perception of student behavior. Goldhaber et al. (2019) noted that students of color who have White teachers are more likely to be seen as disruptive, inattentive, or not completing assignments than students of color who are assigned to teachers of color. Goldhaber et al. (2019) posited that these factors may influence the way that a teacher

encourages or motivates a student's participation in class. Redding (2019) concluded that Black and Hispanic students assigned to a White teacher can be perceived as more disruptive in class and as having more disciplinary issues than White students. Redding (2019) continued that Black teachers are generally less likely to report Black students having disciplinary issues than teachers of another race. White teachers also subjectively rate Black students' academic performance lower than Black teachers rate Black students (Redding, 2019). Furthermore, teachers of color can serve as cultural translators for White teachers and White administrators with regard to the behavior of students of color (Egalite et al., 2015). Ingersoll et al. (2019) called this understanding of cultural heritage by teachers of color cultural synchronicity.

Fighting Stereotypes

Teachers of color serve to fight stereotypes about people of color. Sometimes a teacher of color is the only experience that a student may have with a person of color in a professional role and may help change stereotypical, racist beliefs about people of color. Teachers of color may help students achieve intercultural humility and learn to discuss racial issues appropriately. Having teachers of color in a school sends a message to students about the authority, power, justice, and the worth of others (Moscote Basney, 2019). All students need to see teachers of color in order to reduce stereotypes of intellectual incapability. Schools with only or mostly White teachers silently promote stereotypes about people of color (Hollenside, 2017).

All schools need teachers of color but independent schools particularly need them to be a force for change; elevating institutional understandings and modifying behavior (Eshoo, 2015). Schools that are preparing students to lead in a diverse society must recognize the importance of teachers of color (Kane & Orsini, 2003). Furthermore, parents of independent school students

report the importance of a diverse community in their schools in order to prepare their children for work in the diverse world outside of the school community (Eshoo, 2015).

Social-Emotional Support

Pérez del Toro (2017) found that students who attend a school environment where the student's own racial group makes up less than 20% of total enrollment report a significantly less satisfactory experience citing challenges in belonging, academic success, racial identity, and psychological well-being. Despite schools working to diversify their population, majority White independent schools can be emotionally and socially difficult for students of color according to Pérez del Toro (2017). Students are most likely to face social loneliness, racial visibility and social invisibility, and class and cultural discomfort. Some of the benefits associated with a more diverse student population include increased complex and critical thinking skills, increased cognitive development, reduced prejudice, increased cultural and social awareness, increased feelings of interpersonal similarity, increased self-efficacy, and higher levels of intellectual engagement (Pérez del Toro, 2017). Having more teachers of color could help reduce some of this discomfort for students of color attending schools that are lacking diversity (Carver-Thomas, 2018; Kane & Orsini, 2003).

Conclusion

Teachers of color serve as role models to students of color by holding high expectations for those students, showing a cultural understanding toward the behaviors of students of color, and helping to fight stereotypes about people of color (Egalite et al., 2015; Goldhaber et al., 2019; Hollenside, 2017; Ingersoll et al., 2019; Kane & Orsini, 2003; Villegas & Irvine, 2010). Improving the numbers of teachers of color now may be fundamental to having a diverse teaching population in the future (Bireda & Chait, 2011). When students of color have more

teachers of color they find school to be a more welcoming environment, they have higher levels of academic achievement, they benefit from having similar life experiences and cultural backgrounds as their teachers, and, furthermore, diversity benefits the entire school community by allowing the space for students of different backgrounds to connect and build community (Boser, 2014; Carver-Thomas, 2018; Hollenside, 2017; Moscote Basney, 2019).

Student Achievement

There have been many studies surrounding the academic achievement of students of color (Carver-Thomas, 2018; Egalite et al., 2015; Goldhaber et al., 2019; Villegas & Irvine, 2010; Williams, 2011; Yarnell & Bohrnstedt, 2017). The achievement gap between White students and students of color has been an ongoing issue that persists over many different assessments of student achievement (Williams, 2011).

Teachers of color improve the academic achievement of students of color (Carver-Thomas, 2018; Egalite et al., 2015; Goldhaber et al., 2019; Villegas & Irvine, 2010; Yarnell & Bohrnstedt, 2017). This includes improved scores on standardized math tests, increased graduation rates, and increases in the desire to go to college (Carver-Thomas, 2018). Based on a 7-year study across the state of Florida, which included 2.9 million students, a significant difference was seen in math and reading test scores when students were taught by a teacher of the same race (Egalite et al., 2015). Students of color have higher levels of academic achievement when taught by a teacher of color, but the improvement is most notable for Black students who have Black teachers. If a Black student has one Black teacher in grades three through five, they are 39% less likely to drop out of high school, and their intention to go to college increases by 29% (Goldhaber et al., 2019).

Furthermore, while teachers with higher credential test scores or National Board Certification are more effective than other teachers in general, assigning a Black student to a Black teacher has a larger effect than assigning a Black student to a White teacher with higher credential test scores or National Board Certification (Goldhaber et al., 2019). The benefits for Black students of having a Black teacher during at least one year in elementary school has positive effects for academic achievement many years afterward (Carver-Thomas, 2018). Having Black teachers in the classroom teaching Black students through race-matching has shown to improve graduation rates, increase college interest, and promote Black students' intention to enter the teaching profession themselves (Hollenside, 2017).

Cultural Deficit Theory

Ortega Dola (2015) discussed that one reason that White teachers teaching students of color may be less advantageous than teachers of color teaching students of color is the idea that White teachers believe students of color have cultural deficits. Historically White teachers believed that racial and cultural differences came from the home lives of students. This is known as the Cultural Deficit Theory. Schools reward students of color who mirror the White majority and thus force students of color to choose between their own culture and the dominant culture in order to be successful. Cultural Deficit Theory has been used to justify educational inequities that have resulted in low expectations for students of color from White teachers (Ortega Dolan, 2015).

Hard to Staff Schools

Teachers of color are needed because they may serve as a resource for traditionally hard-to-staff schools (Bireda & Chait, 2011; Carver-Thomas, 2018; Ingersoll et al., 2019; Villegas & Irvine, 2010). Teachers of color are more likely to pursue employment at schools

with a high population of students of color, which are historically struggling schools in high-poverty areas. Retaining teachers of color in these schools may be a powerful strategy for improving school stability and student achievement (Bireda & Chait, 2011). Teachers of color reported being called to teach in schools that are predominantly made up of students of color (Carver-Thomas, 2019; Villegas & Irvine, 2010). Teachers of color may have a humanistic commitment to working in schools that serve students of color (Ingersoll et al., 2019). Nationally, 75% of teachers of color work in the 25% of schools serving predominantly students of color (Carver-Thomas, 2018). Teachers of color are two to three times more likely to work in hard to staff schools serving lower-income students or students of color than White teachers (Ingersoll et al., 2019).

Conclusion

There is a need to increase the number of teachers of color in the United States for numerous reasons. Beyond having a teacher shortage in general in the United States (Aragon, 2016), student demographics are rapidly changing and there has been a dramatic increase in the number of children of color in American schools and the demographics of teachers have not matched that pace (Bireda & Chait, 2011; Boser, 2014; Ortega Dolan, 2015; Sleeter, 2017; Villegas & Irvine, 2010). Teachers of color have been shown to have positive effects on the school experience of students of color by serving as role models modeling high academic expectations and understanding the cultural differences related to student behavior (Carver-Thomas, 2018; Egalite et al., 2015; Goldhaber et al., 2019; Hollenside, 2017; Ingersoll et al., 2019; Kane & Orsini, 2003; Villegas & Irvine, 2010). Furthermore, American schools need more teachers of color because they serve to fight stereotypes of people of color and help students learn to navigate White-dominated American society (Eshoo, 2015; Hollenside, 2017;

Kane & Orsini, 2003; Moscote Basney, 2019). Finally, improving the ratio of teachers of color to White teachers could help alleviate some of the negativity that students of color experience when schools are lacking diversity (Pérez del Toro, 2017).

The Essential Differences Between Public and Independent Schools

Introduction

The focus of this study is independent schools because they are different from public schools with different operating procedures, financial considerations, and expectations among students and their families following graduation. Independent schools enjoy greater freedom with respect to the decisions, policies, and curricula that the school supports. This is because the majority of independent schools are privately funded and do not rely on public funding (Eshoo, 2015). Independent schools have historically been elite institutions that educate the children of the wealthiest and elitist Americans (Eshoo, 2015; Moscote Basney, 2019; Pérez del Toro, 2017). This has led to the homogeneity of students not seen in public schools (Eshoo, 2015; Moscote Basney, 2019; Pérez del Toro, 2017). Other reasons that families choose independent schools is because these schools usually boast admissions to the most selective colleges and universities, and offer the chance to network with other wealthy or elite families (Eshoo, 2015). Independent schools need to be studied separately from public schools because of these primary differences.

Traditional Role of Independent Schools

Independent schools were established specifically to recruit families of the upper echelons and recruited faculty with the best educational backgrounds and who would understand children from these elite families (Eshoo, 2015; Moscote Basney, 2019; Pérez del Toro, 2017). It was not only unspoken but instead, it was explicitly stated as the goal of schools such as Choate

Rosemary Hall and Phillips Andover (Eshoo, 2015). Moscote Basney (2019) posited that independent schools continue to be predominantly White institutions created exclusively for the education of White students and the employment of White teachers. Many independent schools originated as schools for Whites fleeing the desegregation ordered by *Brown vs. Board of Education* in 1954 (Pérez del Toro, 2017).

Many independent schools historically saw their homogeneous population as an asset that would further their mission to carry out a common academic purpose (Pérez del Toro, 2017). Since these schools were historically created for the education of White students, there are many traditions, policies, and curriculum in place to maintain the status quo which must be dismantled if these schools desire to change (Moscote Basney, 2019). There were some efforts to increase diversity in independent schools in the United States in the 1960s, but many parents did not support any change to the homogeneity of the population of these schools. Instead, the likeness of the students and families was a reason that people sent their children to these schools. This was a difficult barrier for many schools to overcome in their journey toward a more diverse student population (Eshoo, 2015). If there is to be continued change now, independent schools need a comprehensive plan in order to systemically change and dismantle the systems in order to attract and support students and teachers of color (Moscote Basney, 2019).

Increasing Student Diversity

While some independent schools began working to increase the diversity of their student body, the National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS) crafted its first requirements that schools embrace racial diversity openly and publicly in order to be members of the organization in the late 1960s (Esty, 1992). In the early days of diversifying the student population, many independent schools specifically did not address the differences in the student experience for

Whites and students of color. They operated from the position of color blindness; the policy that all students would be treated the same regardless of their racial or ethnic background (Eshoo, 2015). Gradually those schools have mostly realized that it is important to talk about the student experience and acknowledge differences (Eshoo, 2015; Moscote Basney, 2019; Pérez del Toro, 2017). Now, many schools have diversity directors who are tasked with overseeing many aspects of diversity on campus (Eshoo, 2015).

In the 1940s and 1950s, the headmasters of the Dalton School in New York City and Phillips Exeter Academy both led initiatives to increase diversity in their schools. Dalton Schools did so by recruiting the children of successful professionals of color to join the school from kindergarten. Phillips Exeter Academy just made public their policy to accept the best applicants regardless of their race, ethnicity, socioeconomic background, independent or private school history, among other divisive factors that might have been previously considered when accepting applicants (Eshoo, 2015). In the mid-1960s many independent schools partnered with an organization that was called A Better Chance (ABC) (Eshoo, 2015; Esty, 1992). This organization focused on helping mostly Black and often economically disadvantaged students prepare for and gain acceptance into independent schools (A Better Chance, n.d.; Eshoo, 2015). The increasing numbers of Black students enrolled in this organization during their work with ABC were notable (Eshoo, 2015).

Now, most independent schools have some language in their mission statement relating to increasing or respecting diversity whether that be racial or ethnic, gender, socioeconomic, or another category of diversity (Eshoo, 2015). And while this language exists, there are still many obstacles to putting the philosophy into practice at these schools. Schools sometimes focus on their statistics surrounding the diversity of their student populations and shy away from

conversations about the strategic plan to increase and/or maintain the diversity that the school has achieved. Furthermore, adding more students and faculty of color does not automatically change the institution; this is where the strategic plan, professional development, and other forms of education are necessary. Adding diversity to the faculty is one of the biggest obstacles independent schools face today. This has been a greater challenge than diversifying the student population. These schools have an on-going need to evaluate and reflect on their current diversity and inclusion strategies and make changes to continue to improve and grow. Independent schools must have a plan for accountability with regard to their diversity and inclusion strategies (Pérez del Toro, 2017).

Conclusion

Independent schools are in a unique situation because many were created specifically to isolate White students of privilege from the diversity of the world around them (Eshoo, 2015; Moscote Basney, 2019; Pérez del Toro, 2017). Independent schools have vastly different operating procedures than public schools and convergent history regarding the move toward diversifying the student body and the faculty of these institutions (Eshoo, 2015). Research relating specifically to retaining teachers of color in independent schools is necessary in order for school leadership to create a faculty body that mirrors the diversity seen in the students but also in the larger population of the United States today.

Teacher Attrition

Introduction

Teacher attrition is a problem facing all schools and teachers of varying races, ethnicities, genders, or other degrees of difference (Phillips, 2019). This is especially concerning considering the teacher shortage that exists in the United States today (Aragon, 2016). Teacher attrition is a

problem because it results in both significant learning loss for students and monetary costs for school districts (Hollenside, 2017). In his study of over 700 teachers in a large Midwestern public school system, Phillips (2019) found that for all teachers work environment, fit, compensation, leadership, performance management, and mentoring affect teacher retention and are viewed differently based on the demographic information of the teacher being surveyed (Phillips, 2019).

Overall attrition for teachers of all races may not be any higher than the turnover rates for other professions, but there are some schools that have very high rates of attrition. These schools generally serve low-performing, non-White, and low-income students (Boyd et al., 2011). This is concerning because teachers of color are more likely to work in these hard-to-staff schools (Bireda & Chait, 2011; Carver-Thomas, 2018; Ingersoll et al., 2019; Villegas & Irvine, 2010).

Ingersoll et al.'s (2019) research showed that while the number of people of color in the teaching field has increased, the turnover rates are significantly higher for teachers of color than their White counterparts. New teachers and teachers of color are the most likely to leave a school; accounting for up to 50% turnover within their first 5 years. Teacher turnover rates are higher at the schools with generally the fewest financial resources such as those labeled as low performing, have high numbers of students of color, and are considered high poverty schools (Hollenside, 2017). There are many factors at play in explaining teacher attrition including district/school dysfunction, pay, personal career goals, and other support from school leadership (Bireda & Chait, 2011; Phillips, 2019). There is an especially high turnover rate at high-poverty schools due to the unique challenges presented in working in those school locations (Bireda & Chait, 2011).

Furthermore, this problem is even more prominent for Black faculty. While the number of teachers of color has improved in U.S. schools in the last 30 years, the number of Black teachers has decreased during the same time period (Hollenside, 2017).

Teacher Education Programs

Research has shown that one reason teachers of color leave the profession at rates higher than their White counterparts begins in teacher education programs. Teacher education programs routinely prepare teacher cohorts of 80% White teachers despite White students making up less than half of the school-age population in the United States (Sleeter, 2017).

Most teacher education programs say that they have a social justice framework for the program, but many only offer one or two courses related to teaching diverse students and the rest of the courses pay little or no attention to race, ethnicity, or other aspects of the student experience. State teacher certification and accreditation policies that are applied equally to all candidates fail to account for the ways that race and ethnicity matter and support the continued Whiteness of teachers in this country. The tests given for state teaching certifications are often Eurocentric and have pass rates that are much higher for White candidates than teachers of color (Sleeter, 2017).

School Leadership

Principals have a significant effect on the retention of all teachers through motivation, articulating goals and vision, creating appropriate performance expectations, communicating effectively, and properly allocating resources. Most principals, like most teachers, prefer to work in high achieving schools that usually have fewer students of color, and move into those schools when given the opportunity. This further exacerbates the problem of retaining teachers of color

when school leadership is often in flux in the schools where teachers of color are most needed (Boyd et al., 2011).

Ingersoll et al. (2019) posited that there is actually not an issue with the recruitment of teachers of color, as those numbers have grown exponentially in the past 20 years, but that the real issue is the retention of teachers of color who leave schools at a disproportionately higher rate than White teachers. Teachers of color report leaving schools due to the organizational conditions within the school including the presence and amount of faculty collective decision making at the school and the classroom autonomy given to teachers. These two factors proved to be more important in retaining teachers of color than were salary, professional development, and classroom resources (Ingersoll et al., 2019).

Pérez del Toro (2017) argued that some independent school leaders do not believe that White privilege exists or, if they do believe that it exists, they think that discussing it only leads to greater problems and tensions. Those school leaders who do have a foundational understanding of the different work experiences of White teachers compared to teachers of color are at times uncomfortable talking about diversity, equity, and inclusion and therefore downplay the issues that exist in their schools. Issues of diversity provoke anxiety in many school leaders who are unequipped to have honest, difficult discussions about the work that must be done (Pérez del Toro, 2017). Moscote Basney (2019) agreed that most leadership at independent schools is White and many times those White leaders do not know how to deal with the issues surrounding race and diversity.

School Culture

Much of the creation or retention of school culture starts with the priorities and decisions of school leadership. Independent schools differ from public schools in that they usually have

more layers of leadership woven throughout teachers, deans, division directors, and heads of school. These leaders directly influence the policies and procedures that govern the workplace and the day-to-day activities that happen at school. These factors, among others, are largely known as school culture (Nichols, 2018).

Ingersoll et al.'s 2019 study showed that teachers of color leave schools at a disproportionately higher rate due to organizational factors at the school. The two organizational components teachers of color reported being important in their decisions to leave were the levels of collective faculty decision-making at the school and the level of individual autonomy each teacher had in the classroom (Ingersoll et al., 2019).

The conditions within a school, including racial climate, the collegiality of colleagues, and support from leadership, are the largest predictors of teacher attrition for teachers of color in independent schools (Moscote Basney, 2019). Teachers of color report high levels of job dissatisfaction contributing to the lack of teacher diversity in schools (Hollenside, 2017). Moscote Basney (2019) indicated that teachers of color are leaving the field of teaching more often than White teachers due to Racial Battle Fatigue (RBF); the psychological stress caused by constant and chronic exposure to racism in schools. Furthermore, teachers of color face barriers to promotions due to RBF and institutional racism which increase the number of teachers of color leaving the field of education.

Moscote Basney (2019) added that in schools where institutionalized racism is not addressed and no plans are made to improve school culture, teachers of color feel like tokens hired for the sake of seeming inclusivity within the school. The attention received from being seen as a "token" adds stress on job performance and results in feelings of depression and loss of identity. Moscote Basney (2019) continued that teachers of color are often seen as

representatives of their racial or ethnic group instead of as individuals which adds stress with respect to the emotional well-being of the person. This stress is due to teachers of color feeling as if they have to perform well at every moment across the board for the sake of giving a good name to their own racial or ethnic group. Teachers of color feel their daily choices are more harshly analyzed and criticized for these same reasons. They must make the right decision in every case because it is their responsibility to project a positive racial or ethnic image on the behalf of all people of color. People of color can feel “on display” as if they were an artifact in a museum for others to see (Moscote Basney, 2019).

Teachers of color are also more likely than White teachers are to experience microaggressions within the workplace. Microaggressions are daily verbal, behavioral, or environmental degradations, such as racial slurs, directed toward others (Moscote Basney, 2019). Many times these micro-aggressions are unintentional or not even noticed on the part of White teachers and students, but impact the daily lives of teachers and students of color in schools and in the larger society (Allen, 2016; Moscote Basney, 2019).

According to Hollenside (2017), the same rings true for Black teachers specifically, as well. Adverse working conditions that include the management styles of school leaders, the ability to influence the decision-making process of the school, and the type of control the teacher has on pedagogy, curriculum, and discipline are all factors that lead Black teachers to leave schools. Black teachers report a lack of support from colleagues and administrators, low salaries, and racism as key factors that influence their decisions to remain in or leave the field of education. Furthermore, the opportunity for career advancement and the cultural responsiveness of the administration play a key role in Black teacher satisfaction in the workplace (Hollenside, 2017).

Conclusion

Teacher attrition is an issue nationwide among teachers of all backgrounds (Aragon, 2016; Phillips, 2019) and is an especially pressing issue given the changes in student demographics in the United States today and the increased rates of teacher attrition among teachers of color (Bireda & Chait, 2011; Hollenside, 2017; Ingersoll et al., 2019; Pérez del Toro, 2017). Studies show that teacher education programs, school leadership, and school culture are the leading factors causing teachers of color to leave schools or leave the education profession altogether (Boyd et al., 2011; Hollenside, 2017; Ingersoll et al., 2019; Moscote Basney, 2019; Pérez del Toro, 2017; Sleeter, 2017).

Teacher Retention

Introduction

Studies of schools that have experienced success in teacher retention have shown that having specific hiring strategies and policies related to candidates of color is important (Bireda & Chait, 2011; Carver-Thomas, 2018; Kane & Orsini, 2003; Moscote Basney, 2019; Pérez del Toro, 2017). In order to retain teachers of color schools must also provide financial support for those teachers, have strong school leadership, and have a supportive school culture (Bireda & Chait, 2011; Carver-Thomas, 2018; Hollenside, 2017; Moscote Basney, 2019; Pérez del Toro, 2017; Phillips, 2019; Thomas et al., 2018).

Teacher Education Programs

Another avenue that should be renovated in order to retain more teachers of color in the profession is teacher education programs (Bireda & Chait, 2011; Moscote Basney, 2019; Sleeter 2017). Bireda and Chait (2011) recommended that teacher education programs be federally mandated to report on diversity initiatives and that some type of federal accountability system be

put in place. Recommendations for improving recruitment and retention efforts for people of color include increased federal oversight in teacher preparation programs including mandating reporting on diversity efforts, statewide initiatives aimed at people of color, and strengthening financial aid programs for people of color entering the profession (Bireda & Chait, 2011).

Universities should begin recruiting for teacher education programs when students are still in high school. They should also include a social justice framework for programs that make efforts to advance equity among teacher candidates (Moscote Basney, 2019). Finally, in order for teacher candidates of color to successfully complete teacher education programs, these programs must address racism fully and directly in order to prepare teachers to teach diverse students and to diversify their own teacher candidates as well (Sleeter, 2017).

Hiring Strategies

Schools that are effective in the retention of teachers of color have specific hiring strategies with this mission. In order to create a hiring strategy or policy, schools should include all stakeholders in the initial steps in order to gain feedback from others and have community buy-in. When creating a hiring committee, schools should select faculty and staff that reflect the diversity that the school is seeking to create (Kane & Orsini, 2003). In addition, people of color should be represented at all levels of the administration: the board of trustees, school administrators, teachers, faculty and staff (Pérez del Toro, 2017). Schools should interview strong candidates of color even when there are no openings and create positions for ideal candidates of color (Kane & Orsini, 2003). Schools can start “grow your own” programs that recruit teacher candidates from the already established school community. These candidates are more likely to reflect local diversity and have more invested in the progress of the community (Carver-Thomas, 2018).

Teacher Recruitment

In order to find quality applicants of color, schools need to work on recruiting those applicants. Relationship building is a key component to recruiting teachers of color successfully (Bireda & Chait, 2011; Moscote Basney, 2019). In case studies involving Teach for America, The New Teacher Project-Fellowship Programs, the Urban Teacher Enhancement Program, the North Carolina Teaching Fellows Scholarship Program, and Teach Tomorrow in Oakland, Bireda & Chait (2011) found that the alternative teacher recruitment programs with the most success in retaining teachers of color were those that spent a lot of time building relationships early in the recruitment process. Their research also showed that highly attractive teaching candidates have many options and view teaching as a less prestigious career choice.

Furthermore, within these organizations there is a noted need to balance recruitment with teacher effectiveness. Finally, once candidates decided to enter these programs, there were obstacles surrounding the financially intensive licensure process for these candidates. They added that all of these alternative licensure programs faced financial hardships in the recruitment of teaching candidates of color (Bireda & Chait, 2011).

On the reverse, if strong relationships are not built, teachers of color can feel invisible during the recruitment phase of hiring and can believe that they were an affirmative-action hire. Many candidates feel that they are visible only in the sense of the token diversity that they will bring to the institution instead of being valued for their own individual accomplishments and skills (Moscote Basney, 2019).

Mentoring

Another factor that contributes to the retention of all teachers but specifically to teachers of color is the presence of mentoring early in the teacher's career. Johnson (2005) points to data

from a survey of teachers conducted by the National Education Association in which teachers ranked having cooperative and competent mentors as the number one factor in helping them teach well. Perry and Hayes (2011) supported the idea that mentors are important regardless of the race of the teacher but also those mentors who are most effective are the ones who are paired with teachers with similar major traits and characteristics.

Dixon et al. (2019) in their case studies of teachers of color reported that these teachers face five main challenges: an antagonistic work culture, feeling undervalued, experiencing a lack of autonomy and agency, unfavorable work conditions, and financial and psychological impacts. Mentorship emerged as an important component to the retention of teachers of color in the workforce. Dixon et al. (2019) continued that principals needed to provide opportunities for formal and informal mentorships and create a sense of community with strong relationships.

Financial Support

Another obstacle that teachers of color face is the financial hardship of going to college (Bireda & Chait, 2011; Carver-Thomas, 2018; Ladson-Billings, 2013; Moscote Basney, 2019). Bireda and Chait (2011) recommended that the TEACH grant program, a federally funded program offering grants to students studying to be teachers, be expanded, that more federal work-study and internship opportunities be offered, that more lower-cost options for teacher preparation and certification be explored, and that states create state-wide recruitment programs for teaching candidates of color. States can provide funding for teacher residency programs in order to improve training (Bireda & Chait, 2011). Candidates who receive quality training before entering the classroom are two to three times more likely to stay in the classroom than those who embark upon teaching in an alternative licensure program with inadequate training. States can support candidates of color by providing more scholarship and loan forgiveness programs in

exchange for three to five years of teaching (Carver-Thomas, 2018). Independent schools specifically should strengthen financial aid programs for low-income graduates of the school to return to their alma mater to teach (Moscote Basney, 2019).

School Leadership

School leadership is critically important for the retention of teachers of color (Hollenside, 2017; Thomas et al., 2018). Hollenside's (2017) research concluded that school leadership should incorporate six key components in order to retain Black teachers; giving support and recognition, showing racial and cultural consciousness and competency, creating the space for connections with black students, families and communities, career advancement opportunities, inclusion initiatives, and showing respect.

All school leadership must be actively engaged in the diversity and inclusion work of the school if it is to be effective (Carver-Thomas, 2018; Moscote Basney, 2019). This work should be included in everyone's job description and faculty should be evaluated on how they are supporting and encouraging inclusivity (Moscote Basney, 2019). Schools should improve training for principals surrounding the recruitment and retention of teachers of color including professional development, community partnerships, and on-going professional learning (Carver-Thomas, 2018). The leadership style of school administrators also makes a difference in the experience of teachers of color. Teachers report that school leaders who are transformational or have transformational leadership styles make them feel more motivated to teach and more satisfied with the job (Thomas et al., 2018). Teachers of color also need to have opportunities for advancement if they are going to remain at the school (Carver-Thomas, 2018).

Another important component to retaining teachers of color is that school leaders recognize the presence of institutional racism and actively work against it in the school

(Carver-Thomas, 2018; Hollenside, 2017; Moscote Basney, 2019). Leadership must recognize not only that institutionalized racism exists in the larger society, but also that it exists within most if not all school structures and be a vocal proponent of change (Moscote Basney, 2019). School leaders should accept and acknowledge the existence of racism in many forms including when it is covert or subtle. Schools should also provide professional development on cultural competence and responsiveness for all faculty, staff, and students (Hollenside, 2017). These needs are even more important for Black teachers. Black teachers are more likely to stay in a school where the leadership recognizes racial injustice and actively works against it (Carver-Thomas, 2018).

School Culture

Beyond having supportive school leadership, the larger culture of the school must also be one that is supportive of teachers of color (Carver-Thomas, 2018, Pérez del Toro, 2017). An important aspect of school culture is that teachers have buy-in at the school and serve as teacher-leaders (Carver-Thomas, 2018, Moscote Basney, 2019; Pérez del Toro, 2017). Carver-Thomas' (2018) research showed that Black teachers feel supported when they are recognized for their expertise. Many Black teachers report feeling the need to prove themselves or being relegated to teaching only lower-level classes. Black teachers need administrators who ensure that they are professionally and culturally respected in the larger school community (Carver-Thomas, 2018).

Building relationships within the school community is another important component of the school culture that aids in the retention of teachers of color (Carver-Thomas, 2018; Phillips, 2019; Thomas et al., 2018). Teachers report that student growth is the most rewarding aspect of their jobs followed by the relationships that they have with their co-workers (Phillips, 2019).

Furthermore, collegial support is positively related to how teachers feel about their jobs (Thomas et al., 2018). Professional support plays an important role for all teachers with regard to retention. Finally, the diversity of the teaching staff directly impacts the ability of teachers of color to build strong relationships with colleagues (Carver-Thomas, 2018).

The culture of the school must be one where diversity, equity, and inclusion are central to the mission of the school and school leaders must be vocal about the retention of faculty of color in order for successful change to happen (Moscote Basney, 2019; Pérez del Toro, 2017). School programs must be consistently evaluated and should include faculty mentoring, affinity groups, and professional development opportunities related to diversity and inclusion work (Moscote Basney, 2019).

Finally, there must be ongoing education for every member of the school community. Independent schools that have been successful in recruiting and retaining teachers of color have looked at the need for educating all school stakeholders including the board of trustees, staff, students, parents, and faculty, and have ensured that the curriculum includes the thinking of non-Westerns. The entire culture of the school must change in order for the school to be successful. Schools should supply and promote anti-bias training for the entire school community on a regular basis. Schools should develop mentoring programs for faculty of color and create school-wide affinity groups for parents beyond any other diversity committees (Kane & Orsini, 2003).

Conclusion

Independent schools need to recruit teachers of color in order to address the gap between the numbers of students of color and teachers of color in American schools (Boser, 2014; Carver-Thomas, 2018; Egalite et al., 2015; Hollenside, 2017; Ortega Dolan, 2015; Villegas &

Irvine, 2010). Successfully recruiting teachers of color starts with building strong relationships that make candidates feel like more than a “token” diversity hire (Bireda & Chait, 2011; Moscote Basney, 2019). Schools must provide unique financial assistance to offset the costs incurred by people of color who are competing teacher education programs and the federal government must provide increased financial assistance to these students (Bireda & Chait, 2011, Carver-Thomas, 2018, Moscote Basney, 2019). School leaders are most effective when they possess a transformational leadership style, acknowledge and understand institutionalized racism and make fighting it a priority, and provide advancement opportunities for teachers of color (Carver-Thomas, 2018; Hollenside, 2017; Moscote Basney, 2019; Thomas et al., 2018). The culture of the school must provide space for teacher leadership, relationship building among colleagues and the community, and have a team committed to ongoing education related to diversity and inclusion initiatives (Moscote Basney, 2019; Pérez del Toro, 2017). Schools should commit themselves to provide ongoing education about diversity and inclusion (Kane & Orsini, 2003). Finally, teacher education programs can be improved by recruiting candidates of color while they are still in high school, increasing federal oversight of the diversity of the candidates within the program, and including a social justice framework within their programs (Bireda & Chait, 2011; Moscote Basney, 2019; Sleeter, 2017).

Conclusion

The results of this research will provide actionable steps for leaders of independent schools to retain faculty of color. It is based on Critical Race Theory, which is the belief that racism is systemic in the United States and continues the cycle of oppression of people of color (Dixson, 2018; Sleeter, 2017).

The literature reviewed by the researcher supports that there is a need for teachers of color due to the overall teacher shortage in the United States, the disparity between the demographics of school-age children and teachers, and the need for role-models for students of color (Aragon, 2016; Bireda & Chait, 2011; Boser 2014; Carver-Thomas, 2018; Hollenside, 2017; Ingersoll et al., 2019; Moscote Basney, 2019; Ortega Dolan, 2015; Villegas & Irvine, 2010). Other reasons that more teachers of color are needed in schools is to improve the academic achievement of students of color and because they serve as a resource for hard to staff schools (Bireda & Chait, 2011; Carver-Thomas, 2018; Egalite et al., 2015; Goldhaber et al., 2019; Hollenside, 2017; Ingersoll et al., 2019; Moscote Basney, 2019; Villegas & Irvine, 2010; Yarnell & Bohrnstedt, 2017).

There are distinct differences between independent schools and public schools that must be considered when addressing the need for more teachers of color in such schools (Eshoo, 2015). Some differentiating factors for independent schools are that they have historically been elite institutions focused on educating wealthy White children (Moscote Basney, 2019; Pérez del Toro, 2017). These schools operate outside the realm of public funding and therefore are not required to meet the same expectations from the federal government as public schools (Eshoo, 2015). While many independent schools have made the shift to recruiting more students and faculty of color, this continues to be a challenge due to the unique history of these institutions (Eshoo, 2015, Pérez del Toro, 2017).

There are many reasons for general teacher attrition in the United States (Phillips, 2019), but there are many that stand out in relation to teachers of color (Bireda & Chait, 2011; Boyd et al., 2011; Hollenside, 2017; Ingersoll et al., 2019). Some causes for the higher rates of attrition among teachers of color include issues with teacher education programs, support from school

leadership, and issues within the culture of the school (Bireda & Chait, 2011; Boyd et al., 2011; Hollenside, 2017; Ingersoll et al., 2019; Moscote Basney, 2019; Pérez del Toro, 2017; Sleeter, 2017).

There are strategies that independent school leaders can use to retain faculty of color within their schools. These strategies include creating purposeful hiring strategies, recruiting teachers of color, offering financial support to candidates of color, providing strong school leadership and a supportive school culture (Bireda & Chait, 2011; Boyd et al., 2011; Carver-Thomas, 2018; Hollenside, 2017; Ingersoll et al., 2019; Kane & Orsini, 2003; Moscote Basney, 2019; Pérez del Toro, 2017; Sleeter, 2017, Thomas et al., 2018). Furthermore, to improve the number of candidates of color for all teaching jobs, teacher education programs should recruit in high school, report on diversity numbers annually to the federal government, and address issues of racism and social justice within their programs (Bireda & Chait, 2011; Moscote Basney, 2019; Sleeter, 2017).

Chapter 3. Research Methodology

Overview

The purpose of this research study was to understand the lived experiences of teachers of color who are working in or previously worked in independent schools that are members of the National Association of Independent Schools. This research will provide independent school leaders possible strategies for retaining teachers of color.

Research Questions

The overarching question for this research is: What are the lived experiences of faculty of color working in independent schools? The research questions utilized to guide this study were the following:

1. What are the perspectives of faculty of color working in independent schools?
2. What experiences helped faculty of color feel supported while working in independent schools in the United States?
3. What experiences did faculty of color feel were unsupportive of them while working in independent schools?

Qualitative Design

Qualitative research begins with the frameworks that guide the research (Maxwell, 2005). This is a phenomenological study based on the lived experiences of participants and is grounded in Critical Theory and Critical Race Theory. The design for this research started with the broad question concerning the perceptions of faculty of color working in independent schools. The focus questions served to give participants the chance to provide rich details about their experiences and allowed the researcher to create themes based on participants' responses.

Role of the Researcher

It is the primary role of the researcher in a qualitative study to attempt to access the feelings and perspectives of the participant (Sutton & Austin, 2015). The researcher asked many in-depth follow up questions during interviews to ensure that she was accurately understanding the thoughts, feelings, and perspectives of the study participants.

It is also the role of the researcher in any study to safeguard the information being provided by participants. The researcher followed guidelines from the Institutional Review Board of the university when taking steps to ensure the privacy and confidentiality of participants in the study.

Ethics

Introduction

This section discusses the ethical considerations of the researcher with regard to the study. It includes the considerations before beginning the study, the considerations during the interviews, and details the informed consent process.

Prior to the Study

The researcher sought approval from the university through their dissertation chair and dissertation committee. Then the researcher completed the appropriate training through the institutional review board of the university and ultimately received approval to complete the study from the institutional review board of the university and from their dissertation committee.

Interviews and Informed Consent

Informed consent is an important and necessary part of any research containing human subjects (Cresswell & Poth, 2018; Hammersley, 2012). Participants were informed in the first email correspondence about the purpose of the research and that it was the intention of the

researcher to keep all personal, identifiable information confidential. If a participant agreed to continue with the study, they were sent a blank informed consent document at least two days before the interview so that they had ample time to review it. Participants were also told that they could withdraw their participation at any time during the process. Participants were told before the interview began that their participation was voluntary and that all personally identifiable information would be kept confidential. The researcher reviewed the informed consent form with each participant at the beginning of each interview and then confirmed that the participant consented to participate again at the end of the interview. Finally, transcriptions were sent to each participant to ensure that they reflected in fact what the participant intended to say and that the participant still gave their consent for the information to be used for the study.

Sampling Strategy

For this study, both purposeful sampling and snowball sampling were used. Purposeful sampling is when a researcher uses their own judgment to select participants that they know will inform an understanding of the problem (Cresswell & Poth, 2018). The first recruitment strategy used was contacting diversity, equity, and inclusion directors who were members of the diversity forum of the National Association of Independent Schools' website. The researcher contacted directors via email (Appendix A) to ask for the email to be forwarded to any faculty of color who may have been interested in participating in the study. Potential participants emailed the researcher to indicate their interest in participating in the study. After initial participants were identified from this purposeful sampling strategy, snowball sampling was used. Snowball sampling is when the researcher finds potential participants by asking if initial participants know anyone who meets the participant criteria that would be interested in participating in the study (Cresswell & Poth, 2018). Finally, the researcher and participant discussed via email the best

time for the interviews to take place over Zoom. The researcher made every effort to find a time that was most convenient for the participant whether that be during the week or weekend, in the mornings, afternoons, or evenings.

Sample

There were 12 total participants in this research study who worked at NAIS member independent schools across the United States including in California, Colorado, Connecticut, Florida, Georgia, Indiana, Maryland, Minnesota, Ohio, and Texas. Participants were varied in their teaching positions including lower, middle, and upper school, counseling, or library positions. There were nine female participants and three male participants. Of the 12 total participants, four were currently serving as diversity directors, four were currently serving as diversity coordinators, and one was serving as a dean of students. All participants were either currently teaching classes or had previously been classroom teachers or in direct student support roles. The participants averaged 13 years working in the field of education. Eight participants self-identified as Black or African-American, two self-identified as Asian, one self-identified as Latinx, and one self-identified as being of mixed racial heritage. Nine of the participants had left at least one position working in an independent school during their careers. Pseudonyms were assigned to the participants in order to protect their confidentiality. Composite stories were used as necessary to further protect the confidentiality of the participants.

Interviews

Contacting Participants

Based on the information obtained from the strategies listed in the sampling and recruitment section, a spreadsheet was created of all potential participants for the study. The spreadsheet included the name of the participant, the school where they currently or previously

worked, participant email, confirmation of a signed informed consent document, the participant's chosen pseudonym, the date and time of the interview, and a section for any additional details as needed.

Scheduling Interviews

Interviews were scheduled over a two-month period between October and December of 2020. The goal was to interview three to four people per week and transcribe and code all interviews within two days of their completion.

Planning Interview Location and Duration

The researcher conducted all interviews via Zoom, an educational video conferencing software that is freely accessible to anyone with a computer and internet access. The interview was scheduled to take 45 minutes to one hour but the actual times varied based on the length of responses given by the participants. The researcher conducted these interviews at times in her own classroom teaching space and other times at her home. The same was true for study participants.

Interview Protocol

The researcher created an interview protocol (Appendix B) that contained the basic guide for each interview. It includes a confirmation that the participant meets the study criteria, a review of the informed consent document and a chance for the participant to ask any questions, the basic interview guiding questions, and finally a review of the follow-up items to be done post-interview.

Interview Process

The researcher conducted one interview with each participant that lasted between 30 minutes and one hour. The researcher followed the interview protocol when completing all

interviews and avoided siding with the opinions given by interview participants and reported contrary findings when they arose in order to complete ethically sound data analysis (Hammersley, 2012). When necessary, the interviewer asked clarifying or follow-up questions based on the responses of the individual participant.

Follow-Up

The researcher transcribed all interviews using a denaturalized method of transcription. Denaturalized transcription removes elements such as involuntary sounds, mumbling, laughter and instead focuses on the essence of the interview (Mero-Jaffe, 2011). A copy of the transcription was sent via email to the participants so that they could approve, edit, or omit any information before the information was included in the study. This type of follow-up is known as a member check (Cresswell & Poth, 2018).

Data Management

Interviews were recorded via the Zoom platform which records not only the audio but also the video to the local hard drive being used. A secondary audio recording device was used as a backup. All Zoom files were saved to a password-protected hard drive and all audio files were transferred to that same computer immediately following the interview. The files were then deleted from the recording device.

Participants were given pseudonyms for this study in order to protect their identity during this study and the original names and assigned pseudonyms were saved on an external hard drive separate from the rest of the study information and kept in a locked file cabinet.

Measures of Rigor

Introduction

This section contains information on how the researcher went about ensuring the trustworthiness of the study by considering the four main aspects of trustworthiness which include credibility, transferability, dependability, confirmability (Shenton, 2004). The researcher also discusses the authenticity of the study. Authenticity refers to the idea that the researcher is not only evaluating the lived experiences of the participants but also situating those experiences in the larger political and social context of the world in which the participants live (James, 2008).

Credibility

For a research study to be considered credible, it must provoke confidence in the results. It is the equivalent to internal validity in a quantitative study (Connelly, 2016). The credibility of a qualitative research study is defined by the quality of the descriptions given, the triangulation strategies used, the multivocality of the research (or the presence of multiple and varied voices), and through member reflections. Triangulation is the idea that if two or more independent researchers reach the same conclusion based on multiple data points, that those conclusions are more credible. It is therefore important that the researcher access multiple data sources, methods, and theoretical lenses in order to explain the phenomenon (Tracy, 2010). The researcher triangulated the findings by consulting similar research as analyzed in the literature review, and by using multiple theoretical lenses (Phenomenology, Critical Theory, and Critical Race Theory). Furthermore, the researcher asked follow-up questions during interviews to elicit a richness of detail, interviewed participants that showed multiple and varied voices, and completed member checks composed of the transcription of the interview and the opportunity for study participants to further engage with the process.

Transferability

Transferability is the ability of the results to be transferred to similar groups in different places. A rich, detailed description of the experience of the study participants allows for the research to be transferable even though the goal of qualitative research is not specifically generalization (Connelly, 2016). The researcher asked many follow-up questions to participants in order to elicit this richness in detail and thus allow for the transferability of the study.

The researcher also used purposeful sampling which is when the researcher intentionally selects participants that they know will benefit the research. Purposeful sampling is another strategy which allows for the transferability of the study (Jensen, 2008c).

Dependability

Dependability is whether the findings are found to be stable over time. It is the equivalent of reliability in a quantitative study (Connelly, 2016). In qualitative research, the research context is continually changing when the researcher is conducting interviews (or other field work) and therefore it is critical that the researcher create procedures to ensure that the experiment can be replicated by others (Jensen, 2008b). In order to assist with the dependability of the study, the researcher kept a process log that included notes of everything that happened during the study and justifications for decisions that were made in order to allow for the successful repetition of the study by others.

Confirmability

Confirmability is an important component to the trustworthiness of the study. Confirmability means that the study is accurately depicting the stories of the participants and is free of researcher bias (Connelly, 2016). If the research is confirmable then the researcher has constructed meanings that are in alignment with and based upon the perspectives of the

participants. Confirmability does not mean that the researcher will not bring their own perspective to the work, but rather that the researcher is upfront about any bias that may have impacted the study (Jensen, 2008a). For this reason, the researcher explained their potential biases for further researchers and attempted to limit the impact of these biases while conducting the research.

Authenticity

Authenticity is achieved when the researcher fairly and completely shows a range of realities in the lives of the participants (Connelly, 2016). In order to conduct authentic research, the researcher should make efforts to ensure that the research is genuine not only in consideration of the participants' lived experiences but also within the larger social and political context present during the time of the research (James, 2008). The researcher aimed to achieve authenticity by interviewing a diverse group of teachers within the larger category of people of color. The researcher interviewed people of color in varying positions within independent schools and varying racial and ethnic backgrounds in order to ensure authenticity within the study. The researcher situated the lived experience of participants inside the larger social and political context in the discussion section of Chapter 5.

Data Analysis

Introduction

The following section includes information about the analysis of the data. It includes a discussion of epoche, the coding procedures used by the researcher, and how the data were interpreted and synthesized.

Epoche

In a phenomenological study, the researcher should begin by describing their own experiences in order to recognize that they cannot remove themselves completely from the situation. This is the first step in phenomenological reduction known as “epoche” (Cresswell & Poth, 2018). This process helped the researcher set aside their own preconceived experiences in order to fully understand the participants in the study.

Coding Procedures

First, the researcher reviewed the transcripts of the interviews many times. This allowed the researcher to then focus on the phenomena experienced by each participant by highlighting significant statements and quotes that provided an understanding of how the participants experienced the phenomenon. The researcher then listed the significant statements and treated each as equally worthy to develop a list. This is called the horizontalization of the data. Then, the researcher wrote a description of the experience, or the “what” of the experience of each of the participants which served as a guide for coding the subthemes contained in each interview (Cresswell & Poth, 2018). Finally, the researcher grouped the topics, or subthemes, into larger, overarching themes that organized the information.

While the researcher asked the three research questions to all participants, their general perceptions of working in an independent school, perceived supportive factors in their work, and perceived non-supportive factors in their work, many participants discussed the same topics when asked about a supportive factor or a non-supportive factor depending on their situation. For example, some participants reported that they experienced positive administrative support in their work while others noted that they did not receive support from the administration. Therefore, the researcher organized participant responses into themes instead of organizing

responses by the research question. Responses that discussed either support or lack of support from the administration have both been coded under administrative support.

Interpretation and Synthesis of Data

The researcher created a spreadsheet of all themes and subthemes and then looked for similarities in participant responses in order to accurately evaluate the information provided during interviews. The researcher used this spreadsheet of codes to analyze the overall perception of the participant while working in an independent school. This process allowed the researcher to further clarify, edit, and omit themes as necessary based on the data. During this process the researcher returned to review the relevant literature on the themes that emerged during the synthesis of data.

Conclusion

Chapter 3 contains the research methodology used for this study. It includes the research questions and an explanation of the qualitative design of the work. The role of the researcher, ethical considerations, sampling strategy, and information about the actual study sample are discussed. It contains information about the interview processes, data management methods, and the measures of rigor used by the researcher to ensure the quality of the work.

Chapter 4. Analysis of the Data

Introduction

The racial and ethnic demographics of the student population of the United States is rapidly changing (National Center for Education Statistics, 2019) therefore schools need to be aware of this changing demographic and make appropriate changes to support the students they are serving now and will be serving in the future. There is a wide variety of research supporting the idea that students need to see teachers with varied racial and ethnic backgrounds in order to fully support their academic achievement (Carver-Thomas, 2018; Egalite et al., 2015; Goldhaber et al., 2019; Hollenside, 2017; Moscote Basney, 2019; Ortega Dolan, 2015; Villegas & Irvine, 2010; Williams, 2011; Yarnell & Bohrnstedt, 2017) as well as their cultural understandings and awareness (Hollenside, 2017; Moscote Basney, 2019). Despite this research, the majority of all teachers, public and private, continue to be White (Bireda & Chait, 2011; Boser, 2014; Carver-Thomas, 2018; Egalite et al., 2015; Hollenside, 2017; Ortega Dolan, 2015; Villegas & Irvine, 2010). While many schools are making strides to hire more faculty of color, this continues to be a challenge for independent schools (Munhofen & Vardi, 2020).

The purpose of this qualitative, phenomenological research study was to understand the lived experiences of faculty of color working in K-12 independent schools in the United States in order to illuminate the factors that contribute to faculty of color either continuing to teach at an independent school or leaving an independent school for another position in another independent school, public school, or a position outside the field of education. The overarching research question for this study was: What are the lived experiences of faculty of color working in independent schools? The focus questions to guide this research were as follows:

1. What are the perspectives of faculty of color regarding their experience working in K-12 independent schools in the United States?
2. What experiences helped faculty of color feel supported while working in K-12 independent schools in the United States?
3. What experiences did faculty of color feel did not support them while working in K-12 independent schools?

Data Analysis

Chapter 4 presents the relevant findings of the qualitative interviews of 12 teachers of color who are working or have previously worked for at least three years in a school that is a member of the National Association of Independent Schools. This section of chapter 4 contains information about the coding processes used by the researcher and the analysis of the emergent themes that were found after analyzing participants' interviews. The researcher coded participants' responses first into subthemes and then into the larger themes which can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1*Overview of Emergent Themes and Subthemes*

Theme	subthemes
Job Satisfaction	Career Growth Impact on Students Economic Incentives Teaching Environment Economic Inequities
Administrative Support	Upper-Level Leadership Division-Level Leadership Inauthenticity
Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Initiatives	Educational Curriculum for Students Affinity Groups Recruitment and Hiring Professional Development Directorships Retention
Emotional and Psychological Factors	Authenticity Microaggressions Burden Exhaustion
External Social Issues	Political Climate Geographical Location of the School
Faculty Support	Mentors
Internal Social Issues	Student Diversity Faculty Diversity Prestige or Elitism Disciplinary Differences
School Stakeholders	Parents Board of Trustees Alumni

Emergent Themes

Introduction

The overarching research question for this study is: What are the lived experiences of faculty of color working in independent schools? The guiding questions were: What are the perceptions of faculty of color working in K-12 independent schools in the United States? This was the first question asked to participants after they were asked about their personal background and professional experience. After discussing overall perceptions, participants were asked directly about factors that either supported or did not support their work in independent schools. The researcher coded their responses into themes. Participants' responses can be found in Table 2 and are listed by the greatest frequency to the lowest frequency.

Table 2

Participant Responses by Theme

Participant	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Job Satisfaction	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Administrative Support	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
DEI Initiatives	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Emotional/Psychological Factors	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X
External Social Issues	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X
Faculty Support	X		X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Internal Social Issues	X		X	X	X		X	X		X	X	X
School Stakeholders	X	X		X			X	X		X		X

Job Satisfaction

All of the 12 participants discussed factors related to overall job satisfaction in their work at independent schools. The subthemes related to job satisfaction, in order of frequency discussed, are career growth, impact on students, economic incentives, and teaching environment. Table 3 shows the frequency with which participants discussed each of the subthemes contained within the theme of job satisfaction.

Table 3

Frequency of Participant Responses on Theme of Job Satisfaction

Participant	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Career Growth	X	X	X	X	X	X		X		X		
Impact on Students	X			X	X	X				X	X	X
Economic Factors		X	X				X	X		X	X	
Teaching Environment		X						X	X	X	X	X

Career Growth

The subtheme of career growth includes the discussion of moving from one position to another in order to learn new skills or gain leadership experience and receiving or seeing the potential for promotions or opportunities to move into a supervisory position. Eight participants noted that the opportunity for career growth was either something that allowed them to stay at an independent school or was a contributing factor in their decision to leave an independent school. Three participants left one or more independent schools where they were employed for a promotion to a new position with another school. Two participants felt that promotions had been given to their White colleagues despite the participants themselves being more qualified for the

role. Others noted either the power of an experience that they had in an informal leadership position or the desire to have the opportunity to grow their own leadership skills in their work.

Participant Five noted that the opportunity to work with SEED seminars was influential in their career. SEED stands for “Seeking Educational Equity and Diversity.” They said that these seminars were “rewarding and an opportunity to demonstrate leadership and growth in a different way” during their career.

Participant 10 remarked that they not only left the independent school where they had been working due to a conflict with the division director but also that they did not apply for a promotion for which they were qualified because even with that promotion they would not have the ability to impact change at the school. The participant said that applying for the position “would be an exercise in futility and... doing a disservice to the kids because he wouldn’t listen to me.”

Impact on Students

The subtheme impact on students includes the discussion of the impact that the participants felt they had on the students at the school. Many faculty of color discussed the importance of their roles as mentors to students of color at the school, and how the ability to be a positive role model in their lives was a contributing factor to feeling satisfied working in an independent school. Seven participants discussed this impact on students being critical to their work.

Five participants discussed feeling the need to stand up for students of color on their campuses to fight against injustices that were present. Participant one shared:

I am currently on a mission to make sure that we can do what we need to do in order to make sure our students aren't going through the same things that I know our faculty and staff of color are going through on the regular.

Participant six stated that “You have to advocate for the kids that are in the community, advocate for their needs, what they're experiencing, what they are saying. And so you always have to maintain that amplification voice.”

Four participants discussed the importance of showing different perspectives in the classroom and the positive impact that it had on students of color and White students. Participant 11 said that “Everyone needs to see the perspectives of teachers of color... having a Black teacher in class with Black experiences is important to that Indian kid, just like White teachers are important for Black kids.”

Four participants discussed feeling the need to be an emotional support for students of color in independent schools. Participant Five shared a story from a parent who said that their daughter “wouldn't have made it” without the participant. After the participant's influence on the student, the student was able to “turn things around and experience success at the school and experience success because she was supported in who she was and that was everything.”

Economic Factors

The subtheme of economic incentives includes the discussion of salaries and other fringe financial benefits of working for an independent school such as reduced tuition for their own children to attend the school, tuition reimbursement for university classes taken, school-provided housing, housing allowances, or other similar financial incentives provided for school employees. It also includes the discussion of salary inequalities and other perceived injustices with regard to salaries or other fringe benefits. Six participants noted that these economic

incentives were important in making them feel either supported or unsupported working at their schools.

Four participants shared concerns that their pay was either not equitable with their peers or that they were not compensated for the extra workloads they had taken on either due to being a person of color at the school or due to their direct involvement with the diversity, equity, and inclusion program at the school. Participant Two noted that while they received a pay increase when they became the director of diversity, equity, and inclusion at the school, they could not help but wonder if their pay was on par with colleagues in similar positions. The participant said “even though I received a significant bump... I may still even be hovering under my peers.” They also noted that prior to the directorship they did not feel adequately compensated. They shared, “it wasn’t until I received my director appointment that I feel like I was actually compensated for the skill set and experience that I was bringing to the table.” Participant Seven noted that, while they wanted to be involved in the committees related to diversity, equity, and inclusion, those were unpaid and expected to happen outside of regular working hours which was not feasible for this participant. They shared, “We have affinity groups and committees for intercultural life, but those are always unpaid and after school on your own time.”

Two participants discussed how economic considerations made them or others at their schools unable to change jobs even when they were dissatisfied with their work. Participant Three discussed the systemic injustices faced as a Black person in independent schools. They said that there was no freedom of choice in changing jobs when they were unhappy due to financial hardship. The participant said:

The first few years working in an independent school was hard because, again, because of systemic racism and systemic injustices.... I didn’t have the money to look for an

apartment. I didn't have, and I'm not assuming this is White America, but I didn't have a generational legacy where someone is going to give me... mommy or dad or whoever is going to help me.

Participant Eight noted that their independent school pays a very high salary for teachers in the area and that the high pay causes people to stay quiet about the injustices that are happening or to continue working for the school despite being unhappy. It is "golden handcuffs... the money's good..."

Three participants discussed other economic benefits that the school provided to employees such as reduced or free tuition for children of teachers, tuition assistance for courses toward advanced degrees for teachers, or other benefits such as housing or other forms of stipends. Participant 10 shared that it was easier to leave a school when they were unhappy because they did not have children attending the school. The participant shared:

They do better with people with families... it's easier for me because I don't see the future... I don't have kids. I don't know when I'm going to have kids. That is not an appeal to me versus for her. She's willing to put up with more foolishness than I am. Because, for her, where else am I going to send my child?

Teaching Environment

The subtheme of teaching environment includes participants' discussion of factors impacting their teaching at the school such as class sizes, funding availability, types of students at the school, and freedom allowed by the curriculum at the school. Six participants noted that the teaching environment was important for feeling either supported or unsupported in their work.

Participant Two enjoyed the curricular flexibility in working in an independent school.

They said:

I've always really enjoyed the freedom to create and innovate and be part of a small intimate community. I just loved the dynamics of independent and private schools. In general, I always felt like there was too much red tape, too little funding in order for me to feel like I was able to make successful changes in the lives the way I wanted to for kids in the public school environment.

Administrative Support

The theme of administrative support was also addressed by all 12 participants in the study. The theme was narrowed down into the subthemes of upper-level leadership, division-level leadership, and inauthenticity. Table 4 shows the frequency with which participants discussed each of the subthemes contained within the theme of administrative support.

Table 4

Frequency of Participant Responses on Theme of Administrative Support

Participant	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Upper-Level Leadership	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X
Division-Level Leadership	X	X		X	X	X	X			X		X
Inauthenticity	X		X			X	X			X	X	X

Upper-Level Leadership

Upper-level leadership includes heads of school, assistant or associate heads of school, any school officer, and administrators who work at the level of the Board of Education or

Superintendent's office in a public school setting. Out of the 12 participants, all but one talked about feeling either supported or a lack of support from the upper-level leadership at the school.

Seven participants noted that the upper-level leadership of the school needs to create and support the structures necessary to have a diverse faculty.

Participant 10 shared "I think it's a want for a simple solution," for the need to diversify the student body and faculty in independent schools. The participant thought that schools attempted to hire faculty of color but did not make the internal changes necessary to support faculty diversity because, as the school reasoned,:

If we just bring faculty of color here that solves the problem... and they haven't realized. Even though the data are very clear that the average tenure for faculty of color at independent schools is somewhere between 2 and 3 years...

Participant Two shared the need for systemic change.

Senior leadership that looks at policies. I think that as we continue to audit ourselves and reflect on where we are in this work and whether or not we are doing well or we're missing the mark. That's where I think we can identify some blind spots that we might be operating in just blindly versus being intentional about creating systemic change in our microcosm of the larger system.

Participant six noted the need for upper-level leadership to create structures to assess how faculty of color are feeling in schools. They said:

Continually asking a specific identity group, how are you experiencing the culture?

Really learning from the listening--what is working and what is not working. If something is working, then build structures around that, build systems around that to make sure it becomes reproduced.

Five participants discussed the need for upper-level leadership to be clear in their communications surrounding support for diversity, equity, and inclusion philosophies and practices including the need to communicate clearly about the political climate outside of school and its impact on faculty and students.

Participant Four discussed the initial interview with the head of school who said that the participant needed to sit with the idea of being the only Black faculty member at the school at that time, despite the school's goal of increasing faculty diversity. The participant said:

So the thing that made me feel really supported at my first school was just their openness even from the start of my interview... the head of school there was like before you accept the position... you'd be the only Black teacher in our school... I want you to sit with that and think about if that would be a good fit for you...

Participant 12 noted that a lack of strong communication skills made them feel the need to leave the school. This participant shared, "When you have a head of school tell you in August that we're making Black Lives Matter political, at that moment, I was just done."

Division-Level Leadership

Division-level leadership includes division heads such as the head of the upper school and assistant or associate division level heads, or others who would be generally seen as equivalent to the principal in a public school setting. Eight participants discussed feeling either supported or unsupported by the division head at their school.

For five participants, they felt most supported by their division-level leadership due to the strong relationships they had formed. Participant One shared a story about the middle school division director. Participant One talked about her division director seeking her out to invite her

to attend the annual People of Color Conferences hosted by the National Association of Independent Schools. They said:

You could make me cry... she sent me an email and said, ‘hey, do you consider yourself a person of color?’ and even now I struggle with my identity, but at twenty-three, I think she was looking for a yes or no answer and I’m pretty sure I sent a six-page dissertation of my identity and why I struggle with being very obviously White passing... and she came up to my room and said you need to go to PoCC.

Participant six shared the story of a bond with the division director. They said:

When I first met the supervisor when I applied, I think what really opened up the relationship honestly was that he decided to take me on a drive of the city... as we drove I realized that this individual is not just interested in me the teacher, he was asking about my life and asking about my background, my beliefs and values.

Inauthenticity

The subtheme of inauthenticity refers to either the upper-level leadership, division-level leadership, or both of the school being inauthentically engaged with the issues faced by faculty of color in independent schools. Seven participants discussed feeling like one or more administrators at their school were being inauthentic in wanting the school to look diverse but not in upholding the criteria necessary to create a harmonious environment for either faculty or students.

Participant Seven shared:

I think top leadership knows it's good business to sound invested in diversity and inclusion, but not actually feel that way authentically.” Participant 10 said that “after I was hired I was flat out told I was hired because they wanted a Black woman.

She also shared that she thought “a lot of independent schools are so desperate to hire people of color, they do not look at the dynamics of our lives.”

Participant 12 shared “they want the look of being diverse, but they don’t want to do the work in it.” Participant Three spoke of “schools that hire a director of diversity just to check off the box and say they have one.”

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Initiatives

Diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives are those which aim to promote a fair learning environment for all students in independent schools including equal access to an independent school education and eliminating barriers to participation. The National Association of Independent Schools includes embracing diversity, championing inclusivity, and empowering community as a part of its mission ("NAIS - NAIS vision, mission, and values," 2021). DEI Initiatives is the third theme that was discussed by every participant in the study and includes the subthemes of the educational curriculum for students, affinity groups, recruitment and hiring practices, professional development, directorships, and the retention of faculty of color. Table 5 shows the frequency with which participants discussed each of the subthemes contained within the theme of diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives.

Table 5*Frequency of Participant Responses on Theme of DEI Initiatives*

Participant	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Educational Curriculum		X	X	X	X		X	X			X	X
Affinity Groups	X	X			X	X	X	X			X	
Recruitment and Hiring	X	X			X			X		X	X	
Professional Development	X				X		X	X	X		X	X
Directorships	X	X	X				X				X	
Retention		X	X					X		X		

Educational Curriculum for Students

The first subtheme within diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives is the educational curriculum for students present at the school either through curriculum implemented by grade-level teams, by academic departments, through character education or social-emotional learning initiatives, or by teachers individually in their classrooms. Eight participants noted that either having a strong diversity, equity, and inclusion educational curriculum or lacking such a curriculum either made them feel supported or unsupported at the school.

Five participants noted that their schools need to implement an educational curriculum for students related to diversity, equity, and inclusion. Participant Three discussed the need for this educational component for students in a story about their son’s experience at the school. The participant said:

He struggled... and I think what ended up happening is it became about race. But not only did it become a racial thing, but it became an economic thing... he went on the first playdate and the house was huge. And he was asking ‘Mommy, can we buy a house like

that?’ And you still have his friends, ‘Can I touch your hair? Why do you have white stuff on your skin?’.

Participant Five discussed the way they brought diversity, equity, and inclusion into the classroom as a teacher of color. They compared the way that they were taught by all-White teachers growing up to the way that they teach their own classes as a person of color. They said:

The goals and outcomes were the same as other teachers, but my students had different experiences based on my lived experiences. So one teacher could be teaching the exact same lesson, but because of just my culture and my understanding of who I am, I was able to add some things I didn’t realize I was adding... there was a greater intention of including voices that were never presented to me... the only books I remember mentioning Black folks they refer to as ‘n-words’...

Affinity Groups

An affinity group is a place where people of the same race or ethnicity meet and talk about issues related to their experience as a member of that group. Seven participants talked about the importance of either official or unofficial affinity groups during their time working in independent schools.

Participant One talked about experiences with an unofficial affinity group saying:

One thing that I really appreciate is just our time spent together, pre-COVID we would make an effort to go to happy hour. We just gave ourselves space to vent so that we could go back to work the next day with a smile.

They continued that:

If I did not at least have this small cohort of people of color that I could chat with on the regular, I don’t know if I could still be here. I think that these microaggressions would

have worn on me a little bit more. It is so helpful to know that others are in the same shoes.

Participant six echoed the importance of affinity groups saying:

Those affinity spaces or people I could connect with was really important to me. And that's what I found. That's what kept me here. And yes, I do go through those moments where I ask myself, I look out into the crowd and say 'Is this really my calling? Am I supposed to be here?' And as I reflect and well on it a little bit, the answer is a resounding yes.

They talked about how the affinity space for faculty at the school was not school-sanctioned.

It was more informal. As a person of color coming into independent schools, one of the things that stands out is that you want to find your people. You want to find your people to connect with because there is that certain connection that you have. That way you can process. There is a solidarity and an understanding that maybe some people might not have. You can talk about what it means to be a person of color at the institution. You can voice your frustrations. You can vent and know that somebody understands what you're experiencing.

Recruitment and Hiring

The next subtheme under the larger theme of diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives is recruitment and hiring. This subtheme contains the discussion of the recruitment of a diverse teaching staff including, but not limited to, faculty of color and the hiring practices that either support or do not support maintaining a diverse faculty. Six participants noted practices related to diversity recruitment and hiring in their interviews.

Participant Two stated, “It is absolutely imperative that we are intentional about seeking out people of color who are competent and experienced to fill the positions and voids that we have.” Participant Eight discussed diversity dashboards and other means of visualizing the data in hopes of increasing the faculty of color, and diverse faculty in general, in independent schools. The participant explained that a diversity dashboard is a visual representation of the demographics of the school community including both students and staff. They stated:

It’s visualized and it’s data-driven. So, it’s not my opinion, it’s not your opinion... It’s often a very pat excuse that we can’t find qualified candidates, but the institution is not really looking. And they don’t have a visual data set that the board has to look at every quarter and say, well, are we making progress?’

Participant 10 discussed the need to be a good fit for the school for reasons other than simply being a person of color. They said:

Being honest about who I am actually recruiting versus just putting out, well, any person of color will do... you need to narrow down what you’re looking for and it can’t be that you’re a person of color and you’re qualified, so come work here.

Participant 11 discussed the need to be intentional about looking for teachers of color with proven track records of being amazing teachers instead of looking only at candidates with advanced degrees. They said:

[The school] has an attitude that those who have a designer degree or those who have a doctorate degree are better... just because you have the designer degree doesn’t mean you know how to teach middle schoolers on their level... It’s kind of interesting because you have a lot of people with doctoral degrees teaching sixth grade.

Participant One noted the importance of having a diverse faculty including leadership. They noted that the lack of diversity of the school leadership made a statement about the priorities of the school. After there were some race relation issues among students, “they tried to host a virtual town hall; a panel with all of the admin. But then all of the admin is White. So it’s just all these White faces trying to tell you that we’re not racist.”

Professional Development

Professional development includes opportunities for education related to diversity, equity, and inclusion either offered directly at or by the school or those that are supported by the school through funding, time allotted to attend conferences, or other means. Six participants discussed professional development opportunities either being a support or the lack of professional development being a non-supportive factor in their work. Seven participants noted the need for professional development opportunities for the entire faculty and staff related to diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Participant Eight discussed the need to educate teachers on dealing with race relations and the importance of DEI education. They said:

You have to build capacity. There is a lot of faculty who feel like they are out of their depth and a lot of writers have articulated that particular bear... very few White Americans have the muscle memory to talk about race. They don’t have the vocabulary or understand the core structures of it. It’s not a part of their core experience, so how do you transform those people into competent evaluators of situations that unfold in classrooms?

Participant 12 noted that the head of school showed a lack of competence when dealing with diversity, equity, and inclusion issues and that made faculty feel like the school was not

prioritizing those issues. They said, “He didn’t even have a background with DEI. We want to say that we’re diverse, but we don’t want the work in it.” Participant 11 noted that the participation of upper-level leadership in professional development related to DEI is important and sends a message to the school community about its importance or lack thereof. When discussing DEI sessions hosted by the DEI team at the school, “the headmaster didn’t attend any, which is interesting because he should have been the first person popping into the Zoom.”

Participant Five argued that cultural competence should be a key factor when making any hiring decisions and that professional development related to diversity, equity, and inclusion be a factor in yearly faculty evaluations. They said:

Sometimes the educational piece is passive, and we need to require engagement and involvement. I can sit here and read a book on exercise and know all the right things to do, and then ask myself, ‘why aren’t I in better shape?’ ... we can’t just give information to folks without requiring that they practice it.

When discussing professional development, four participants specifically discussed the People of Color Conference (PoCC). The National Association of Independent Schools hosts the People of Color Conference annually, and it is an event that is open to NAIS member schools and educators from outside organizations. The goal of this conference is to provide equity and justice professional development activities, networking, and leadership opportunities for all people of color and allies, White supporters of this mission, who are working in independent schools (National Association of Independent Schools, n.d.-b). Four participants noted that participation in the NAIS People of Color Conference was a support to their work in independent schools.

Participant Five noted the importance of the People of Color Conference. They said:

Every person of color should be able to go, regardless of finances or who does not go or how many years they've got, it doesn't matter. Every school should support the opportunity for such a small, marginalized group within our independent schools to attend an empowering and uplifting experience.

Directorships

The directorships theme refers to participants discussing either the impact of a director of diversity, equity, and inclusion at the school or a need for such a position. This also includes positions with varying titles that are primarily tasked with the diversity, equity, and inclusion work of the school such as director of cultural competency, director of social impact, director of multicultural affairs, and the like. Five participants discussed how the director, or need for a director, was either a support or did not support their work.

Participant Two, a former counselor who had recently begun working as a DEI director at the school, talked about needing a figure to lead the DEI work. They said the school needed:

Somebody who is a director who can lead the work.... I think heads need to understand that it's not a checklist. This is a marathon. It's not a sprint. We're dismantling however many hundreds of years of intentionally, systemically integrated mechanisms that were made to support one group and marginalize another or others.

Participant One reflected on the hope that the school will see improvement upon hiring a diversity, equity, and inclusion director. They said:

We are in the process of hiring a full-time diversity, equity, and inclusion director, who we are hoping will be a person of color. And so we're doing these things to hopefully make sure those conversations don't happen with our students. We know that they are. There is blatant racism happening in our school with our faculty.

Retention

Retention refers to work that is done by the school in order to keep the faculty of color working at the school after their initial hiring. Four participants mentioned that the retention work of the school either supported or did not support their work.

Participant Two noted, upon reflecting on the difficulty of retaining teachers of color that: It's this self-perpetuating cycle where you're damned if you do, you're damned if you don't. If you stay you're going to continue to stay there and endure. And if you make the choice not to stay and endure, because the systemic changes aren't being made in the small environment to support you overtly, then all of the sudden it's your fault for leaving.

Emotional and Psychological Factors

Emotional and psychological factors were mentioned by 11 of the 12 study participants as factors in feeling supported in their work. Emotional and psychological factors include any issues that were posed as causing an emotional reaction such as fear or sadness by the participant or a psychological effect such as stress or confusion. Within the theme of emotional and psychological factors, participants discussed authenticity, microaggressions, burden, and exhaustion as being important issues in their work. Table 6 shows the frequency that participants discussed emotional and psychological factors impacting their experience.

Table 6*Frequency of Participant Responses on Theme of Emotional and Psychological Factors*

Participant	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Authenticity	X		X		X		X				X	X
Microaggressions	X			X		X	X	X			X	
Burden							X			X	X	X
Exhaustion		X				X				X		

Authenticity

Authenticity refers to the ability to be oneself in the workplace. It includes feeling that the participant’s own morals and ethical values are in alignment with the mission of the school, and that the participant felt valued for the unique characteristics of his or her own personality and character. Six study participants discussed authenticity as important to their experience in independent schools.

Six participants felt that they could not be themselves at the school. Participant 11 said, “I wanted to put up a Black history bulletin board but I didn’t feel safe doing it because no one said that they had a Black history board before.” Participant 12, who is leaving their current independent school, said “I love teaching. I love recommending books to kids and reading and just sitting around talking to kids. But my morals and values are being compromised, and so it’s time for me to go.”

Five participants discussed not feeling like they could speak up against perceived injustices at the school. Participant One discussed how they feared that speaking out against what was perceived to be an injustice at the school could compromise their career trajectory. They said:

I need to say something, but I also need to use this person as a recommendation... so when my mentor teacher in one of my first student teaching positions talked really derogatorily about students of color, I was just not going to acknowledge it and let it slide.

Participant Five spoke of supporting students in creating a Black culture club but there was push back from White students who wanted to create a White culture club. The participant said:

I know there were adults on campus who felt the same way... not having a realization that they were in a White club all day, everyday... my thoughts, my opinions didn't align with the majority within the school and that was a really, really hard place to be in.

Participant 12 talked of colleagues who "if they think something's not right, they will speak up. Not everyone has that courage because they don't want to be called out... there are a couple of friends that will just speak out and who will fight." They said that they did not feel that there was enough job security to speak out. The participant felt like the school did not value them and that if they spoke up they would be fired. The participant said:

You learn that in your years of working... I've been the only minority and so it just got to 'let me keep something in my desk, to clean my desk out' because I knew if somebody said something that would be the end of it, and I would be out.

Microaggressions

Microaggressions are small behaviors that show discrimination against a marginalized group (Sue, 2010). For example, if a Black man walks by, a White woman might hold her purse more tightly, or if there is both a male and female assistant principal at a school the male assistant principal may be treated with more authority by the faculty. Six participants discussed

the negative emotional impact of the microaggressions that they experience while working in an independent school.

Participant 11 noted feeling like they had been treated differently by colleagues. They told the story of having a student stay late in class to finish taking a test. The student's next teacher reported this behavior to the division director instead of talking to the participant directly about what he saw as an issue. The participant said:

He felt that he needed to go talk to the principal because I kept a student late versus coming to me... if I was blah, blah you would have easily just gone to that person, but you have to go behind my back, whether it was malicious... I'm not saying it was malicious... but that's the kind of ingrained biases that we all have, myself included.

Participant One also discussed microaggressions from colleagues. They told a story about attending the People of Color Conference and a colleague of color made a joke at their expense saying that the colleague was surprised that Participant One was allowed to go to the PoCC because they were a White passing Latinx person. They said:

Microaggressions are still there. I think that the comments and jokes are made in a way... they're jokes, right, and it puts me in an interesting position because people say things to me that they would not say if my skin was the color of my dad's or even my sister's who is a little bit darker than me. People assume a lot.

Participant Seven, an Asian, immigrant, lower school teacher, discussed both microaggressions from parents and the importance of support from the division director. They said:

Early in my career, those comments would get said to me, and I didn't feel like I had anyone I could address them with. If not address them with the parent directly at least

have someone to acknowledge that it was hurtful. So when the second principal came through that was another way that she was helpful.

They told the story of a parent who did not want her child to be in Participant Seven's class. The participant shared:

So this lady says to me, I didn't know why my kid was put in your class, but then we got your postcard and saw you. That's why... because her child was adopted from China. I have a master's degree at this point... when I went to the White, male principal to share that comment... he was like 'oh, what's wrong with that?'

Burden

The subtheme of burden is characterized by the feeling of an added responsibility to fight against perceived injustices within the school whether that be injustices against students, faculty, or unjust policy in general. This includes the feeling of being an added support for diverse students at the school or feeling that it is one's responsibility to be the voice for diversity, equity, and inclusion causes at the school. Four participants noted that this burden negatively impacted their experience.

Participant Six said:

At the end of the day, I think being a faculty of color in an independent school is a unique experience. There are many highs and many lows. I think you have to fight more for what you want. You have to raise your voice more for what you want.

Participant 11 talked about having the right mentality to work in independent schools.

They said:

You also need to understand that not everyone is out to get you. There are some people who really value you and your voice, and you've got to open your mind and open your

headspace to allow that to happen. If you walk around thinking everyone is out to get you and everyone is racist then you're not going to thrive... give the benefit of the doubt, and I continue to get training in the work so that I can be a voice to help promote diversity, inclusion, equity and belonging for everyone.

Participant 10 said:

I did 3 years at my first school, and I'm about to do 3 years here because of the emotional stress. I have to translate for my kids of color after I translate for myself. I have to translate for my parents... like the additional burden, I have to educate the White kids... it's just so much work that I have to do that my colleagues don't have to do, and you do not recognize it. You do not honor it or if you do it's a very tokenized honoring of it.

Exhaustion

This subtheme includes any discussion of undue tiredness mentioned by participants caused by the emotional or psychological factors that they encountered working in independent schools. Three participants noted that exhaustion played a part in their experience at these schools.

Participant Two noted that communication and open discussion are critical to improve the climate of independent schools. They said, "We have to talk. We have to talk. We have to talk. We have to talk ad nauseam, which makes some people emotionally exhausted, or feel that enough is enough already."

Participant Six shared that the work that faculty of color do in independent schools is exhausting but important. The participant said:

That can be exhausting at times, but also there is a receptiveness to that as well. There is a fine balance. You have to advocate for the kids that are in the community, advocate for

their needs, what you're experiencing, what they are saying, etc. And so you have to maintain that amplification voice and that can be tiring as well. But there is a consistent need for advocacy because if people don't share how they are feeling or how they are experiencing things then they cannot receive that support.

External Social Issues

External social issues are those happening outside of the school of which, mostly, the school has no influence or control. The subthemes presented in this category include the political climate of the United States and the geographical location of the school within the United States. All but one of the study participants mentioned that external social issues played a role in their experience at the school. Table 7 shows the frequency that participants discussed external social issues impacting their experience.

Table 7

Frequency of Participant Responses on Theme of External Social Issues

Participant	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Political Climate	X	X	X			X	X	X			X	X
Geographical Region			X	X			X	X			X	

Political Climate

Political climate includes any discussion of the Trump presidency, the Black Lives Matter movement, the deaths of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and others, and other protests against discrimination and racism in the past few years of United States history. Eight participants discussed the impact of the current political climate on their work.

Participant One told a story about a coach at the school fearing losing their job after supporting players who kneeled during the national anthem.. They said:

The students of color on the team did a presentation to the rest of the team and explained why they would be doing this. They said we completely understand and if this is not your comfort zone, it's completely up to you, but we're going to knee and this is why and the history behind it.

Two participants discussed the awakening of White teachers after the events of the summer of 2020. Participant Seven said:

So after George Floyd, although not all, a sizable number of White teachers are like we need to do better... but there's no real accountability on the school's part... not doing a training or doing a book, but examining your practices and being culturally responsive and really thinking about how to decenter your Whiteness in your teaching. That's absent. That's not there.

Participant Eight said:

I think that until the summer, a lot of White faculty felt like, well, the diversity committee is for those people, it's not for us. But then the summer events unfolded and one of the most strident critiques we heard across all social media and the different groups and platforms, was the idea that White American teachers had failed profoundly in teaching race as it actually is. And we know there are lots of studies that have been done that show White American teachers either fear teaching the history of slavery as it actually happened because they don't want to inflame tensions. And so they just gloss over it and then that leads people to not read accurately what's unfolding in our society.”

Geographical Location of the School

The geographical location of the school was noted by five participants as something that influenced their work. Those participants specifically hailed primarily from the midwest and the

south, although one northeastern participant also noted that her geographical location impacted her experience as well.

Participant Four, who worked in multiple regions of the United States during their career noted that race relations can vary greatly depending on the region of the United States where the school is located. They said:

In some parts of the region if you're Black you're Black, there you are Haitian, you're Dominican, they really want to specify, even if you are Hispanic or Latino, are you from Venezuela? I think maybe nationality and ethnicity play a bigger role than race in some ways... There was the first time I realized that not all Hispanics or Latin people see themselves as people of color and that depending on the country you are in, they would be White Puerto Rican, so that was a learning experience for me too.

Participant 11, who also had experience teaching in multiple regions of the United States, shared their experience teaching in the south:

So the way I describe it to people is anyone who lives in the former Confederate States of America, let's just put it that way, it's a different culture and I feel that people are a little bit bold in saying how they feel versus when I lived up north. I lived in Kansas City and things were more secretive, behind your back, and I also grew up in Louisiana and people are racist... racism was a bit more in your face.

Faculty Support

The theme of faculty support is made up of participant experiences with feeling supported by their colleagues in school. This includes personal levels of support and instances of support where faculty fought against perceived injustices either inflicted upon participants or

enacted through policies of the school. 10 of the 12 participants noted that faculty support was relevant in their experiences at independent schools.

Participant Eight shared:

The main challenge I think that a lot of NAIS schools that I've encountered are experiencing is what the White faculty are choosing not to do. So our diversity committee meetings are not widely attended. That signals support or lack thereof for these initiatives and values... so the point is... I guess you feel supported when you see your colleagues actually engaging in this and realizing that this is a long-term project.

Participant 10 said that they felt that the curriculum that they had created was looked down upon by another teacher. The participant shared:

Those complaints come out very differently when you're dealing with a person of color... it's a different level of disrespect... I was able to get past it... but sometimes you're not able to get past it and that will build into levels of frustration and impact the ability to work with somebody and be in collaboration with a person.

Mentors

Five participants noted the importance of mentors in their experiences. Four of the five had positive experiences with either colleagues serving as official or unofficial mentors. One participant noted that they did not have a positive experience with a mentor, and said that the experience would have been more positive if they had been paired with a different mentor.

Participant Three talked about the value they placed in a colleague who served as an unofficial mentor. They said:

My mentor took me under her wing, and she was another woman of color. She was a Black woman who had experience in predominantly White schools. She would say 'I see

so much potential in you, but I don't want them to hurt you like they hurt me.' So she took that on. I will say though, if she wasn't there, I wouldn't have stayed. I wouldn't have lasted because, besides her, there wasn't anyone else that gave me the support.

Participant Six discussed the formal mentorship programs offered by many schools. They shared:

The mentorship piece is really important. For somebody to understand what the goals are, where do you see yourself in the long term, and somebody speaking to that. Let me help you get to where you want to be is really important professionally, so mentorship structures are really important.

Internal Social Issues

Internal social issues are issues that are endemic to the school itself and this theme contains the subthemes of student diversity, faculty diversity, prestige or elitism, and the discipline of students of color. Nine participants noted internal social issues as being relevant to their experience at independent schools. Table 8 shows the frequency that participants discussed internal social issues.

Table 8

Frequency of Participant Responses on Internal Social Issues

Participant	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Student Diversity	X		X	X			X	X		X	X	X
Faculty Diversity	X				X		X	X		X	X	X
Prestige or Elitism	X			X			X	X			X	
Discipline							X			X		X

Student Diversity

The subtheme of student diversity is centered around the perceived diversity of the student body by the participant. It includes not only racial diversity but also ethnic diversity, socio-economic diversity, religious diversity, and diversity in other areas as well. Eight participants noted student diversity as important to their overall experiences in independent schools.

Participant One noted that the school has worked hard to have a diverse student body. The participant said, “They are really focusing on trying to create as many opportunities for not only students of color, but lower-income students to attend. That middle-class race is kind of losing itself in independent schools.” Participant 11 said that the school has entrance grades where they open up enrollment and “if it wasn’t for those entrance grades there would be less diversity than what it is. They diversified a little bit.”

Participant Eight talked about the need for NAIS schools to diversify their student population due to economic viability. They said diversification is necessary “in order for schools like ours to keep their retention numbers up... retention at NAIS schools is dropping dramatically and it’s a problem. It’s a problem from a fiscal standpoint, making the minimum...”

Faculty Diversity

The subtheme of faculty diversity represents participants’ discussion of the diversity of the faculty at their schools and how that factored into their overall experiences.

Participant One noted that while their school was doing great work in diversifying the student body, the same efforts were not being made to diversify the faculty and staff. They said “I think that if there is one thing schools can do is to make sure that there are faculty that at least represent their students... that being said, there isn’t very much representation within our faculty

or staff.” Participant Seven noted that their school had not been successful retaining faculty of color. They said “it’s not going to be more than like 10% teachers of color, even K-12, it’s just very, very small. And it’s getting smaller... teachers of color will come and they’re there for a year or two, and that’s it.” Participant 12 also talked about the need to diversify the faculty at their school, despite her school not having that mission. The participant said, “My previous school said that they didn’t need diversity, equity, and inclusion. It was predominantly White... when I started, including myself, there were only two Black people on the middle school team.”

Participant 10 talked about the need for diversity among school leaders. While they did have a Black division director, they felt that having only one administrator of color negatively impacted their experience. They said:

There are too many White heads because he’s the only Black one there... you can always have, just like with women who uphold patriarchy and sexism... but if you only have one woman and you get the woman that does that versus if you had more diverse leadership...

Prestige or Elitism

The subtheme of prestige or elitism refers to times when participants discussed some aspect of either the perceived prestige of the school in the greater community or the sense that the school community itself demonstrated behaviors that were perceived to show elitism or the sense that they are above others who did not attend a prestigious school. Five participants discussed how prestige or elitism impacted their experiences at their schools.

Two participants noted that either the prestigious reputation of the school or the elitist school community itself made them feel that they had to prove themselves more frequently than if they were not working in independent schools. Participant One discussed feeling that they

were not being included in DEI work and second-guessing whether they were not being included due to being a White passing Latinx person or due to her educational background. They said, “At this time, I’m one of two teachers without master’s degrees. It’s a very prestigious place with very high expectations, so I think a lot of things could have been at play there.”

Participant 11, who was working in their first and only independent school, summarized: You have a level of elitism, you have a level of microaggressions, you have a level of always trying to prove yourself. You have a level of watching what you say, you sometimes have to code-switch because you are trying to make them comfortable, the list goes on.

They continued by discussing again having teachers with doctorate degrees teaching 6th-grade. The participant said, “It’s an elitist attitude.”

Participant Seven, who had only worked in one independent school and recently left after only three years, noted that the school’s elitist attitude during the COVID-19 pandemic was part of the final breaking straw that led them to leave the school. They said:

There was a lot of exceptionalism around, well, I know other schools don’t think they can pull it off in person, but we’re somehow better, aka more resourced and privileged and, so it was that... but also how the narrative was being fed to use of, and I think it’s gaslighting again, we always have teacher and student safety as our top priority...

Disciplinary Differences

The subtheme of disciplinary differences contains references or anecdotes from participants that discuss how students of color receive differing or more disciplinary consequences than White students and how that impacted their work at the school. Three participants discussed how the discipline of students of color negatively impacted their work.

Participant Seven told the story of weekly grade-level meetings in which any students who were having issues were discussed, and how those lists were overwhelmingly students of color based on disciplinary issues in the classroom. They said:

It's always the people of color who are bringing up concerns around diversity or specifically standing up for the students who aren't fitting that White mold of compliance like the perfect little student. Just the idea that kids sometimes need something different or maybe that the issue is their lack of cultural competency and not the kid just being non-compliant.

Participant 10 discussed the lack of transparency regarding discipline and the perception that students of color received different consequences than White students. They said the school needed

Systemic structures in terms of discipline... discipline was very case-by-case. It was not transparent. I think that one is applicable to all independent schools but very much at this school. There was one major incident where the police had to be involved... this group of Black boys got associated with it. And it turns out it wasn't them, it was a White girl and the way the whole conversation got changed when they found out it was this little White girl... it became about mental health issues and blah, blah. It went from punitive to now we need to take care of her.

Participant 12 also discussed disciplinary differences and told the story of a Black girl and a White boy who had an argument during class about resources to use during a group project. The participant said that the dean of students "had made up his mind that she was going to apologize. She was going to get consequences and he was not..." despite the participant finding out that the young man had made disparaging posts on social media about the girl, and,

in her opinion should have received a disciplinary consequence as well. Participant 12 continued, “We can’t go in with a made-up mind about what we’re going to do. We need to be open. And the consequences, whatever they may be, need to be fair and equitable.”

School Stakeholders

The theme of school stakeholders contains participants' thoughts regarding parents, alumni, and the board of trustees. Seven participants discussed issues relating to these constituencies in their interviews. Table 9 shows the frequency that participants discussed school stakeholders.

Table 9

Frequency of Participant Responses on Theme of School Stakeholders

Participant	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Parents	X	X		X			X	X		X		X
Board of Trustees	X		X					X				X
Alumni	X							X				X

Parents

The subtheme of parents includes direct references to the parents of students but also to terms such as family, grandparents, or other family designations. Seven participants discussed the role of parents in their experiences at independent schools.

Participant One noted that many parents have chosen to take their children out of the school because of its diversity, equity, and inclusion practices and that those parents choosing to leave hurt the school financially. The participant said, “And then, parents, there have been people who have left this school who have literally said, you guys are taking this whole diversity thing too far. They said that to the head of school in their exit interviews.” They returned to the story

of the coach possibly losing their job for supporting players kneeling for the national anthem.

They said:

A coach posted a picture of the kneeling and now the coach is about to get canned because there is so much backlash from parents. The coach hasn't done anything wrong, but because of the power of some of these parents outside of here... this is awful. It's the parents who are concerned that we are going too far with the diversity conversations and the parents that are concerned with us kneeling at the block, they are full-pay students.

Participant Four talked about the influence of parents on their reputation at the school.

They said that parents were extra critical of them as a teacher of color. They shared, "If I were a White teacher, they would not be grammar checking my emails to this extent, and then making the association that a typo means I don't have the capacity to teach their child English and writing."

Participant Two talked about the influence that the parents have on the educational DEI curriculum at the school. They said:

The parent community is where I find they have more freedom to articulate their political positions. It cannot be separated. DEI work is integrated into politics, and we see that right now in our face. But I think there is an expectation that we don't indoctrinate, which I don't think anyone wants to do. I think what we want to do is to teach our kids how to critically think versus what to think.

Participant Eight, an upper school teacher and a member of the school DEI committee, discussed a DEI initiative they started. They created "diversity days" where the curriculum centered around anti-racism and other school priorities. They took 2 days each year out of the regular school calendar to host these specialized days. He said, "We set aside the curriculum and

that's a really difficult task for teachers with AP courses, which are schedule-driven to pass the test.... but the parents... 25% of the study body will not show up on diversity days." Parents allowing students not to attend on diversity days was a factor in Participant Eight not feeling supported by the parent community of the school.

Board of Trustees

In an independent school, the board of trustees is an appointed committee of representatives of the community that guide school decision making and steer the work of the head of school. The board is charged with ensuring that the mission of the school is relevant and vital to the community and that the school is succeeding in its mission ("NAIS - Board of trustees," 2021). They are equivalent to the school board in a traditional public school setting. Four participants referenced the board negatively in their experiences in independent schools.

Participant One noted that while they did not think the board was actively working against DEI initiatives, the board just did not prioritize them for the school. They said:

I think that every single person on that board is a well-intended White person, for the most part. I think there might be one or two people of color on there... whether overtly or covertly, I think that a lot of times it's not pushed to the forefront. It's not something that they really care about. Of course, when we bring it up, it's like yes, this is important, yes we agree... But when it comes down to actually doing something about it, it's not at their forefront.

Participant Three noted that the board of trustees does not always understand DEI issues. They said, "There are certain things on the board level because they don't understand racial-ethnic stuff, they've never said no. But I think they question..." Participant Eight noted that the board appeared to support diversity initiatives through the diversity statement but did not

support taking action and changing policy to support that statement. They said, “The board started to push back against that as if they didn’t actually want it... they wanted a boilerplate diversity statement...”

Alumni

Three participants noted the influence of alumni specifically with regard to the power of alumni voices in order to work toward changes in diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives within the school.

Participant One talked about alumni of the school creating a “dear school name” Instagram page that featured stories of the incidences of discrimination and racism that the alumni experienced as students attending the school. Because of this alumni criticism, the school contracted an outside company to guide their response to racism at the school. The participant said:

These ‘dear insert school name here’ Instagram pages are popping up all over our area. We have one and these students are just writing in and submitting acts of racism and abuse that are happening within the school. And our school is wonderful in that they did not immediately shut down the page. And two other independent schools in the area had these pages pop up and they debated it. Then the pages were shut down immediately.

Participant Eight talked about a petition that was started by the alumni to create change in the school. The participant said:

There was this petition that alums drafted and posted online without consulting the school, the Board, the administrators, and it garnered 4000 signatures in a week and a half. And it basically stated that there needed to be an anti-racist educational curriculum at the school. And the school needed to start teaching the students how they might be

complicit in racism and White supremacy in our society and to be cognizant of the impacts of their behaviors, actions, and participation in a system like this.

The participant continued that another, smaller petition was created following the first in which;

Students started telling their stories about aggressions, I won't even call them microaggressions because that sometimes diminishes the significance of what people of color are experiencing. But they started narrating their own stories that made demands of the institution and they told the institution that this is a 7, 8-year-long process that won't be solved with easy solutions...

The participant continued to say that the "administration has felt largely beholden to the board's expectations for the school. And that now is clashing with a large body of alumni who say they won't donate another dime to the school until it gets its act together."

Conclusion

The emergent themes covered in this section were ordered by those which occurred in the largest frequency of the 12 total participants. The first theme of job satisfaction was divided into the subthemes of career growth, impact on students, economic factors, and teaching environment. The second theme of administrative support was divided into the subthemes of upper-level leadership, division-level leadership, and inauthenticity. The third theme of diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives was divided into the subthemes of educational curricula for students, affinity groups, recruitment and hiring, professional development, directorships, and retention. The fourth theme of emotional and psychological factors was broken into the subthemes of authenticity, microaggressions, burden, and exhaustion. The next theme was external social issues and included the subthemes of political climate and geographical location of the school. The next theme of faculty support had only one subtheme of mentors. The next

theme of internal social issues was divided into the subthemes of student diversity, faculty diversity, prestige or elitism, and disciplinary differences. Finally, the theme of school stakeholders was divided into responses about parents, the board of trustees, and school alumni.

Data Results

Research Question One

The first research question for this study was: What are the perceptions of faculty of color working in independent schools? The results of this question were that independent schools are difficult places for faculty of color to work for a variety of reasons. These reasons were addressed by research questions two and three.

Research Question Two

Research question two was: What experiences helped faculty of color feel supported while working in K-12 independent schools? The findings based on question two were that the most important factors in helping faculty of color feel supported were opportunities for career growth, the positive impact that they were able to have on the students at the school, and the relationships they were able to build with colleagues of color, other colleagues, and with division-level leadership.

Research Question Three

Research question three was: What experiences did faculty of color feel were unsupportive of them while working in independent schools? The findings based on question three were that there was not support from upper-level leadership in moving the school toward diversity, equity, and inclusion, and that there was not any educational curriculum for students on DEI matters.

Conclusion

Chapter 4 presents the findings based on the interviews of 12 people of color working in independent schools. It starts with a description of the 12 participants and an overview of the methods of analyzing the data including the process by which the researcher coded the interviews. The main research question that these 12 participants answered was “What is your experience as a person of color in independent schools.” The participants then focused on either factors that served to support their work in these schools or factors which made them feel unsupported or caused them to leave an independent school. The following themes emerged as factors that influenced the experience of the participants in the study: job satisfaction, administrative support, DEI initiatives, emotional and psychological factors, external social issues, faculty support, internal social issues, and school stakeholders.

Chapter 5. Summary, Findings, and Conclusions

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative, phenomenological research study was to gain insight into the lived experiences of faculty of color in K-12 independent schools in the United States. Chapters 1 and 2 present an introduction to the need for independent schools to increase their numbers of faculty of color. Chapter 3 presents the research design in detail. Chapter 4 presents the analysis of the data gathered through interviews with 12 teachers of color who are currently or had previously worked in an independent school that was a member of the National Association of Independent Schools for at least three years. Chapter 5 presents the conclusions of this research based on the literature review, the researcher's commentary on the emergent themes found during the interview process, recommendations for practice, and recommendations for future research.

Discussion

Job Satisfaction

All of the participants in the study discussed factors that related to their job satisfaction. Satisfaction was defined as experiencing more happiness than unhappiness. Within this theme, the subthemes of career growth, impact on students, economic factors, and teaching environment emerged.

Eight of the total participants discussed the opportunity for growth in their careers as important in their decisions to either stay or leave the independent school where they were working. These were discussions of official promotions from being a classroom teacher to an administrator position, from being a full-time classroom teacher to a part-time teacher and part-time administrator role, or informal opportunities to grow and build leadership skills such as

committee work. Six participants discussed economic issues influencing their perceptions of working at an independent school including feeling that they were not being paid sufficiently for the work that they were doing or that they were being paid less than their White colleagues. While other studies (Ford et al., 2018) researching general teacher job satisfaction have shown that salary is a factor in teachers' feeling satisfied with their jobs, there is a lack of research showing whether the desire for teachers to move into leadership positions within the school is related to the perception that those positions come with an increased salary. Furthermore, Ford et al. (2018) pointed out the lack of research specifically correlating support for teachers' growth with their job satisfaction.

The impact that faculty of color have on students in general, but more specifically on students of color, was an overwhelmingly positive indicator in job satisfaction for participants in the study. Participants discussed how students of color feel isolated in independent schools and need teachers who can support them and understand what it means to be a person of color in the independent school community. An important note is that while faculty of color reported that their ability to impact students in independent schools was very important, they also discussed the burden that the extra work of having to stand up for students' needs, having to fight against the unjust policy, and being the people expected to move the school forward in terms of diversity, equity, and inclusion resulted in an increased workload that their White colleagues did not have on their shoulders.

The study participants also noted that teaching environments in independent schools are favorable when compared to positions teaching in other types of schools such as public schools. Teachers noted that they appreciated the feeling of autonomy in their classrooms and the ability

to choose and design the curriculum as they saw fit. They also discussed the smaller class sizes and abundance of resources available to them while working in independent schools.

Administrative Support

It is not surprising that all participants in the study discussed the importance of administrative support while working in independent schools. Studies of teacher satisfaction generally report similar findings among all demographics of teachers (Boyd et al., 2011; Cansoy, 2018; Johnson, 2017). The subthemes under the larger theme of administrative support were upper-level leadership, division-level leadership, and inauthenticity.

Many participants discussed feeling supported by division-level leadership, such as division heads, principals, or those in similar roles, due to having built personal relationships with those direct supervisors. Participants discussed the importance of relationship building and the importance that their supervisors knew them personally. Those who reported having negative experiences with division-level leadership discussed feeling tokenized or that they were only hired to meet a diversity goal. Those participants felt that their division-level leaders did not really know them as people or value the skills and talents that they brought to the school.

Participants generally reported not feeling supported by the upper-level leadership who are charged with making policy that drives the school due to feeling like those upper-level leaders such as heads of school, or associate heads of school, were not appropriately prioritizing diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives at their schools. Others noted that the top leadership at the schools did not have the training to handle race relation issues, issues surrounding the equitable treatment of students or faculty in the school, or the political climate present in greater American society outside of the school environment.

While discussion of inauthenticity was targeted mostly toward upper-level leadership, participants also talked about division-level leadership being inauthentic. Inauthenticity refers to school leadership supporting diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives in name only and not truly dedicated to those efforts. Many participants talked about their schools having a diversity mission statement but not putting in systems at the school level that support having diverse faculty or a diverse student body. Some of those needs that participants talked about were an anti-racist educational curriculum for students and anti-racist professional development for all faculty. Many said that the school wanted to look like a diverse place, but did not want to do the work to support the diversity of the students and faculty.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Initiatives

Given that participants in this study included four diversity directors, four diversity coordinators, and that all participants were faculty of color, it is not surprising that diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives were discussed by all participants. It should also be noted that participants who are passionate about the growth of these initiatives in independent schools were people who volunteered to participate in the research and could have impacted the results of the study. The subthemes discussed by participants with regard to diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives were the educational curriculum for students, affinity groups, recruitment and hiring practices, professional development, directorships, and retention.

Participants discussed the need for an educational curriculum that supported the students of color at the school and exposed White students at the school to the perspectives and experiences of people of color. Many talked about the curriculum for students told from the White perspective without including diversity of voice or thought. Others talked about the need as a faculty member of color to teach students to appreciate and respect diversity and expose

them to a variety of voices in their subject areas. Participants who discussed their own improvements to the curriculum as teachers of color discussed the need for White faculty to do the same.

Participants also discussed the need to have other people working with them who could understand their experiences, whether those be through official affinity groups or even unofficial gatherings of colleagues of color. Participants discussed the need to vent about frustrations and perceived injustices and discussed how having that opportunity with other people of color working in independent schools made their experiences better. More than one participant said that without that type of support they would not have made it in an independent school. What is remarkable about this need for organized or unorganized affinity groups is that faculty of color need others who are like them in school in order to benefit from this shared experience which promotes the notion that independent schools need to diversify their faculty as a means for retaining the faculty of color that they have already hired.

Participants in the study discussed the need to recruit and hire faculty of color, but many pointed out that school leaders say that there is a lack of qualified candidates, which, as discussed in Chapter 2, is a barrier to diversifying the faculty of independent schools (Ingersoll et al., 2019; Ladson-Billings, 2006; Moscote Basney, 2019; Sleeter, 2017). What must be noted is that recruiting and hiring faculty of color must be a priority when hiring. One participant discussed, her school placed more emphasis on the educational background of applicants rather than the need to diversify the faculty. As also discussed in Chapter 2, this is a mistake if the school wants to improve the academic achievement of students of color (Carver-Thomas, 2018; Goldhaber et al., 2019; Hollenside, 2017; Kane & Orsini, 2003). Students of color perform better when they have a teacher with fewer impressive qualifications and certifications (Goldhaber et

al., 2019; Ladson-Billings, 2013). Students of color perform better when they have teachers of color in their classrooms (Carver-Thomas, 2018; Egalite et al., 2015; Goldhaber et al., 2019; Villegas & Irvine, 2010; Yarnell & Bohrnstedt, 2017). Independent school leaders should be aware of the cost of hiring teachers based on having advanced degrees or other qualities that look good on paper, as opposed to hiring with the intent to diversity the faculty for the benefit of students.

Professional development is needed in order for faculty and leadership to move into an integrated space. Many participants discussed feeling like White faculty and leadership are not invested in diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives because they are unaware of the impacts that those initiatives have on them. They believe that DEI work is the work of people of color as those are, seemingly, the people who benefit from those initiatives. This DEI work must be the work of everyone at the school in order to be successful. One participant talked about White faculty “opting out” of professional development and educational opportunities related to diversity, equity, and inclusion. He said that White faculty should not be allowed to “opt-out” because it’s important to improve their own awareness and practices for the benefit of a diverse student body and for the benefit of colleagues at the school. DEI work cannot be a separate part of school improvement, instead, it must filter through all parts of the school in order to actually impact change.

Participants discussed the need for organized, structural decision-making processes to improve the conditions for not only faculty of color in independent schools but also the students of color in those schools. Some thought that this work is the role of a diversity director, while others noted that some schools have a diversity director just to say that they have someone in the position despite that person not being effective or passionate about the work. Others commented

that upper-level leadership needs to be well versed in DEI work in order to make sure that the school is hiring faculty who are also competent in this area as well. It seems at times that independent schools are moving toward having a diversity, equity, and inclusion director instead of integrating DEI work into every aspect of the school. Most participants spoke positively about the impact of having a DEI director or the need to have a member of upper-level leadership holding the school accountable for making progress toward its diversity and inclusion mission statement. Again, it should be noted that many participants were DEI directors or coordinators themselves and this could have impacted their views on this particular topic.

Finally, a few participants talked directly about the need to retain faculty of color. These participants discussed the need for the school to prioritize retaining faculty of color. Schools can show support for faculty of color and possibly improve retention by implementing programs, policies, and actions mentioned throughout the interviews with the participants in this study such as affinity groups for faculty, leadership building relationships with faculty of color, and looking at the equitability of workloads for all employees, among other topics addressed through this research.

Emotional and Psychological Factors

All but one participant discussed the emotional and psychological factors at play as a faculty member of color in an independent school. How participants discussed these factors were varied. Many discussed feeling like they could not be themselves while working in an independent school. Some said that they needed to talk differently around White faculty or parents or had an overwhelming feeling that they had to prove themselves more than their White colleagues. Many discussed microaggressions and how those many times subconscious behaviors and actions made them feel angry or sad. It was notable that some participants talked

about microaggressions from White faculty and leadership as well as from faculty and leadership of color. Participants talked about the burden to be the voice for justice in their schools and the exhaustion that this added work causes.

External Social Issues

The theme of external social issues was defined as issues that are outside of the school that the school itself does not control. While the school does not control issues like political climate or the geographical location of the school, the way that the school addresses these issues and concerns matters to faculty of color. Specifically, with regard to the political climate, the participants in this study needed the school to support political ideologies in line with decreasing oppression and increasing justice for marginalized members of the United States population. When the school did not openly support those causes, faculty of color asked that upper-level leadership at least be confident and competent in addressing those issues internally with faculty and staff when necessary. Faculty of color did not feel supported when school leadership avoided discussing the political climate or when they were incompetent in communication about such topics.

The geographical location of the school is an important issue to faculty of color as well and should be something that school leadership takes into account when diversifying the faculty and student body. For example, school leaders in the South should be aware of the desire of some families and students to wear articles of clothing or otherwise support the former Confederate States of America and have a plan for addressing issues such as these that are perceived as overtly racist and in some cases a threat to the safety of people of color. While the school cannot usually pick up and move to another geographical location, the leadership of the

school should work to be versed in the social issues facing that particular region and be competent to support both students and faculty of color when facing those external social issues.

Faculty Support

Participants discussed the support of their colleagues being important to their work in independent schools. Beyond the support provided by affinity groups and faculty of color, participants talked positively about their White colleagues standing up for justice and supporting students of color at the school. Others noted conversely that when White faculty do not participate in DEI initiatives, meetings, or programming, that is a signal of their lack of support for the faculty of color at the school. White faculty seeing DEI work as the work of the diverse people in the school sends a negative message to faculty of color. Many participants discussed that when only the diverse faculty members are involved in that work that it is “preaching to the choir” so to speak. The people who attend DEI meetings and support DEI work are the people who know that change is needed. The people who need to reflect on their own practices to improve are the people who “opt-out” of this work and are allowed to opt-out by school leadership.

Faculty of color discussed the support that they received from mentors as well. Most participants had mentors of color as well and said that their mentor could help them navigate the school as a person of color. These mentorship roles were critical and many participants discussed that being an integral part of their success working in independent schools. It must be said that the majority of participants in this study were presently employed in independent schools, so they are representative of the portion of faculty of color who chose to remain in independent schools. There was only one participant who had left working in an independent school to work

in a charter school and two that were actively seeking employment elsewhere either in another independent school or a public or charter school system.

Internal Social Issues

The theme of internal social issues was defined as a social issue that was unique to the school that occurred due to the culture or climate within the school. While all social issues exist inside and outside of the school, these particular issues were ones where the school had more control over the situation than in the external social issues theme. Faculty discussed the diversity of the student body, diversity of the faculty, the prestige or elitism evident at the school, and the discipline of students of color.

Participants in the study discussed the need to have a diverse student body within independent schools and most participants noted that their school was either successful in initiatives to recruit more students of color or were actively working toward that goal. Participants did not feel the same about the diversity of the faculty and said many times that while student diversity was positive and growing, the faculty of the school did not reflect the same demographic shift. The problem here that participants noted is that students of color need support from faculty of color. They need someone to support them and someone with whom to discuss shared experiences.. So when there are fewer faculty of color, that burden of being there for students of color is heightened. Many talked about either the existence of affinity groups for students or the need for those affinity groups but not having the appropriate faculty diversity to support those important outlets for students.

Participants discussed the prestige of the schools that they were working for and being made to feel like a special privilege had been afforded to them by being hired to work at that school. This feeling of prestige within the school sometimes made participants feel like they had

to prove themselves every day because not only was the school prestigious but they were one of the only representatives of people of color at that school. The reputation of all people of color fell on the shoulders of the few representatives of that group in the school. Other participants talked about the elitism shown in the school community. One said that parents had the attitude that they allowed her to work at the school, and she should be grateful. Another talked about the exceptionalism surrounding independent schools because they are special places with very special communities and how those ideas stopped the school community from moving toward improvement or even making decisions that were in the best interest of students and faculty.

Finally, participants noted seeing disciplinary differences between White students at their school and students of color. Participants shared that unintentional biases were to blame for White faculty members and division-level leadership handling discipline in different ways depending on the racial or ethnic background of the student and that schools need to do a better job of maintaining equitable disciplinary practices for all students.

School Stakeholders

The final topic that participants discussed were school stakeholders such as the Board of Trustees, the parents, and the alumni of the school. Faculty of color talked about the importance of the Board in driving the mission of the school and how critical it is that the board understand the importance of DEI work and that the board actively support that work. Participants talked about the parents who did not support the diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives of the school, allowing students to stay home on diversity days or being vocal about political positions contradictory to the work to end oppression and marginalization. Participants talked positively about school alumni who are demanding that schools improve what they are doing to end racism and other forms of discrimination against students. Some participants pitted the older members

of the Board of Trustees against the younger members of the alumni showing a generational clash of ideas.

Recommendations for Practice

Recommendations for practice include recommendations for upper-level leadership, division-level leadership, and recommendations for faculty. These recommendations are intended to assist school leadership and the greater school community support faculty of color at their schools so that they may retain those faculty members.

Recommendations for Upper-Level Leadership

- **Be Authentic.** Be authentic in your priorities for the school with all faculty and staff. If diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives are not at the fore-front, be honest when hiring and be honest with current faculty about your priorities for the school.
- **Grow Professionally.** Attend conferences and training to appropriately communicate about the social issues facing the United States today and to learn how to communicate your support to faculty of color during those instances. Continue to learn about diversity, equity, and inclusion and their role in every school leader's day to day decision-making process.
- **Evaluate Hiring Practices.** Consider the hiring practices of the school. Consider whether the hiring practices place a priority on hiring faculty of color above other factors such as educational background or other qualifications of candidates. If they do not, re-evaluate the top organizational priorities and make sure that hiring practices reflect those priorities.
- **Evaluate Salary Schedules.** Look over employee salary schedules to determine if any subconscious bias has wrongly impacted the salary of employees. Make adjustments

where necessary and consider steps moving forward when negotiating salary with new faculty members.

- **Board of Trustees.** Take careful consideration when there is an opportunity to appoint new members to the Board of Trustees that they are in alignment with the mission of the school to diversify both the student body and the faculty. Educate current board members on best practices within diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives and be an advocate for those initiatives during all Board meetings or other gatherings.
- **Parent Education.** While the primary responsibility of a school is to educate students, it is also important to consider the needs of the parent community and their power to help build community. Parent education should be offered and encouraged regularly to help parents understand the need for a diverse student body and the need for diverse faculty and why those are important for the success of all students at the school.
- **Affinity Spaces.** Create a space during working hours that happens at regular intervals for faculty of color to come together and share their experiences. Having a space to vent about frustrations and to share victories together is an important experience for faculty of color in independent schools. Time and space need to be given in an effort to create community between not only faculty of color but other marginalized groups within the school. If the school does not have many faculty of color, work with upper-level leadership in other local independent schools to create a network for faculty of color in the region versus solely at the individual school.

Recommendations for Division-Level Leadership

- **Build Relationships.** Division-level leaders need to continue to build strong relationships with their faculty and specifically with faculty of color. Participants reported that their

strong relationships with their direct supervisors were responsible for feeling supported or for feeling a lack of support in their work in independent schools.

- **Consider Workloads.** Consider the workload specifically for faculty of color given that, beyond a traditional workload, many times serve as a support to the students of color at the school. This could look like faculty of color teaching fewer sections of a course or assigning fewer students to the sections that a faculty member of color teaches in order to acknowledge and appreciate the time that these educators work in creating a safe place for students of color in their schools.
- **Affinity Groups.** Create affinity groups for faculty of color or support upper-level leadership in the creation of these groups. Consider creating affinity groups for students of color in which faculty of color can serve as mentors and support those students in the school.
- **Leadership and Professional Growth Opportunities.** Specifically look for leadership and professional growth opportunities for faculty of color. As division-leadership typically has the strongest relationships with the teachers in the school, it is important that leadership use that relationship and knowledge to provide ample opportunities for faculty of color to grow in some element of their careers. This could include inviting faculty to participate in a variety of committees or allowing faculty of color to create committees or take on a leadership role whether formally or informally within the school.
- **Reflect on Disciplinary Practices.** Look at the racial and ethnic backgrounds of the students who are regularly receiving disciplinary consequences. Analyze whether there are more students of color receiving disciplinary consequences and look at whether there are specific faculty members who are reporting misbehavior. Be a voice in the

grade-level meetings advocating that compliance is not the goal of schooling. Provide additional training if there are teachers who seem to discipline students of color more than White students. Provide training and support the dean of students in their work to create an equitable disciplinary policy for all students.

- **Mentorship.** When a new faculty member of color is hired, pair them with a competent mentor, a mentor of color when possible. Support this mentorship by giving the mentor and the mentee time inside of regular work hours to meet. Make sure that the workload of both the new faculty member and the mentor faculty member are conducive to the pair actually working together productively.

Recommendations for Faculty

- **Opt-in.** Opt-in to the work of the diversity, equity, and inclusion committee and their initiatives and programming. Even if you are a faculty member who feels committed to the ideals of ending the oppression of marginalized groups, opt-in to this work to show support. Encourage other faculty members to get involved as well as a direct way to support the faculty of color at the school.
- **Create Affinity Spaces.** If the leadership of your school has not taken the initiative to start any formal or informal affinity space, start one yourself. Discuss with your division head the possibility of starting an affinity group and the resources available. Present the relevant research that supports the need for affinity groups. If the school leadership is not supportive of this idea, start an unofficial affinity group. This could be a very informal gathering of faculty that takes place outside of the school and outside of work hours.

- **Grow Professionally.** Continue to learn and look for opportunities to learn more about diversity, equity, and inclusion. Even if you are someone who supports DEI work, be open and willing to continue learning and to continue growing in this area.
- **Reflect.** Reflect on your own practices in your classroom. Look for the areas where you still need to grow as a professional and seek out the resources to do so. Consider the impact of your decisions on the students of color in your classroom and on the faculty of color in your school.
- **Diverse Perspectives into the Classroom.** Look for ways to bring in diverse perspectives into the classroom and into your teaching. Choose authors and textbooks that present views from multiple perspectives.

Recommendations for Further Research

While this research brought many issues to light regarding the experiences of faculty of color working in independent schools, it also uncovered many areas that warrant further research. Firstly, the participants in this research were overwhelmingly integrated into the DEI work at their schools, so it would be beneficial to repeat the study with faculty of color who are not deeply engaged with DEI work to see how their experiences are similar to or different from the participants in this study.

Furthermore, many independent schools are creating this dedicated director of diversity, equity, and inclusion position. As previously discussed, many participants feel that these positions serve to “check off a box” and allow for schools to separate DEI work from the other school improvement initiatives. Further research should address whether these positions help move the school toward its DEI mission.

Conclusions

The purpose of this qualitative, phenomenological research study was to explore the experiences of faculty of color working in independent schools. The research questions focused on overall experience but asked faculty to identify things that supported them in their work in independent schools or factors that did not support their work. Through this research, it was determined that many issues are similar between faculty of color and teachers in general as far as job satisfaction. For example, it is important to have a strong relationship with your school leadership, and it is important to have professional growth and leadership opportunities available. Other issues arose that are unique to faculty of color, such as the importance of the diversity, equity, and inclusion programs and initiatives at the school, the emotional and psychological effects of being a member of a marginalized group working in an independent school, the external social issues facing the school, the support from colleagues, the internal social issues facing the school, and the school stakeholder community.

The information provided by participants about their experiences as faculty of color in independent schools will contribute to the literature concerning retaining faculty of color in independent schools by offering insights for school leadership that will strengthen the support they provide for faculty of color at their schools. It offers possible tools to create a more supportive culture through creating affinity groups, mentoring programs, reducing workload, and providing equitable pay for all faculty. It offers insight into the mental state of faculty of color and provides the background necessary for school leadership to support mental health. It gives suggestions about improving the anti-racist educational curriculum for students and parents and providing professional learning opportunities for the entire faculty and staff on the same topic. It

offers suggestions for working with the board and gives insight into the state of alumni support for this work.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: Recruitment Email to Diversity Directors

Hello,

My name is Mary Cathleen Smith, and I am a doctoral candidate at East Tennessee State University. I am currently working toward the completion of my dissertation which focuses on the experiences of faculty of color working in independent schools in the United States. The goal of my research is to provide actionable steps for school leaders to take to retain faculty of color at their schools.

I am looking for school faculty who identify as people of color and have worked at an independent school that is a member of NAIS for at least three years. Teachers do not currently need to be working at an independent school to participate in the study but must have completed three years in a NAIS member school.

Participation in the study consists of one interview via Zoom, an online meeting application, that will last no more than one hour and will be scheduled at a time that is convenient for the participant.

I am asking for your help in identifying anyone who may be interested in participating in the study. If you are interested in participating, please reply to this email indicating your interest. Please forward this email to anyone else that you think may be interested in participating or respond with the name and email address of anyone you think may be interested, and I will contact them directly to find out if they are interested in participating.

If you have any questions, please contact me at 501-425-4929 or reply to this email.

Thanks for your time,

Mary Cathleen Smith
Doctoral Candidate
Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis
East Tennessee State University

reedmc4@etsu.edu

APPENDIX B: Interview Template

1. Participant Eligibility
 - a. Can I confirm that you are at least 18 years of age?
 - b. Can I confirm that you have been employed for at least three years in a member school of the National Association of Independent Schools?
 - c. Can I confirm that you self-identify as a person of color?

2. Review Informed Consent
 - a. Now, I would like to review the informed consent document that you have already signed.
 - b. Review document
 - c. Do you have any questions?

3. Interview
 - a. Now I would like to begin our interview.
 - b. First, can you tell me a little bit about yourself?
 - c. What is your educational background?
 - d. How long have you been working in education?
 - e. Tell me about the schools where you have taught.
 - f. What are your perspectives regarding your experiences working in independent schools?
 - g. Were there any experiences that helped you to feel supported working in independent schools?
 - h. Were there any experiences that you feel did not support you while working in independent schools?
 - i. Do you have anything else you would like to add?

4. Post Interview
 - a. In the next week, I will email you a transcript of our interview so that you may confirm its accuracy.
 - b. At that time I will also ask that you chose a pseudonym to be used in place of your name in the study.
 - c. If you have any questions in the meantime, feel free to call me or email me.

VITA

MARY CATHLEEN SMITH

- Education: Ed.D. Educational Leadership, East Tennessee State University, Johnson City, Tennessee, 2021
- M.A. Romance Languages, University of New Orleans, New Orleans, Louisiana, 2017
- M.A. Teaching, Christian Brothers University, Memphis, Tennessee, 2009
- B.A. Philosophy and Spanish, University of Central Arkansas, Conway, Arkansas, 2007
- Professional Experience: World Language Department Chair, 2020 -- Present
Canterbury School, Fort Myers, Florida
- Adjunct Spanish Instructor, 2017 -- Present
University of Memphis, Memphis, Tennessee
- Middle School Dean of Students, 2019 -- 2020
World Language Department Chair, 2014-2020
Spanish and French Teacher, 2011-2020
St. George's Independent School, Collierville, Tennessee
- Spanish Teacher, 2007 -- 2011
Memphis City Schools, Memphis, Tennessee
- Licensure: Florida Professional Licensure # 1416314
Educational Leadership Endorsement
Spanish K-12 Endorsement
- Tennessee Professional Licensure #000524081
Beginning Administrator Endorsement
Spanish 7-12 Endorsement
- Professional Activities: Advanced Placement Spanish Language and Culture Exam Reader, 2014 -- Present, Educational Testing Services
- Edu-Inter Study Abroad, Quebec, Canada, July 2016
- Chair Cinema Special Interest Group, 2015-2017
Mentor Teacher, 2014 -- 2015
American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages

Costa Rica Spanish Institute Study Abroad, June 2015
American Association of Teachers of Spanish and Portuguese

- Professional Presentations: “Night at the Movies,” Presenter, November 2017
American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages
Annual Conference
- “Using Film in Integrated Performance Assessments” webinar
host, March 2016, American Council on the Teaching of Foreign
Languages Annual Conference
- “Going Paperless in the World Language Classroom” presenter,
November 2016, American Council on the Teaching of Foreign
Languages Annual Conference
- “Roundtable on Differentiation Using Technology” presenter,
November 2016, American Council on the Teaching of Foreign
Languages Annual Conference
- “Going Paperless in the Upper School Classroom” Presenter
April 2015, Tennessee Association of Independent Schools
Technology Conference
- “Teaching Hispanic Culture Through Film” Workshop presenter
April 2015, American Association of Teachers of Spanish and
Portuguese Annual Conference
- “Make Culture the Organizing Theme of your Classroom”
workshop presenter, November 2015, Tennessee Foreign
Language Teachers Association Annual Conference

- Awards and Honors: ETSU Dissertation and Thesis Scholarship, January 2021, awarded
by the Graduate School of East Tennessee State University
- Oxbridge Distinguished Teaching Fellowship, June 2017
Awarded by Oxbridge Academic Programs
- COSI Study Abroad Scholarship, July 2015
Awarded by the American Association of Teachers of Spanish and
Portuguese
- Praxis Principles of Learning and Teaching Recognition of
Excellence, awarded by Educational Testing Services
- Presidential Scholarship, August 2003
Awarded by the University of Central Arkansas