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Exploring the Experiences of Black Teachers with School Administrators in Los Angeles County

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Exploring the Experiences of Black Teachers with

School Administrators in Los Angeles County

by

Geneva D. Matthews

A dissertation presented to the Faculty of the School of Education,

Loyola Marymount University,

in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree

Doctor of Education

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Exploring the Experiences of Black Teachers with

School Administrators in Los Angeles County

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This dissertation written by Geneva Matthews, under the direction of the Dissertation Committee, is approved and accepted by all committee members, in partial fulfillment of requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate my dissertation to my niece Jordan Denise Dukes.

God took you away from us too soon.

I love you dearly!

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ABSTRACT

Exploring the Experiences of Black Teachers with

School Administrators in Los Angeles County

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Geneva Matthews

Teachers in California, like in many other states, are leaving the profession at an alarming rate, thus creating a severe teacher shortage. Specifically, Black teachers are leaving and this problem warrants thorough exploration in an effort to increase Black teacher retention. The objective of this dissertation was to unpack the different factors that contribute to job dissatisfaction among Black teachers in secondary public schools in Los Angeles County. In particular, the study investigated the role school leaders played in their dissatisfaction through a phenomenological study that interviewed 10 Black teachers. Using critical race theory (CRT), this study found that there were six key themes that contributed to the dissatisfaction of Black teachers: persistent awareness of race, the racialization of the teacher-student experience, hurdles to professional advancement, lack of confidence in school leadership, inconsistent and inadequate support, and the psychological and emotional impact of these experiences.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

As a Black educator and administrator, I participate in weekly meetings that focus on different trends that impact our schools (see Appendix A for definition). During one of our district administrators' meetings, the agenda focused on increasing teaching diversity in our schools because the data pertaining to the racial diversity of our teachers revealed that the number of Black teachers at our schools was alarmingly low. The conversation led us to the question: *Why do some Black teachers leave the classroom?* Bristol (2017) shared findings from research that explored 86 Black male teachers' school-based experiences and their plans to leave or stay at that particular school. The findings suggested that the teachers' intentions to stay or leave their schools were based on the experiences of being Black male teachers on campus. Being a Black male teacher had an impact on their experiences due to their relationships with colleagues and administrators, their lack of influence on school policy, feared presence by others on campus, and isolation. The problem of teacher attrition ultimately impacts students because schools in urban communities, comprised of mostly low-income students, are experiencing higher levels of teacher turnover. Additionally, as an administrator I found it important to explore the different factors that contribute to Black teachers leaving the classroom, especially Black teachers who were leaving due to discontentment with their job. As I explored the literature, I found myself guilty of enacting some of the same behaviors that contributed to Black teachers' dissatisfaction, such as asking teachers to be mentors to certain students to discuss their behavioral infractions.

Statement of the Problem

Teachers in California, like in many other states, are leaving the profession at an alarming rate, thus creating a severe teacher shortage (Sutcher, Darling-Hammond, & Carver-Thomas, 2016). Specifically, Black teachers are leaving and this problem warrants thorough exploration in efforts to increase Black teacher retention (see Appendix A for definition). Less than 10% of the teaching force is comprised of Black teachers while Black students are more than 15% of the student population (Griffin & Tackie, 2016). This complex problem requires an approach that comes from different angles to increase the number of Black teachers and keep them in the classroom. This research focused on exploring the dissatisfaction experienced by Black teachers and how school administrators (see Appendix A for definition) contributed to their dissatisfaction.

Black Teacher Turnover

Despite their positive impact on students and teacher diversity, Black teachers remain the racial minority in urban schools. A recent report from the Albert Shanker Institute (2015) illustrated gaps between the proportions of students and teachers of color over the past 10 years in nine major cities, including Los Angeles. It is predicted these gaps will continue to increase. Griffin and Tackie (2016) reported that between 2012 and 2013, about 25% of Black teachers left the teaching profession or moved schools, as compared to only 15% of other teachers. Although Black teachers tend to prefer to teach in urban schools, Black teachers have been exiting the teaching profession at high rates (Dixson & Dingus, 2008). In 2005, the U.S. Department of Education collected data to explore the reasons teachers of color, including Black teachers, were leaving the classroom. Although 30% left due to retirement, 56% exited the

profession due to job dissatisfaction (Ingersoll & May, 2011; Kokka, 2016; Kopkowski, 2008). The Albert Shanker Institute (2015) reported similar findings that job dissatisfaction was the number one reason for Black teacher attrition.

Job satisfaction and dissatisfaction. Loeb, Master, and Sun (2015) have illustrated that job satisfaction rates are lower amongst minority teachers, including Black teachers, compared to other teachers. Leukens, Lyter, and Fox (2004) emphasized teachers leaving schools due to heavy workloads is common and is often cited as a reason that has reduced retention. Having an excessive workload may include paperwork, discipline, additional classes outside of the assigned subject area, outside work obligations, and preparing for standardized tests. Furthermore, this workload is expected to be executed regardless of low resources and support that can impact the ability to find enjoyment in work and contribute to attrition (Kersaint, 2005). Black teachers working in low-resourced schools and in underperforming districts experience a heavy workload that is complicated and exacerbated by different student needs unique to more disadvantaged students. With fewer resources and lower capacities to address all students and their needs, teachers experience higher rates of burnout and subsequent turnover in schools located in urban school districts. Additionally, literature on Black teachers has exclaimed their workload is extended because of the additional responsibilities and to help Black students and parents (Griffin & Tackie 2016; Irvine, 1989). Finally, being a Black teacher has a unique set of experiences that remain under-acknowledged through recognition and compensation by superiors and peers.

Studies have explored why teachers are dissatisfied with their jobs and the various factors that contribute to this dissatisfaction, such as work pressures and the lack of work independence

(Holtom, Mitchell, Lee, & Eberly, 2008; Price, 2001). This research focused specifically on Black teachers' dissatisfaction and how to their school administrators, primarily their principals and assistant principals, can be a contributing factor to their dissatisfaction. With dissatisfaction being the most cited reason for attrition, it was essential to explore because addressing job dissatisfaction could have a positive impact on teacher retention.

Research pertaining to Black teachers leaving the classroom is critical because diversifying the classroom goes beyond hiring more teachers of color to understanding the experiences of Black teachers and why effective teachers are deciding to leave schools or the field of teaching entirely. In depth research, such as the study conducted by Griffin and Tackie (2016), has included direct quotes and experiences from a number of Black teachers and has shown how essential it is for school administrators and school districts to recognize biases, alienation, and restrictions that specifically affect Black teachers and subsequently impact the classroom.

The Need to Keep Black Teachers in the Classroom

Students of color—students from various racial/ethnic backgrounds such as Black/African American, Latinx, American Indian, Asian Pacific American, and multiracial/multiethnic—in underserved urban schools make up the population that feels the greatest impact by teacher turnover. Ingersoll and May (2011) argued minority students and students in urban school districts are disproportionately impacted by teacher turnover because their schools are already generally considered less desirable due to low resources and academic underperformance. Additionally, teachers are also leaving the profession due to dissatisfaction, particularly with the support of their school administrators (Albert Shanker Institute, 2015).

Understanding the benefits of having a Black teachers can further contextualize the importance to explore their dissatisfaction. Having a Black teacher in the classroom can help with issues specifically related to cultural connection, academic impact, and providing additional mentors. These topics will be further discussed in the proceeding sections.

Cultural connection. Black students face negative experiences, academically and socially, and are in high need of teachers to teach and support them with culturally competent practices. *Cultural competency* is the capability to work together successfully with people of different cultures by being considerate of and responsive to their beliefs and practices (Cross, Bazron, Dennis, & Isaacs, 1989). Cultural understanding between teachers and Black students is an important factor in promoting the success of Black students, as expressed by Ladson-Billings (1995) in the theory of culturally relevant pedagogy. Though it may not be true for every Black teacher, research shows a cultural understanding of students' experiences pertaining to race, family structures, and community life is critical for setting expectations and building trust in the classroom. Black teachers have a unique opportunity to connect with Black students because of the cultural comprehension of their school, home, and neighborhood experiences (Darder, 2012; Farinde, Allen, & Lewis, 2016; Milner, 2006) and can link lessons to culture (Villegas, Strom, & Lucas, 2012) without compromising high expectations (Bristol 2017; Easton-Brooks, 2013; Farinde et al., 2016; Milner, 2006). A qualitative study conducted by Griffin and Tackie (2006) articulated that Black teachers felt a sense of obligation to support Black students beyond the academic content.

Student impact. With the overwhelming number of avenues where Black students are underachieving, it is important to discover variables that contribute to even the slightest increase

in their academic success. Black students struggle in the education system and regularly receive limited access to resources and educational opportunities (Darling-Hammond, 2010; Farinde et al., 2016). Scholars have researched different factors that contribute to the achievement gap and the educational struggles of Black students, such as a lack of resources, low funding, the overrepresentation of Black students in special education, a high percentage of students of color being suspended and/or expelled, and teacher retention in urban schools (Darling-Hammond, 2006; Harry & Klingner, 2006; Schaffer, White, & Brown, 2017). One variable is Black teachers. According to a study published by the Institute of Labor Economics, "The Long-Run Impacts of Same Race Teachers," Black students performed better academically and socially when provided with Black teachers (Gershenson, Hart, Lindsay, & Papageorge, 2017). Those students performed better on standardized tests and experienced more favorable teacher perceptions, which led to a reduction in risks of dropping out of high school and disciplinary actions, especially among Black males. Furthermore, this study found that Black students exposed early on to Black teachers are more interested in attending college.

Mentor. Lastly, understanding the benefits of having a Black teacher serve as a mentor for Black students further urged the exploration of the dissatisfaction of Black teachers as the first step in the effort to retain them. Patitu and Hinton (2003) discussed a connectedness between Black teachers and Black students due to their shared experiences involving race and feelings of isolation. This connection can contribute to an understanding of students' experiences and opportunities to offer advice on difficult situations that the Black teacher may have also experienced. Additionally, familiarity with their experiences allows the teacher to help students view their circumstances from a positive mindset versus a deficit mindset, the latter of which

blames communities for low academic achievement and believes that parents do not value their child's education (Kohli, 2008; Yosso, 2005). Research has shown that teachers with a deficit mindset, from any race or ethnicity, treat students poorly and have low expectations, which have a negative impact on teacher-student relationships and contribute to students' negative self-perceptions (Kohli, 2008; Valencia, 1997). If students are going to school with this deficit mindset, it will have a negative impact on their academics. Therefore, it is imperative for Black students to have teachers who view them in a positive way and see their potential (Howard, 2013). Having a cultural connection is one way to potentially combat a deficit mindset.

Having Black teachers in the classroom not only has a positive influence on Black students (Dee, 2004; Ferguson, 1998; Hanushek, Kain, & Rivkin, 2004) but on all students by providing multicultural perspectives students from other cultural backgrounds may not have encountered in other spaces. Black teachers are the minority in urban schools and the implications of fewer Black teachers include less exposure to diversity and fewer teachers who can help all students achieve. Thus, the benefits of having more Black teachers are far reaching in promoting more inclusive and diverse learning environments and equipping young students with positive representations of communities that are different from theirs. For students from other cultures and ethnicities, having Black teachers is beneficial because students can gain from interacting with individuals of different backgrounds, potentially helping to lessen the negative effects of implicit bias and increase cultural competency (see Appendix A for definitions) (Deruy, 2016; Hodgkinson, 2002).

Hence, interactions with teachers from various backgrounds are necessary and important for all students regardless of their backgrounds, but the absence of teachers of the same ethnicity

among Black students is especially detrimental. The case to keep Black teachers in schools presents a win-win for all students, parents, other teachers, and administrators and presents an urgent need to identify sustainable and feasible strategies that can positively impact the education system in the long run. This study, which looks at the manner in which administrators are linked to Black teachers' dissatisfaction, is an effort to understand this phenomenon and to bring greater attention to this question in the field to better address the issue of teacher retention.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to unpack the different factors that contribute to job dissatisfaction among Black teachers in secondary public schools in Los Angeles County. In particular, the study investigated the role school leaders contributed to this phenomenon. Understanding the experiences of Black teachers from their own voices may contribute to the growing body of literature on recruitment and retention of Black teachers. The results found in this study can be used to inform and help school districts in Southern California with their retention efforts for Black teachers for safer adult school cultures that understand the needs of Black teachers. The research findings led to recommendations for school administrators that can specifically contribute to Black teachers' overall experiences with the larger effect to contribute to the efforts to improve teacher retention.

Significance of the Study

The exit of Black teachers from the profession has many implications for all students, especially Black students, and therefore, this research demonstrated the need to retain Black teachers. Teacher retention is a benefit for all students in general (Achinstein, Ogawa, & Saxton, 2010; Darling-Hammond & Sykes, 2003). The lack of teacher retention affects students because

the quality of relationships is disrupted (Bryk & Schneider, 2002), which impacts student achievement (Guin, 2004) and has a negative effect on school culture (Van Houtte & Van Maele, 2011). There is a vast amount of research that has been conducted to encourage, train, and recruit teachers of color, but very few focus specifically on Black teachers (Ingersoll & May, 2011). This dissertation explored the experiences of Black teachers in relation to school administration and the positive and negative impact it has on their contentment with their jobs. This study looked at Los Angeles County because it is one of the urban cities identified as having a diminishing pool of Black teachers with administrators (Albert Shanker Institute, 2015).

Research Questions

Two overarching questions that undergirded this study:

1. What experiences by Black teachers relate to job dissatisfaction?
2. How is job dissatisfaction for Black teachers associated with school administrators?

Guiding Hypothesis

Participants are anticipated to highlight general issues of job dissatisfaction impacted by school administrators in relations to additional responsibilities, microaggressions (see Appendix A for definition), and being stereotyped, however, a lack of available research prevents a more specific hypothesis at this time.

Theoretical Framework and Research Approach

Research on job satisfaction incorporates the individuals' demographics, job setting characteristics, and perceptions of the workplace, including support, work stress, and autonomy, and how these all have an impact on voluntary turnover (Holtom et al., 2008; Price, 2001). The component of voluntary turnover is impacted by race because it affects a sense of belonging,

ownership, and team dynamics, and suggests that Black teachers are more susceptible to feeling "less than" in predominantly White teaching forces. Minority teachers make up about 20% (Ingersoll, May, & Collins, 2017) of the teaching force, even in schools and schooling districts that serve students of color; there are different cultural norms, attitudes, and beliefs that racialize Black teachers' experiences. Critical race theory is an ideal theoretical framework that provides a race-centered lens to analyze the experiences of Black teachers to begin to understand their work experience and how this impacts teacher turnover.

Critical Race Theory

Critical race theory offers a lens to examine the role of race in society and institutions. Schools, one of this country's largest institutions, produce and uphold values, norms, and a culture that reinforce the values of society in the classroom and in the school environment culture (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). Critical race theory is regularly associated with qualitative research, and to provide a voice to the marginalized group, this research will use CRT as a framework to capture the voice of Black teachers and analyze the data. Ladson-Billings (1995) claimed the education system emulates the norms of society benefiting only a specific group of people, therefore creating disparities for the Black community, especially in the institution of education. Research pertaining to Black teachers is vast, but limited research has been conducted pertaining to their reflections on their job experiences and how it is impacted by school leadership through the lens of CRT. This demographic is small and under researched, but they have a unique set of experiences that deserve to be explored. More discussion on CRT will follow in the discussion of CRT and education in Chapter 2.

This study focused on the factors that contribute to the experiences of Black teachers that might result in a sense of dissatisfaction or other related reactions toward their jobs in southern California. With the intentionality to explore how the actions of administrators have an impact on Black teachers' feelings about their jobs, CRT was used to analyze the interaction and relationships between Black teachers and their administrators. This framework provides a lens that explains and interprets the inequalities in the institution of education. Additionally, CRT provides a lens to examine power, institutional structures, and procedures (Crenshaw, Gotanda, Peller, & Thomas, 1995; Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). One way to increase Black teacher retention is to understand what contributes to their job satisfaction and the impact of school administrators through the lens of CRT. The broader objective of this research is to identify ways to attract and retain Black teachers and to improve the culturally responsive practices used in schools, creating a healthier multicultural work climate.

Research Strategy

This study used a qualitative approach to further explore Black teachers' experiences through a brief survey and then the perspectives of at least six Black teachers via interviews, specifically related to their job dissatisfaction or other related reactions. The interviews were the method employed for data collection. Questions were developed to support data gathering in a systematic manner, ensuring the research reflects participant perspectives, rather than solely the researcher's point of view (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). Additionally, the interview method is ideal when minimal research has been conducted on an issue or population (Mills & Gay, 2016). With the aim to capture the lived experiences of Black teachers' satisfaction in rich detail, the use of phenomenology was appropriate to this study (Moustakas, 1994). Patton (2014) noted

phenomenology concentrates "on exploring how human beings make sense of experience and transform experience into consciousness" (p. 104). This method connects with the goal of the study and the framework to provide a voice for Black teachers and understanding the two phenomena: how school administrators connect with their job satisfaction and dissatisfaction.

Organization of the Manuscript

This dissertation consists of five chapters: the introduction, literature review, methods, results, and discussion. Chapter 2 presents the review of literature relevant to this research. Chapter 3 describes the design of the study, encompasses the description and rationale for the methodology, the research design, participants, validity, reliability, data collection protocol, data analysis procedures, limitations, delimitations, and positionality. Chapter 4 describes the findings from the data analysis. Lastly, Chapter 5 will report the discussion of the findings, conclusions, and recommendations.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This chapter begins with a review of the literature on Black teacher turnover, job satisfaction, attrition, and the relationship between school leaders and teachers' job satisfaction before introducing the theoretical frameworks used to guide the study. Background information about Black teacher turnover and dissatisfaction is included to provide a context of the problem with Black teacher turnover and the need for further research related to how the perceptions of principal leadership impacts Black teachers' job satisfaction. Finally, the purpose of this study was to gain more information on the experience of Black teachers in an effort to positively impact the different factors that may contribute to job satisfaction and retention (Ingersoll, 2001; Ingersoll & May, 2011).

Discontent among Black Teachers and the Turnover Problem

Data has shown that teachers are leaving the profession at an alarming rate. In 2005, the U.S. Department of Education collected data to explore the reasons teachers were leaving the classroom. Although 30% left due to retirement, 56% exited the profession due to job dissatisfaction (Ingersoll & May, 2011; Kopkowski, 2008). Similar findings reported that job dissatisfaction is the number one reason minority teachers left the classroom (Albert Shanker Institute, 2015). This study underscores that job satisfaction is on a continuum and acknowledges that the factors that contribute to dissatisfaction may not be the same as those that contribute to satisfaction, thus it is critical to provide the participants with an opportunity to define what satisfaction means to them. The following section provides a literature review of the scholarly research on job satisfaction.

Job Satisfaction

There has been research on job satisfaction in relation to individuals' demographics, job setting characteristics, and perceptions of the workplace, such as support, work stress, and autonomy, and how this has an impact on voluntary turnover (Holtom et al., 2008; Price, 2001). Job satisfaction interacts with race in a myriad of ways including sense of belonging, ownership, and team dynamics. Bristol's (2017) research explored the experiences of Black teachers and factors that contribute to discontent in the workplace, and the findings suggested Black teachers were more susceptible to feeling "less than" when positioned in predominantly White teaching forces. This is a factor to further explore because White teachers make up more than 80% of the teaching force, even in schools and districts that predominantly serve students of color (Achinstein et al., 2010).

While the factors related to job satisfaction and dissatisfaction are explored throughout many different professions, including teaching, this research focuses on Black teacher satisfaction in relationship to their dissatisfaction with administration. With job dissatisfaction being the highest reason for the lack of retention, it is essential to explore the supervisory relationship because it can have an impact on retention and enhance the literature. Research pertaining to Black teachers leaving the classroom is critical because diversifying the classroom goes beyond hiring more teachers of color but requires understanding the experience of Black teachers and why they, including effective teachers, are deciding to leave schools or the field of teaching entirely. In depth research, as the study conducted by Griffin and Tackie (2016), has provided direct quotes and narratives from a vast number of Black teachers pertaining to their experiences. This research is critical for school administrators and school districts to recognize

biases, alienation, and restrictions that specifically affect Black teachers and subsequently impact the classroom. In addition, Loeb et al. (2016) stated, "Minority teachers report substantially lower job satisfaction rates than other teachers, which had been consistent over time. Preparing and supporting an academically skilled and diverse teacher workforce as a whole remains a pressing issue" (p. 20).

Factors That Impact Turnover

The issue of discontent or dissatisfaction among Black teachers requires a consideration of factors that might lead to not only feeling that sense of discontent but also the factors that eventually result in role departure or turnover. There are numerous factors that contribute to Black teachers' experiences, including but not limited to being stereotyped, being the model, and experiencing microaggressions (see Table 1). The factors as stated are applicable to all teachers, but race impacts the ways perceptions of and challenges with administration are experienced among Black teachers. Research that unpacks the nuances and specifics of those experiences is necessary and an integral part in understanding ways to mitigate turnover among Black teachers. Given the backdrop of racism and race in schools, the perspectives of Black teachers become essential in understanding the trends related to turnover driven by their own unique experiences. Black teachers' experiences are unique because they have to navigate in educational institutions with policies and traditions that do not favor the academic success of Black students (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). Nevertheless, there are desires to work beyond these hurdles to help students succeed. According to research by Ford and Grantham (2003) and Gershenson et al. (2017), Black teachers were more likely than teachers of other ethnicities to rate Black students as gifted and were less likely to confuse or conflate cultural differences with intellectual deficiencies.

Table 1

Different Variables from Research That Contribute to the Dissatisfaction of Black Teachers

Factors	Descriptions
Stereotyped	Feeling devalued and intellectually inferior Not seen as an educator Pigeonholed to only helping Black students
Additional Responsibilities	Invisible tax can lead to burnout and potentially attrition Considered the expert on Black culture and student needs
Role Model	Mentor all Black students on campus even if they are not the teacher's actual students Black teachers have a positive impact on Black students due to potential commonalities
Microaggressions	Racial hierarchies Having to prove qualifications to teach other teachers and parents Feeling stifled to fully engage in the workplace

Note:.Adapted from *Through our Eyes: Perspectives and Reflections from Black Teachers*, by A. Griffin and H. Tackie, 2016, Washington, DC: The Education Trust. Copyright 2016 by The Education Trust; *Educating African-American Males: Detroit's Malcolm X Academy Solution*, by C. Watson and G. Smitherman, 1996, Chicago, IL: Third World Press. Copyright 2016 by Third World Press.

These examples of an inequitable educational system highlight the undergirding role of race in the experience of Black teachers and provides some context for the tensions they might experience as practitioners.

Being stereotyped. Prior research has pointed to the salience of race and racism in society and in schools; thus, the perspectives of Black teachers are important when highlighting trends in attrition that are driven by their unique experiences. Needless to say, being a Black individual in America is complex due to the historical contexts of slavery, racism, segregation, and institutional barriers that have limited or prevented upward mobility due to stereotypes. Although the Emancipation Proclamation was signed in 1863, the lingering effects of the institution of slavery still impact societal norms and hierarchical structures. For example, even the *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) trial highlighted the fact that Black teachers only taught Black students (Hudson & Holmes, 1994). At one point, over 82,000 Black teachers were

educating two million public school students and fulfilling multiple roles such as mentors and/or counselors (Hudson & Holmes, 1994). It was the teacher's responsibility to equip Black students with the knowledge, self-reliance, critical thinking, and integrity needed to elevate the Black race (Irvine, 1989).

Although there are many benefits gained from the ruling on *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954), there were unforeseen consequences that directly affected Black teachers. As segregation expended, the jobs for Black teachers and administrators were eliminated. In the South alone, over 38,000 teaching jobs were taken, and Black teachers were not considered "good enough" to teach White students (Kohli, 2008; Madkins, 2011). The stereotype of being intellectually inferior and the expert of Black children are challenges still impacting Black teachers today.

Griffin and Tackie (2016) elaborated: Black teachers felt uncomfortable about their colleagues' perceptions that they were only good enough to teach Black students, posing questions about colleague support for Black teachers and whether Black students were supported by all teachers. Researchers illustrated that "being able to easily discipline students often led others to see them as enforcers rather than educators. These teachers were assumed to be tough as opposed to being seen as effective teachers that establish order and create a classroom environment conducive to learning through their positive relationship with students" (Griffin & Tackie, 2016, p. 5).

Additionally, Black teachers are often assigned duties and responsibilities that they are expected to perform even though it is not a part of their job responsibilities. For example, Black students with behavioral challenges are sent to Black teachers to be disciplined and lectured (Griffin & Tackie, 2016). Discipline is a major part of school culture and leadership, which

would suggest that Black teachers are perceived with even more value because of their willingness to support this discipline method, but in reality, it is harmful to the teacher's development. Additional responsibility takes away time for teachers to spend with their own students, to take advantage of professional development opportunities, and to prepare for their classes because students are being brought into their room during their breaks, prep periods, and even during instruction, thus impacting student learning. The role of disciplinarian limits teachers' time to showcase their other skills, and the focus group results highlighted that the feeling of under appreciation transmitted into other adult spaces as Black teachers shared they were overlooked or not seen as a subject-matter experts with valid ideas to contribute to team meetings or the curriculum (Griffin & Tackie, 2016).

Being labeled can lead to feelings of exclusion, as can being seen as "simply a good disciplinarian" and not a content expert who can provide strategies and resources that support colleagues and assist all students to learn. Instead of principals and colleagues seeing the abilities to manage classrooms as testament to good teaching skills, Black teachers in this focus group felt that their skills were seen as a transfer of occupation—disciplinarian—and not an additional variable to be a good educator (Griffin & Tackie, 2016; Jackson, Boutte, & Wilson, 2013). This misinterpretation of being solely a good disciplinarian instead of having one of several qualities of being a good teacher, such as the ability to successfully manage a classroom, contributed to Black teachers' dissatisfaction.

Additional Responsibilities. Though teaching responsibilities are widely understood to extend beyond the classroom, Leukens et al. (2004) emphasized teachers leaving schools due to a heavy workload is common and is often cited as a reason that has reduced retention. Having an

excessive workload may include paperwork, discipline, additional classes outside of the assigned subject area, outside work obligations, and preparing for standardized tests. Furthermore, this workload is expected to be executed regardless of low resources and support, which can impact retention and satisfaction (Kersaint, 2005). With fewer resources and lower capacity to address all students and their needs, teachers experience higher rates of burnout and subsequent turnover in schools located in urban school districts.

Additionally, literature on Black teachers has demonstrated their workloads are extended because of the invisible tax to help Black students and parents. *Invisible tax* is a term used by the former U.S. Secretary of Education, John B. King, Jr., to describe the additional responsibilities or experiences of a Black person working in an organization or institution (King, 2016). Being a Black teacher has a unique set of experiences that go under-acknowledged through recognition and compensation by superiors and peers. This study also considered the cost of being a minority in connection to being a Black teacher when examining Black teacher experiences. Oftentimes this is seen as a cultural responsibility and an unacknowledged burden, but it does not take away from the immense sense of responsibility that Black teachers feel when it comes to their students.

Teachers have identified ways of using what they have to provide students with the best education they can possibly give, but it does not come without a cost on them both professionally and personally. The cost of being a Black teacher can be mentally and emotionally taxing, and that is coupled with the fact that they are seen as the individuals to help all the Black students on campuses or answer questions on their cultures, regardless of if the student is assigned to their classroom. Aside from the predetermined value of their roles to students, it can lead to being pigeonholed to only teach Black students, thus limiting professional opportunities. This invisible

tax can lead to burnout and potentially attrition, which is a conundrum because these extra duties, while potentially necessary, can leave Black teachers with mixed feelings about their occupation. Additionally, being one of a few Black teachers on campus can lead to an overwhelming additional load to support the school's Black students (Bristol, 2017).

Although research has shown Black students academically perform better with Black teachers, this mentality has stifled career opportunities for Black teachers because Black students are not only overrepresented with poor academic outcomes but are also mostly in lower level classes instead of advanced placement classes (Griffin & Tackie, 2016). Black teachers assume the responsibility of guiding Black students through school in a variety of ways (e.g., mentorship and academic tutoring), and that is sometimes to the detriment of their own professional development. This is a challenge that influences how Black teachers experience teaching altogether because while they desire to teach Black students, they also should not be restricted to only teaching lower placement courses that consequently hinder their career and development. The limitations that constrain Black teachers' advancement into additional opportunities is another aspect of the invisible tax, especially because Black teachers can request or apply to teach higher placement courses but run the risk of being denied, which has an impact on job satisfaction and retention.

Role modeling. Research points to the relationship between good teaching and role modeling, where Black teachers take on the responsibilities bestowed upon them by administrators, teachers, and parents to be role models to Black students (Watson & Smitherman, 1996) to increase their academic confidence and motivation and, ultimately, to reduce the feelings of insignificance that Black students have in schools (Albert Shanker Institute, 2015;

King, 1993). Several schools have a very small percentage of Black teachers on campus, and these few teachers are sought out to take on this role even though the students may not have classes with the teachers. There is a sense of obligation and expectation for Black teachers to mentor and discipline all Black students despite their low numbers on most campuses. This pressure is placed on Black teachers by principals and colleagues to create and maintain safe environments with every Black student.

Research has stated that having more Black teachers in schools is beneficial because they can serve as role models and bring levels of cultural connectedness to Black students (Darder, 2012; Ladson-Billings, 1990). Kohli (2008) highlighted that Black teachers, as role models, helped prepare their students to recognize and react to racism by creating safe spaces for discussions on different topics, such as code switching. Also, Black teachers have found healing from their own negative encounters pertaining to racism by guiding students through similar experiences (Kohli, 2008). While complicated, the reality that Black teachers are good for Black students is one that must be scrutinized in the context of a schooling environment that upholds structural racism and leadership that is not inclusive of Black teachers. The resulting tension is one that requires additional research to better understand why Black teachers are leaving the classroom altogether.

Maylor (2009) explored this stance and cited Hoyle's (1969) role theory to elaborate, from sociological and psychological lenses, how students adopt and emulate adults, such as teachers, when exploring their senses of self. Black teachers can have positive impact, especially when, as role models, they take interest in the personal and home lives of their students and provide strategies on how to successfully maneuver throughout the education system, show

interest in their futures, and push them academically (Albert Shanker Institute, 2015; Klopfenstein, 2005). Although there are benefits to having Black teaches as role models, it is important to acknowledge the additional responsibilities being a role model can create (Blair, 1994), especially if they block professional opportunities.

Furthermore, being a role model has been cited as one of the main motivating factors for Black teachers to seek this occupation. It is a complicated role because as much as it reflects the interests and passion of Black teachers, it can be seen as taxing due to the imbalance between Black teachers and Black students and the time it takes to build and maintain these relationships. Blair (1994) explored the false narrative that addresses an alternative perspective: Black teachers are best equipped to model and discipline Black students because of their ethnicities. This research demonstrated that matching teacher and students' ethnicities and relational demography is too simplistic of a solution to increase Black student success.

Microaggressions. Stereotypes and microaggressions are other contributing factors to Black teachers' isolation from their colleagues. Being hypervigilant is one of several tactics that Black teachers have exercised to ensure they are not negatively perceived (Griffin & Tackie, 2016). Griffin and Tackie (2016) reported, "Black teachers feel pressured to police their own behavior so they could be seen as more professional. Assumption about their demeanor—that they were too loud or too harsh . . . regulate their behavior based on context to fit into their school" (p. 9). Similar notions were expressed in Bailey's (2016) report of Black teachers in the Denver Public Schools. Over 70 subjects participated in a qualitative research study, reported they experienced several themes highlighted throughout Griffin and Tackie's (2016) report, and elaborated on the encounters with institutional racism. Fifty-one out of the 70 participants rated

their experiences with institutional racism at school in an 8 on a scale of 1 to 10. Furthermore, Black women educators stated that they were stereotyped as the "angry Black woman," and this impacted their abilities to be comfortable at work. This additional energy to ensure that they display behaviors that "fit in" to combat stereotypes is another variable that contributes to Black teachers' dissatisfaction.

An additional lens to explore in Black teacher retention is the power dynamic in adult relationships, such as interactions with peers, administrative support, collaborations, and influence. The concept of racial hierarchies is that certain racial groups are superior and are given opportunities and respect over other racial groups (Kohli, 2008). This term connects with the experiences of Black teachers being treated as subpar educators to their colleagues of different races. Griffin and Tackie (2016) stated:

> They are often viewed as not as educated or as knowledgeable as their counterparts. Their qualifications were openly questioned . . . explicitly mention where they earned their degrees and which certifications they held in order to be taken seriously by parents or administrators. (p. 6)

Having to prove that they are qualified to teach in the classroom also impacts their voices in contributing in professional development and teacher meetings on curriculum. There is an uphill battle to assert their position as competent and effective teachers, and they do not have the freedom to fully engage in the workplace, which deepens the feeling of being devalued and isolated. Black teachers are asking for different strategies and support from administrators to effectively intervene on racism that occurs among colleagues and that is directed toward students (Kohli, 2008).

Overall the increasing number of demands to be a disciplinarian, the Black student expert, a role model to Black students, pigeonholed, underappreciated, disempowered, and

disrespected due to race are enormous additional costs to endure on top of the increasing responsibilities of a teacher. Although this is not the experience of every Black teacher in the United States, there is an ample amount of research that illustrates this narrative in efforts to accurately highlight and potentially change this experience. Although this has been the experience of many Black teachers, the need to zoom in on teachers can be questioned because of the role that race plays for all Black working professionals in any setting. However, because this is such a shared experience among Black teachers, it is important to investigate, document, empower, and change this experience, especially when the impact has a larger effect on Black students. Additionally, the strengths that Black teachers have are helpful for all students, although currently these same skills are used to limit Black teachers' professional opportunities. Furthermore, while the dissatisfaction with administration is a key component to Black teacher job dissatisfaction, this variable is only vaguely and cursorily explored throughout the current literature. Principals have an important position to shape, cultivate the school norms, and can find ways to help increase Black teacher satisfaction.

School Administrators and Teacher Experiences

Prior to the Albert Shanker Institute's (2015) report on specific statistics across nine major cities on the factor of teacher attrition, various research had consistently established a connection between teacher's job satisfaction and administrator support (Boyd et al., 2010; Gisson, 2011; Kukla-Acevedo, 2009; Tickle, Chang, & Kim, 2011; Viano & Hunter, 2017). Minimal literature was available specifically on Black teachers' job satisfaction and how Black teachers' job satisfaction is impacted by school administrators. However, if the number one

reason why Black teachers leave the teaching profession is due to dissatisfaction with administrators (Albert Shanker Institute, 2015), this is a topic that needs to be explored.

Initially, the role of a principal was less defined and the leaders of the school were head teachers whose responsibilities were to support teachers in the school (Rousmaniere, 2007). As education progressed into the 20th century, the role of head teacher/principal required a license and the duties extended beyond disciplinarian and curriculum management to student discipline, school-wide attendance, professional development, district and state compliance, hiring, evaluating teachers, etc. (Blase & Blase, 2003; Goldring et al., 2009). Principals are considered the leaders of the school with the tools to help cultivate safe and productive work environments (Hart, 1992). An additional key dimension to this multifaceted role is the relationship between principals and teachers that influence teachers' emotions toward their jobs. Nevertheless, the title of school leaders and school administrators has expanded beyond principals to included assistant principals, senior teachers, and instructional coaches.

Being a teacher requires an enormous amount of multitasking to juggle the needs of every student, meet the requirements from administration, and cultivate relationships with students' parents and community partners. This noble profession can be extremely taxing, but individuals find this occupation fulfilling and often have lifelong careers. However, teachers are leaving the profession because of interactions with colleagues and their dissatisfaction with administrators. This problem is concerning because these teachers are expressing that their satisfaction would increase and they would be more inclined to stay in this profession if their situation with their colleagues and administrators were different. Teachers' perceptions of their jobs are important to

explore because administrators and teachers are two groups that work closely with one another for the collective goal of increasing student achievement.

Impact of Administrative Leadership

Teachers strive to provide students with the tools and resources to increase their success. Initially, when teachers begin training for this career, they are supported and guided while they are teacher assistants (Supovitz, Sirinides, & May, 2010). However, beginning the very first year as credentialed teachers, individuals are left to teach a room full of students with little to no support, recognition, or collaboration from supervisors such as principals (Supovitz et al., 2010). Blase and Blase (2003) conducted a study of over 800 teachers from elementary to high schools through an open-ended questionnaire to capture which everyday characteristics were exercised by principals that connected with their perceptions of effective principal leadership. The research data developed two major themes of effective instructional leadership: (a) communication and (b) professional improvement.

The first theme was communication that encouraged reflection, such as evaluations, observations, acknowledgement, and providing feedback. In other words, regular communication between administration and teachers was highly valued. The second theme was encouraging professional improvement by supporting collaborations, professional development, supporting the improvement of programs, and promoting adult learning, such as providing teachers with different conference options that will be resources in their classrooms. Although principals take on enormous amounts of responsibility, it is imperative to unpack the dimensions of administrative leadership because it has been identified as a contributing factor to teacher turnover (Ingersoll, 2001). A majority of school administrators do not have the power to directly

adjust the roles and responsibilities of teacher or increase a teachers' salaries; nevertheless, they are seen as the individuals who can improve work environments through promotion of efficacy, morale, and student progress (Pounder, 1987). Furthermore, it is important to acknowledge that the findings from literature that explore the perceptions of administrative support may not precisely mirror the needs of all teachers, specifically teachers from different ethnicities. The study by Blase and Blase (2003) included gender and school location (i.e., rural, suburban, and urban) in its demographic indicators, but race was a demographic indicator that was excluded from the study to protect the anonymity of the teachers. As a result, the study could not provide specific information pertaining to the connection between a teacher's experiences and their race to the administrators' support. With a specific influx of teachers, Black teachers are leaving their profession at alarming rates and it will be beneficial to research what factors impact this particular group and to see if there are commonalities. The ultimate goal is to help school leaders understand what needs and motivations can impact job satisfaction.

Critical Race Theory and Education

To obtain a deeper understanding of the experiences of Black teachers with administration, a theoretical framework is needed that takes into account factors like race and racism. This section explains CRT and its relevance with obtaining a more accurate perspective of the experiences of Black teachers.

Critical race theory is a theoretical framework that explores the centrality of race in institutions and society. Adapted from legal studies, CRT asserts racism is embedded in U.S. culture and institutions (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). In education, CRT can be used to evaluate and examine the significance of race in the marked disparities in education. This dynamic exists

between different racial and ethnic groups due to disproportionate resource allocations and differences in academic expectations. According to scholars, race is a key component of educational inequity and is interwoven into the very fabric of schools as an institution that facilitates and reinforces the achievement gap (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). Finally, CRT provides a platform to inequalities of power, structure, and procedures (Crenshaw et al., 1995; Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995).

Critical race theory is constructed with five core tenets that are used to identify and interrogate the role of race in structuring and perpetuating marginalization and disparities in society. The theory explores the relationship between the dominant majority and minority groups on visible outcomes that are disproportionately under achieved by the minority, with an explicit assertion that race is salient and responsible for the disparity. The first tenet is *counter storytelling*, which provides the disenfranchised group with the capacity to tell their stories and elevate narratives of their experiences—often counter to that of the majority's experience. The second tenet is the *permanence of racism*, which contends that race and racism influence the very fabric of our political, social, and economic society. In this tenet, race is seen as inextricably linked to the construction of our society that has privileged the dominant majority over minority groups. The third tenet is *Whiteness as property* and refers to the structural advantages that White people, by way of rights, have had over nondominant groups, especially because of their rights to own land, vote, and other rights that were given exclusively to White people. The fourth tenet is *interest conversion*, which shines a light on the fact that the dominant group received the greatest gains from civil rights legislation, especially in gender parity on account of affirmative action programs. Finally, the fifth tenet critiques *liberalism* and argues the danger of color

blindness and equal opportunity, which allows us to ignore and mute the centrality of race in policies and practices that perpetuate inequities. Scholars have used CRT to explore and examine issues of success and inclusivity at all levels of educational research (Hiraldo, 2010).

Tate (1997) expounded that CRT provides the lens to study the patterns of racism and power that influence the dominating culture of organized institutions, such as the system of education. Schools make up one of our largest institutions that produce and uphold power, norms, and culture that reinforce the values of society in the classroom and in the school environment. This power reinforces the marginalization of certain groups based on demographics such as race, gender, socioeconomic status, and educational attainment. As educational research overwhelmingly points to the racialized experiences of students in the classroom, this study provides an opportunity to understand and unpack the lived experiences of Black teachers as a marginalized group through counter storytelling. This study purports that Black teachers have their own unique experiences that are impacted by the same power, norms and culture that perpetuates inequities in student achievement.

Ladson-Billings and Tate's (1995) "Toward a Critical Race Theory of Education" assisted with the process of unpacking the experience of Black teachers in education and the structural factors that discourage Black students, and subsequently, Black teachers. They argued the importance of conceptualizing race as a sociological construct that influences educational practice and student outcomes. Moreover, they asserted schools are an institution built to perpetuate disparities on account of race, claiming "the fact that race continues to be significant, U.S. society is based on property rights rather than human rights, and the intersection of race and property creates an analytical tool for understanding inequity" (p. 14). Finally, Ladson-Billings

and Tate operationalized property as a right rather than a physical possession, thus the idea of Whiteness as property is a critical component of CRT. *Whiteness* in the educational context goes beyond the association of literal property and home value on the allocation of educational resources (i.e., more affluent neighborhoods receive more funding) and suggests that race is a social construction with strong overtones of political, social, and economic status and power, thus contrasting *nonwhiteness* as limited power and status. With minority teachers making up about 20% (Ingersoll et al., 2017) of the teaching force, according to Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995), Whiteness extends beyond actual racial demographics and asserts that all administrators are complicit and responsible for guiding and protecting an institution built on racism. The study also assumes that administrators are in a position of power to impact the satisfaction of teachers, and uniquely Black teachers, due to factors of inequity. Whiteness as property in this context can be used to understand racial notions. Finally, this concept of Whiteness as property directly challenges the ideas of multicultural educational practice and pedagogy, and it specifically puts the experiences of Black teachers in schools into perspective.

The core tenets of CRT situate the experiences of Black teachers working in urban communities with school characteristics that are perpetually underperforming, under resourced, and underserved (Lewis, James, Hancock, & Hill-Jackson, 2008). Black students are often faced with low teacher expectations, unequal distribution of resources in urban schools, and assigned classes that will make them ineligible to apply for higher education (Howard, 2008). Thus, the goal of using CRT as a conceptual framework is to lift up the counter narratives of Black teachers' experiences in schools. Ultimately, the goal is to better comprehend the relationship between Black teachers and their administrators in an effort to identify probable solutions to

increasing satisfaction and retention, while shifting the influence of race and power that are embedded in schools.

Summary

The current study was guided by two main questions: (a) What factors do Black teachers associate with job dissatisfaction? and (b) How do school administrators influence those experiences? The guiding hypothesis was participants were anticipated to highlight general issues of job dissatisfaction impacted by school administrators in relation to additional responsibilities, microaggressions, and being stereotyped.

The complex and multifaceted experiences of Black teachers were imperative to explore due to the implications that result from Black teacher turnover, such as the lack of teacher diversity and the inability for students of other races to interface with Black adults. Understanding the relationship between Black teachers and their administrators, using individual teacher interviews with the framework of CRT, provided a chance to grasp themes that contributed to the satisfaction and the dissatisfaction of Black teachers in an effort to increase retention. The use of individual interviews warranted a methodology such as phenomenology that can assist with data gathering and analysis. The rationale of the method and the specifics of the research study are described in Chapter 3.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

This study's purpose was to explore the various factors that contribute to job dissatisfaction among Black teachers. Specifically, this research focused on Black teachers who work in urban secondary schools in Los Angeles County and investigated the role school leaders play in their dissatisfaction. This chapter focuses on the research method, details on the selection of participants, data collection, analysis, and ethical practices of the study in an effort to answer the following two research questions:

1. What experiences by Black teachers relate to job dissatisfaction? and

2. How is job dissatisfaction for Black teachers associated with school administrators?

Qualitative Research Design

The purpose of this study was to gain a deeper understanding of Black teachers' job dissatisfaction and how school administrators impact Black teachers' job dissatisfaction or other related reactions. With limited research on this particular group of people, concern, and phenomenon, qualitative research was the methodology selected to gain depth versus quantity (Mills & Gay, 2016). According to Creswell (1998), a researcher uses qualitative methods of inquiry to research human problems, constructing a picture using various tools, such as observations and detailed interviews with participants. Through qualitative research, a researcher can build a multifaceted yet comprehensive representation. This definition highlights the importance of using this research process to construct meaning and knowledge along with the participants. The qualitative approach to data collection and analysis ensures the research is from the participants perspectives rather than the researcher's point of view (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000).

With the aim to capture the lived experiences of Black teachers in relation to job satisfaction and dissatisfaction in rich detail, phenomenology was the appropriate qualitative approach (Moustakas, 1994). The objective of phenomenology is to actively have participants share their experiences through in-depth interviews and derive themes from the narratives, thus highlighting the core of the phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994). Creswell (2007) recommended the modified version of phenomenology by Stevick-Colaizzi-Keen (Moustakas, 1994) because it focuses on the lived experiences of the participants and involves temporary suspension of the researchers' personal experiences or presumptions, otherwise known as bracketing. The main goal of a researcher is to remain impartial and describe the phenomenon as accurately as possible (Groenewald, 2004). According to Creswell, there are two types of phenomenological studies: (a) hermeneutic and (b) transcendental. Transcendental phenomenological was the approach for this study because it focuses on the descriptions that the participant divulges, and this approach steers the researcher to engage participants in the analysis of the meanings they have developed from their own experiences. This approach was selected for this research because understanding Black teachers' experiences can shed insight into their satisfaction. Gathering how Black teachers make sense of their experiences is significant and essential, and using transcendental phenomenology provided a method of inquiry that believes that the answers already lie in participants and can be discovered through questioning and reflection (Van Manen, 2014).

Urban School Settings

This study concentrated on urban schools throughout the County of Los Angeles. There are almost 80 public school districts in Los Angeles County comprised of approximately 2,000 schools with over 1,500,000 students (Education Data Partnership, 2018). This study focused on

urban secondary schools, a subset of these 2,000 schools. Using Milner's (2006) framework, *urban school* is defined as (a) a school that is located in a large city with a large population that includes a substantial amount of racial minorities, (b) a school located in a city that is significantly smaller in size but reflects similar student diversity demographics, or (c) a school located in a suburban or rural area that is experiencing shifts in student population diversity pertaining to race, language, culture, and socioeconomic status (Schaffer et al., 2017). These locations were selected due to the accessibility for convenient sampling and previous research has emphasized how this large urban area has been impacted by retention of Black teachers (Albert Shanker Institute, 2015). Secondary schools were determined by a grade-level criterion in the school, such as Grades 6 through 8 and Grades 9 through 12, excluding Grades K to 8 schools. Public schools included charter schools as long as they were considered public charter schools.

Participants and Selection Procedures

The goal for this study was twofold: to gather information about Black teachers' experiences via survey and to use the survey to interview full-time Black teachers who fit the eligibility criteria in Table 2. The first criterion was that the teachers' school was located in an urban community because urban schools have a higher turnover rate of Black teachers in under resourced schools (Ingersoll & May, 2011). The second criterion was rating 1 or 2 on the Likert scale questions pertaining to satisfaction with administrators from the participant eligibility survey.

Participant Eligibility Survey

The first half of the eligibility survey asked demographic questions. The second part of

the survey tool was comprised of eight questions pertaining to the satisfaction of Black teachers

Table 2

Participant Eligibility Survey Results

Criteria	Results
Black teacher in a public urban secondary school in Los Angeles County	54
Rating 1 (*very dissatisfied*) or 2 (*dissatisfied*) on the Likert scale question(s) pertaining to dissatisfaction	21

Note. n = 79

in different categories related to their profession such as workplace conditions, relationships with

colleagues, role of race in the workplace, salary, school administrators, opportunities for

promotion, and autonomy. The participants rated their satisfaction on a 5-point Likert scale: 1 =

very dissatisfied, 2 = *dissatisfied*, 3 = *neither*, 4 = *satisfied*, and 5 = *very satisfied*. Participants

were chosen who reported they were *very dissatisfied* or *dissatisfied* with their administrators.

Selection of Participants

The procedure that was used for identifying participants was nonprobability snowball

sampling; the process had initial informants recommend other potential participants (Atkinson &

Flint, 2001). Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval was granted from Loyola Marymount

University (see Appendix D). Once IRB approval was secured, the announcement of this study

and participant eligibility survey was posted on different social media platforms, such as

Facebook and Instagram groups, which focus on Black teachers. All posts included a brief

purpose of the study and a link to a Google survey for interested individuals to complete.

Additionally, fellow colleagues were asked via email and text message to recommend and

forward the invitation to colleagues who matched the study's participant criteria in the Google

survey link (see Appendix B). The aim was to select about six participants from the Google

survey pool to conduct in-depth interviews that included questions on contentment with their job

in relation to their school administrators.

Creswell (2007) recommended three to 10 participants for a phenomenological study;

however, other researchers recommend at least six (Morse, 2000) or at least three (Englander,

2012). Nevertheless, sampling was conducted until there was enough data to ensure the research

questions could be answered (Creswell, 2007; Englander, 2012; Morse; 2000). For this study, it

was important the participants had similar experiences; therefore, during participant recruitment,

interested participants completed an eligibility survey. If there were too many interested

individuals that satisfied the participant criteria, the goal was to use the criteria for purposeful

sampling to select the participants.

Once an individual had shown interest and completed the form to establish their

eligibility, an email containing the written informed consent (see Appendix C) was sent to all

interested parties, including the description of the research, the purpose of the study, estimated

time commitment, data collection methods (e.g., semi-structured interview, digital recording

use), data safeguarding, demographic survey, confidentiality, and their rights to withdraw. In the

eligibility survey were demographic questions to gain additional information of the participant,

such as age, years of teaching, where they taught (middle school or high school), teaching

subject, why they decided to become a teacher, and what contributed to their retention as a

teacher. Although there were an ample number of individuals to complete the survey, due to the

research study's criteria, such as having participants teach in secondary schools and interviewing

in a certain timeline, a total of 10 successful interviews were conducted.

Study Participants

Ten Black teachers agreed to an in-depth interview after rating some level of dissatisfaction with their school administrators on the participant eligibility survey. Outside of the research criteria for the participants to be both Black and teach in a secondary urban public secondary school, Grades 6 through12, the participants were women. Factors that diversified the participants are illustrated in Table 3. For the demographic category of age, half of the participants were over the age of 46 years old. For category of years of teaching, over 70% had taught for more than 10 years. One teacher taught for three to five years, two teachers have taught for six to ten years, and seven teachers taught for over 10 years. For the demographic category, the teacher level between high school and middle school was even with five participants in each teaching level. Lastly, a little more than half of the participants worked in traditional public schools versus public charter schools.

<p style="text-align:center">Collection of Interview Data</p>

Over the span of four months, July through October 2018, a total of 10 interviews were conducted. Each interview lasted between 30 and 90 minutes. The interviews were scheduled and conducted within one week of the interviewees' responses to the interview invitation through email. The primary goal was to create an atmosphere that was supportive, nonjudgmental, and welcomed opinions and personal viewpoints with questions guided from the lens of critical race theory (CRT). The interviews took place in quiet and private locations, such as library study rooms and offices. Before the interviews took place, each participant was emailed an interview protocol (see Appendix D) and consent form. Additionally, these items were also provided to the

participant in person before the interviews started. Each session was audio taped after permission was granted verbally and in writing.

Table 3
Participant Demographics

Pseudonym	Gender	Age Range	Years of Teaching	Teaching Level	Public Charter or Traditional Public
Teacher 1	Female	26-30 years old	6-10 years	High School	Public Charter
Teacher 2	Female	46-50 years old	10 or more years	High School	Traditional Public
Teacher 3	Female	46-50 years old	10 or more years	Middle School	Traditional Public
Teacher 4	Female	31-35 years old	10 or more years	Middle School	Traditional Public
Teacher 5	Female	46-50 years old	10 or more years	High School	Traditional Public
Teacher 6	Female	36-40 years old	6-10 years	Middle School	Public Charter
Teacher 7	Female	41-45 years old	10 or more years	Middle School	Public Charter
Teacher 8	Female	51 and older	10 or more years	High School	Traditional Public
Teacher 9	Female	31-35 years old	3-5 years	High School	Public Charter
Teacher 10	Female	51 and older	10 or more years	Middle School	Traditional Public

Audio recording was used to ensure that the researcher provided their full, undivided attention during the interview and would not have to focus on taking notes. The audio recordings were transcribed and emailed to the participants to review for accuracy and additional input. Zero edits were given from the participants after they reviewed their transcripts; however, one participant did provide additional information about new updates on her job status. Once the interviews were transcribed and reviewed by the participants, the recordings were deleted to ensure confidentiality and to protect the participants. All research materials were locked in a file cabinet until the completion of the study.

The interviews consisted of open-ended interview questions designed by the researcher (see Appendix A) with the intent of having the participants share their experiences pertaining to

job dissatisfaction or other related reactions, the role that administrators contributed to this sentiment, and an intrapersonal component to reflect on how race played a role in their identities and narratives. After the creation of the questions, the researcher consulted with at least five teachers who fit the study's participant criteria to receive their feedback. These individuals did not participate in the study's interviews. Based on the responses, the questions were improved to include the suggestions that ensured that Black teacher experiences were captured (Creswell, 2007; Hiraldo, 2010). The format of the interviews was semi-structured in an effort to provide direction while creating a space for unexpected materials to surface (Gubrium & Holstein, 2001). Additionally, the facilitator probed for additional information when it was warranted, for instance, when a participant answered a question with one word (Patten, 2005). Each interview was scheduled for 30 to 90 minutes, and this length of time allowed the interview to be fluid enough to capture the participants' experiences as naturally as possible.

Analysis of Data

The procedure for data analysis of this research was framed by the phenomenological stages, discussed by Moustakas (1994) and Creswell (2007), that consisted of isolating important statements, equally considering each statement and its meaning, grouping statements into umbrella categories and themes, developing textural and structural descriptions, and articulating a descriptive synthesis that embodies the essence of Black teacher satisfaction and dissatisfaction. Figure 1 illustrates the phases of the data analysis. The coding and recoding process involved several steps over a two-month period to fully settle on the appropriate themes for this study. The researcher used a transcription software, Rev.com, to obtain copies of each interview. The transcriptions were read by the researcher while listening to the corresponding

audio recording to ensure that each one was accurately transcribed. Following the initial reading, the transcriptions were read again to deduct names and words that would link the interview to the participant. Then the transcripts were read a third time to highlight relevant quotes and phrases.The highlighted quotes and phrases were put into a table using Microsoft Word (Version 14) to create a visual of how often certain phrases and excerpts were used to create categories.

The process first created 21 categories. Then, clean, redacted transcripts were read to repeat the process of coding in the effort to create new or similar categories. Through this process, categories were eliminated or combined due to redundancies and reduced the codes from 21 to 11 significant codes. Lastly, themes were created due to the similarities of the codes that connected to the research topics.

Researcher's Self-Reflection

The primary focus of this stage was to help the researcher concentrate on the participants' experiences while suppressing their predetermined viewpoints or biases. This was important because of the researcher's similarities to the participants due to race, gender, and connection to the same occupational field. As a Black administrator the goal was to better understand the

Step 1: Read each interview transcript while listening to the audiorecording for accuracy

Step 2: Read interview transcripts again to dedact names and words that would link the interview to the participant

Step 3: Reread each interview transcript and highlighted excerpts and phrases

Step 4: Compiled the highlighted excerpts and phrases into 21 categories/ codes

Step 5: Used clean redacted interview transcripts to code and recode by repeating steps 1 and 2

Step 6: Compared phrases and excerpts from the initial reading and from the second reading

Step 7: Adjusted the categories/ codes from 21 to 11 codes

Step 8: Created themes

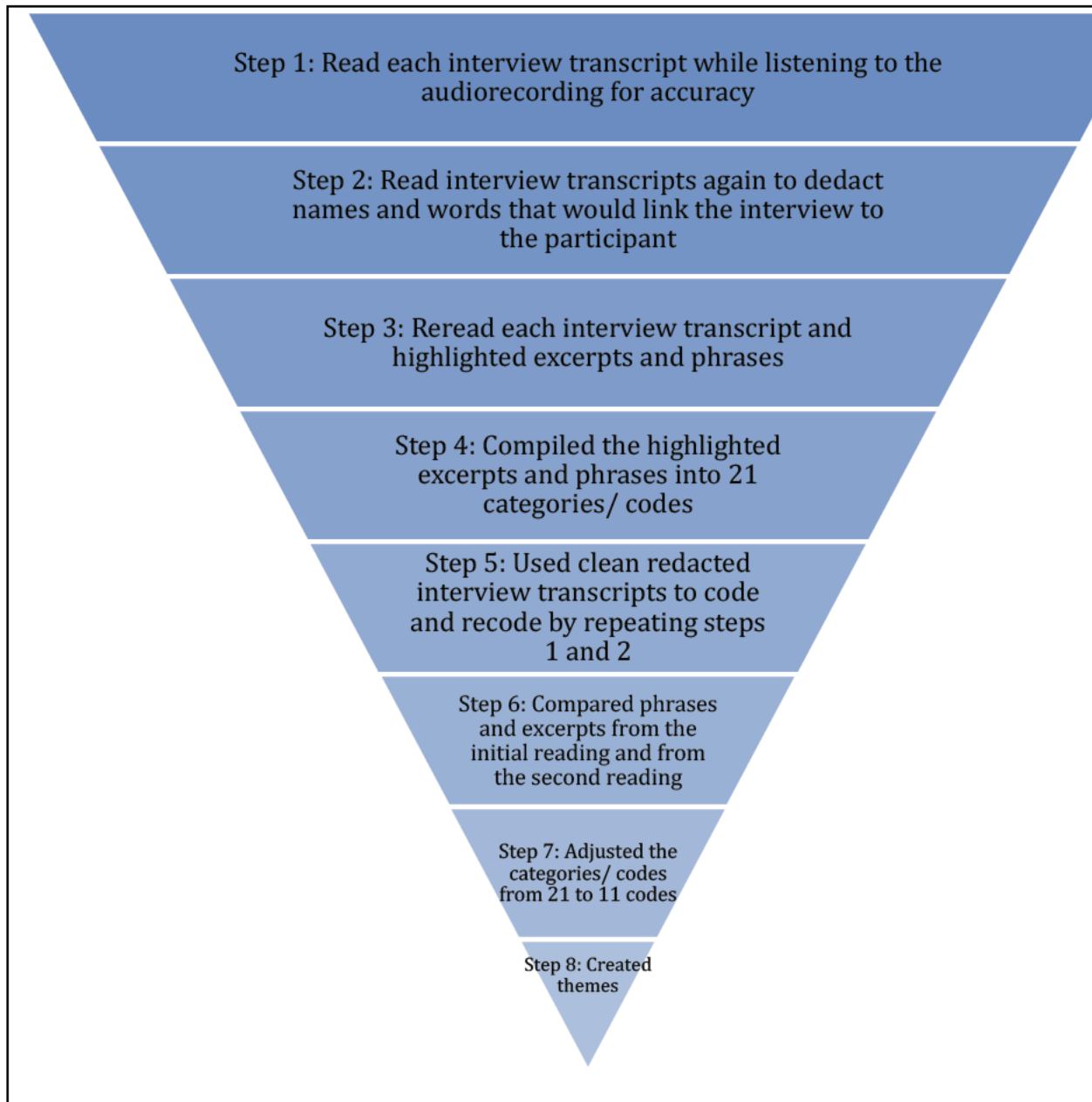*Figure 1.* Steps of data analysis.

experiences of Black teachers to improve satisfaction and relationships with school

administrators. The researcher understood the biases that they brought to this broader question on

Black teacher dissatisfaction since they have personally witnessed Black teacher turnover from

the lens of an administrator. The researcher's positionality is multidimensional as a Black

educator, administrator, and advocate for equitable educational practices. Therefore, notes were taken during the audio recorded interview in effort to capture the participants' narratives accurately with the ability to re-listen to the interview. Also, notes were taken to capture the initial connections of the researcher.

The second stage of transcendental phenomenology is reduction through the use of bracketing. Before and after every interview, the researcher used a journal to write down their feelings, opinions, and considerations as a form of bracketing. After initial considerations were given and the interviews were transcribed, each audio recording was listened to while reading the transcription to ensure accuracy and to develop the initial codes from key phrases from their experiences (e.g., frustrated, administrative support, student growth, stressful environment, and dissatisfaction).

Validity and Reliability

Elaborate efforts were made to decrease personal biases that could have compromised the data. Reflexivity, bracketing, and member checking were used to increase trustworthiness of this research study (Lincoln & Guba, 2000). Reflexivity was accomplished through a journal where the researcher regularly reflected throughout the research process on the decisions, logistics, and rationale. Additionally, bracketing took place by journaling before and after each interview. Details of the bracketing for this research are in the self-reflective section. Member checking occurred after the audio recording of each interview by consulting participants on the transcriptions. After each interview, an email was sent to each participant with the transcription of their interview as a process of member checking to ensure accuracy and completeness. In

addition to asking the participants to check the transcription of the interview, they also had the opportunity to elaborate on any of the topics and expand their stories.

Moreover, one additional step was taken to ensure validity: the research received an external peer audit to discuss and finalize themes that emerged from the codes. Upon the development of the themes from the codes, the dissertation chair provided feedback on the accuracy of labeling themes. This increased the validity and reliability of the study. Lastly, in an effort to validate and contrast the data, triangulation was used in this study by collecting data from multiple participants and through different avenues. Data were collected via the interview transcriptions and eligibility survey, which was considered alongside the researcher's field notes. Creswell (2008) emphasized the importance of gaining a thorough understanding of the phenomenon by using various methods to check for comprehension this specific experience.

(De)Limitations and Ethical Considerations

One limitation of the study was the amount of time to select participants and conduct the interviews, which was four months. With this time constraint, the interviews were limited in the diversity of the participants, specifically gender. An additional limitation was the inability to generalize the findings due to the smaller sample size. Using interviews as the method of collecting data increased the time it would take for the researcher to analyze and code the information; therefore, the sample size was smaller than conducting a quantitative method, such as administering a survey.

This study specifically focused on Black teachers to gain insight on their job satisfaction and experiences working with administrators. Choosing to only interview Black teachers limited the ability to compare their responses to teachers of different races and ethnicities. An additional

delimitation included only interviewing teachers who are currently teaching in the classroom and not expanding the interview to Black teachers who have exited the classroom. However, condensing this study to only Black teachers currently teaching in the classroom provided an opportunity to specifically understand and analyze this particular set of experiences before expanding the research. Although the population was restricted to Black teachers, the demographics such as age, education level, and grade levels taught are not limited and provide the ability to capture a theme that transcends career demographics. Lastly, using qualitative research and interviewing as the research method provided the opportunity to collect rich data; however, due to the smaller sample size, the ability to use these data for generalizability was restricted.

Furthermore, to maintain high ethical and moral standards and to build trusting relationships with the participants, the informed consent from the Human Subjects IRB of Loyola Marymount University was acquired to gain permission to conduct research by the board prior to the study (see Appendix D).

Summary of Methods

To gain a deeper understanding of the Black teacher experience, this research focused on the factors that contribute to their dissatisfaction explicitly with school administrators in an effort to support the retention of Black teachers who work in urban schools. With minimal research, specifically on Black secondary teachers in Los Angeles County, a qualitative phenomenological approach was used to gain a deeper understanding on this phenomenon. The 10 interview participants were selected through snowball sampling. Each participant met the requirements of being a Black teacher and working in an urban secondary school. The results from the

participants' interviews were checked for consistency by having participants review their own interview responses. Qualitative coding techniques were used to analyze all interview data (Saldaña, 2013). The data were gathered and analyzed with a total of eight steps, using stages of transcendental phenomenology (Moustakas, 1994), by rereading the transcripts several times for accuracy, redaction, and identifying key words and phrases. The codes were then created to link the excerpts together. This process was repeated to ensure inter-rater agreement. This process helped decrease the codes and create themes pertaining to the research topic. Additionally, member checking, peer debriefing, and triangulation were exercised to increase the validity of the study.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

This qualitative phenomenological study was conducted to better understand the experiences of Black teachers working in schools in Los Angeles County. Two research questions were posed:

1. What experiences by Black teachers relate to job dissatisfaction? and

2. How is job dissatisfaction for Black teachers associated with school administrators?

The findings from the semi-structured interviews with 10 Los Angeles County secondary teachers generated the following primary themes: active awareness of race, protectiveness of students of color, professional advancement selection bias, low confidence in school administrators, lack of support from school administrators, and the psychological and emotional outcomes of discrimination. These themes emerged from participants' responses describing their experiences as teachers and the different factors that contributed to their dissatisfaction.

Narrative Themes

Persistent Awareness of Race

One of the themes that surfaced during the interviews was the persistent awareness of race, which is defined as a constant reminder of one's racial or ethnic background. Interwoven throughout the interviews, participants reflected on how often they thought about their race and the impact that their race had on different interactions with their fellow teachers. Participants who worked in schools with predominantly Black teachers did not think about race as frequently as teachers who worked in schools with predominantly White teachers. Some teachers who were part of a predominantly Black faculty at their school echoed what one participant said, "No issue

with race, no issue with culture" and that they didn't think about race often "except if I go to a conference" where fewer Black teachers were present. One teacher remarked that the school had a "different feel" [from previous schools she taught at] due to the fact that there are "so many people of color" at her current school. Finally, another teacher linked her experience as a teacher at her current school to her own experience as a student, saying, "I went to school in the inner city, so the dynamics that I see at my school is what I saw when I was in high school."

Participants who worked at schools with a significant number of teachers of color did not share the experience of having a persistent awareness of race compared to those participants who worked at schools where the faculty was predominately White. One of the teachers shared that she thought about race "pretty often because I am one of three Black teachers." Two other teachers shared identical sentiments of being one of few Black teachers and this created "a lens of looking through a lot of things." Whenever she saw the other Black teachers, she would "feel good they're there." Being one of very few Black teachers on the faculty caused one of the participants to feel isolated and like an outsider:

> I feel like I'm not a part of the "in crowd," and when I say that, what I mean is the demographic of teachers at this school. The majority has Caucasian background. And so I feel like it becomes a popularity contest and that, either you're in or you're out.

The participants with fewer fellow Black teachers at their school sites reflected on racial dynamics that existed at their job more often than participants who taught at schools with greater staff diversity. The quotes suggest race was often on their minds, and one teacher stated that in being one of few Black teachers on campus, she developed a racial awareness lens on how she views things. Additionally, participants working in schools with fewer Black teachers elaborated that not being a part of the majority left them feeling isolated and persistently reflecting on how

race is a factor in different interactions. Several participants described this constant reflection on race as a frequent occurrence in interactions with their colleagues.

Teaching is an occupation that requires a high level of interaction and collaboration with different groups of people, including parents, students, and colleagues. Participants communicated that some of their interactions with their colleagues were frustrating due to the lack of sensitivity and inclusion. One teacher shared her experience:

> I try not to think about that too much. Because then I think that would really heighten my level of paranoia . . . but there are times when we're having conversations, and I can see people be a little more hesitant about how they talk about what's going on.

In her quote she stated she has to choose not to think about race and how it impacts her work environment because it will make her paranoid. Another outlook was shared by a different teacher who actively selected when she participated in discussions with her colleagues because of how her participation would be viewed by them.

> Deciding when to speak and when not to speak, and make sure you're not taking over, taking too much space. But there are times when part of it is, it feels, for me, it feels like the nonblack folks are not recognizing their words or their actions may be inconsiderate or diminishing my intelligence or someone else's intelligence.

Based on the quote above, the teacher explained her thought process when determining when to contribute to a conversation with the awareness that others may perceive that she might overly contribute. Additionally, she reflected on the lack of awareness among nonblack teachers and how their comments could be insulting. These participants' experiences with colleagues could be deemed as "awkward, formal, and inconsiderate," and the impact appeared to be draining due to the constant rumination of race that followed. This is illustrated by one teacher's experience:

> It made it difficult for me to work to my full potential . . . they [nonblack teachers] didn't want to share. But they would share with other people. I was like, . . . "Did I say

something wrong?" So then I found other people like me [Black teachers] were getting treated the same way.

This teacher's experience not only links with the other participants' active thoughts of race but also provides a narrative about how other Black teachers on her campus were being treated similarly.

The Racialization of the Teacher-Student Experience

The second theme that emerged from the narratives is the sense of protectiveness of students of color. Several of the participants discussed how fellow nonblack teachers would make comments that heightened their awareness of the language being used to describe students of color. One teacher shared her experience:

> Only three of us [teachers] are Black. All three of us are female. And so when decisions get made . . . particularly when it comes to student discipline . . . I get really aware of the language that's being used, and who is being talked about.

In this case, the teacher was aware of the different phrases used by nonblack colleagues when discussing student discipline, particularly about students of color. She further explained this was important because she wanted to ensure these students were not being targeted. Another participant shared a similar sentiment as she relayed a comment by a White colleague: "These kids don't deserve what the Executive Director was trying to provide for them. We're not in a higher income city somewhere." This teacher was disappointed by this statement and felt very protective of the students from the opinions of her colleagues. Frequent occurrences like these left her feeling that she had an additional responsibility to look after students from teachers who shared negative beliefs about them.

Furthermore, another teacher shared a detailed experience that occurred at the end of a new teacher professional development training at the beginning of the school year with a White

teacher who expressed why they felt they had to work in an urban school and the impact they felt they had to make:

> I felt like I have White privilege, and I feel guilty about my White privilege, and I feel like I need to teach at an inner-city school, inner-city kids who aren't as privileged as I am to give them the education that I received growing up.

This teacher shared her irritation with her teacher-colleague's rationale for working at an urban school with the assumption that these students need to be taught by individuals with more privileged backgrounds. These types of exchanges have a negative impact on Black teachers. Each participant worked at an urban school with predominantly students of color, and they reflected on how these type of interactions with their fellow teachers, where negative statements were often elevated, suggested their colleagues had a deficit mindset toward the students at the school. The protective feeling that participants had of their students certainly had an impact on their job experiences. A few teachers shared their hypervigilance of students, as one teacher expressed:

> So I'm always having a listening ear for if I hear some kid say they feel wrong or slighted. [Other teachers] might have some really great qualities . . . but I just feel like sometimes they're in a wrong area. Maybe they'd be better off somewhere else. So I'm really protective of the kids in that sense.

Another teacher often questioned the reasons why some her colleagues were teachers: "I prefer to be in inner city schools. That's my choice. I'm always looking side-eyed at people who come in. Why [are] you here?" The cynicism some of the participants shared toward their colleagues was associated with how their colleagues talked about students of color, leaving them to wonder why certain teachers decided to work at urban schools. The participants felt they must protect students of color from colleagues who did not have the students' best interests in mind. This protectiveness resulted in hypervigilance related to race and racism, which for many teachers,

linked to job dissatisfaction. The dissatisfaction was a result of working with coworkers who demonstrated a deficit mindset for students of color and the fatigue that is associated with protecting them and always being on alert for certain comments.

Hurdles to Professional Advancement

The third theme that arose from the narratives was the barriers to their career advancement. School administrators' responsibilities are comprised of making several key decisions that sometimes include selecting teachers to move into leadership roles. Furthermore, some of these opportunities entail moving a teacher out of the classroom to coach and support several different teachers to improve their instruction. Many of the participants expressed frustration and discontent with the lack of diversity in the leadership selection and reflected on how race had an impact on their job advancement opportunities. One teacher expressed what she witnessed at her school site: "I dealt with the least experienced teachers promoting up. I dealt with, if you worked under a certain principal, she'll pull in all her people to get promoted up." This teacher expressed that she desired to move into leadership but felt she has been overlooked by her school administrators due to racial bias:

> [The] organization on the whole is picking and choosing, very intentionally it feels, the people they want to lead this organization, and this school. And that they do not value diversity because that's not being shown in whom they're choosing.

When leadership opportunities and promotion arose, a lack of diversity upon selection had an impact on the participants in this study. This practice is also demonstrated when school administrators decided to keep certain teachers inside of the classroom despite that teacher's career aspirations. One teacher mentioned:

> I was such a good teacher that the administrative staff, they want to keep their good teachers in the classroom. They don't want them to move up, so no matter how many

applications I put in . . . I wouldn't get hired. Then I finally asked and they said, "Your principal is not answering our phone call. . . . They want to keep their good teachers at the school site." . . . It becomes frustrating.

The feeling that school leaders hand-select individuals they would like in leadership positions and do not provide equal opportunities for others has contributed to psychological and emotional outcomes such as frustration. One teacher offered a specific example of the lack of diversity in promotion and leadership selection:

They [the administration] decided like, "We're going to have a leadership committee to help support us while the other administrator is on maternity leave." And all three of the people they hired are all White. And that was really annoying as well, because there were other people of color who had applied. There were other people who have been there much longer than they had, and applied, and still didn't get the position.

The barriers to career advancement theme arose throughout the participants' interviews. It was further articulated that this was a practice that occurred regularly at their school sites, and this led to a feeling of hopelessness when it came to advancement at their schools. This pattern contributed to thinking about race incessantly due to the lack of diversity in advancement opportunities and the constant feeling of being overlooked and passed over for promotional opportunities that could lead to different work responsibilities and higher wages. The results of this experience contributed to their dissatisfaction at their job and with their school administrators.

Lack of Confidence in School Leadership

The fourth theme that emerged in this study was the lack of confidence that participants had in school leadership. Throughout the interviews, it emerged that the participants questioned their school administrators' abilities due to the administrators' lack of instructional expertise and the short length of time in their role as administrators.

The role of a teacher is comprised of several responsibilities to help students learn, such as teaching a curriculum and providing a safe learning environment. Participants felt they were unable to get support and guidance from their school leaders and this impacted their workload, confidence in their school administrators, and overall job satisfaction. One participant shared that her administrator was a good communicator, but the participant was frustrated in her administrator's inability to provide guidance in her content area:

> She's a great communicator, so it appears as if she knows what she's talking about, but she doesn't when it comes to actually implementing. If I was to have her come into my classroom—"Can you show me how to do this?" She would not be able to do that.

Due to the lack of instructional guidance on her campus, this teacher had to reach out to different colleagues throughout her school district to create her own curriculum. This added to her workload and contributed to her frustration with her principal. Another teacher shared a similar notion:

> [The administration] can't help me if they don't know what to do themselves. A lot of times they don't have the knowledge. I remember going to one administrator, I was like, "I specifically need help with small groups, specifically writing workshop," and he was like, "I'm just going to be honest with you. There's nobody here that's going to be able to help you with that."

Having an administrator state that there was no one on their campus—including other school leaders—to help with a teaching technique contributed to this teacher's dissatisfaction with her administrators. This is another example in the lack of confidence teachers had in the school administrators' abilities with instructional leadership. When asked if she would stay at this school, this teacher stated she planned to leave before the end of the school year.

When teachers perceived that administrators' knowledge and support was limited, they felt that they could not get the assistance they needed for their instruction, which contributed to

frustration and dissatisfaction. This sentiment was shared by a teacher on curricular support: "Anybody here [who can help]? Absolutely not. I didn't even at my previous school. I never went to any of them for curricular support. Absolutely not." She further elaborated that her current administrators asked her to support other teachers. Because they saw her as the expert, they did not provide her with opportunities to be coached. With curriculum being a vital aspect of their jobs, participants shared where they would go to for support with curriculum and instruction. Teachers stated various sources for supports such as online resources, colleagues, and instructional coaches/specialists; however, school administrators were rarely mentioned. Participants expressed their lack of trust in their school leaders, and this was confirmed when one participant shared reasons for not going to school administrators for instructional leadership or support with curriculum:

> The principals that are here now, I came into the district with them, so I kind of go to other principals and get feedback from them. Those are some of the ones that I get the additional resources that I need. I don't go to my principal for any curriculum support.

The participant described how she had to seek her support from principals outside of her school because she had built a relationship with them and they had been in the district for the same amount of time. One teacher expressed that the lack of experience of administrators can be due to them having little to no experience as a teacher:

> Sometimes they'll have people in administrative positions or working in education who have never been a teacher. They have ideas about teachers or whatever, but they don't have enough experience or just connection or empathy to offer sustainable solutions to issues.

Based on this point of view, having teacher experience could have provided prior knowledge or skills that can help administrators better support teachers. Therefore, participants expressed that a potential qualification to becoming a supportive and experienced principal should include

previous teaching experience inside the classroom. The lack of instructional support could contribute to the lack of confidence the participants had in their school administrators.

Another element that developed in the theme pertaining to the lack of confidence was concentrated around the length of time school administrators had been in their roles. A majority of the participants noted administrators were fairly new and implied their short tenures were due to high turnover rates of administrators. As the quotes in Table 4 indicate, many participants worked in schools where the principal or assistant principal was new to the organization; in addition, participants perceived a gap in the administrator's understanding of school culture because they were new to the school. Veteran teachers—those who had been at their schools longer than the administrators—desired respect for their experience at the school. For some, this looked like being left alone; others wished to be treated with greater respect due to their expertise in the role. Furthermore, an administrator with little time in the school's organization or on the campus created a narrow timeframe for them to become an expert, making it difficult for teachers to accept feedback from them.

Participants expressed their frustration with the consistent turnover of school leadership because they had to acclimate the administrators to the school while dealing with the perception that they could not get reliable guidance, resulting in a lack of confidence in leadership. Together, administrators' lack of instructional expertise and short time as administrators at specific campuses left participants feeling frustrated and dissatisfied with their school administrators. Moreover, the dissatisfaction with school administrators was exacerbated by having to navigate challenges with very little guidance and support.

Table 4

Reactions Regarding New Administrators

Reaction #1	Reaction #2	Reaction #3	Reaction #4
She's been my administrator for just this *past year*, and I've been doing this job for 10 years before she got there. I'm trying to let her know, "You don't have to worry about me."	She's a *new* principal, so she really doesn't understand how we work. . . . Our school is different.	The assistant principal who was a *first* year assistant principal at that organization. . . . He was learning on the job, which is not a crime, but holding me to a standard when you're still learning. It will make me a little bit salty.	The principal himself is still adjusting to his job because he's *new*. He's a *new* principal.

Inconsistent and Inadequate Support

Another theme that emerged was the inconsistent and inadequate support from school leadership, specifically with discipline. Student disruptive behavior can have a negative impact on student learning and classroom instruction; therefore, support with discipline is imperative to teachers and has become a critical component in this study. Although the teachers shared that they had good classroom management and the abilities to control their classroom, the concern with discipline was with the lack of follow through from administrators. One participant illustrated with an example that her current principal did not follow through on different discipline policies, such as students not being in class and out of uniform. She stated she was frustrated because she upheld school-wide expectations in her classroom, but on other areas of campus, those same school rules were ignored and are not enforced by the school administrators:

> That's where her [the principal's] downfall is because she doesn't follow through with the things she wants us to do. It's posted. Parents and students see it when they come in. . . . The administrative team should back us up.

Another participant stated that during her first year she felt overwhelmed due to the students' behaviors, which she described as "literally kids crawling on the floor." Participants articulated how difficult it can be to teach when students are being disruptive and there is a lack of support from school leadership.

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Dissatisfaction with school administrators can extend beyond the decisions made by the actual school administrators and can include expectations passed down from the school district that impact the school. It was shared that the pressure from the school district for administrators to reduce the number of suspensions has affected how discipline is addressed on campus, which has felt like a lack of support for teachers. One teacher explained how changes in discipline practices had typically impacted the satisfaction of the participants:

> When we have to deal with so much of the discipline issues that teachers have to face. . . . Getting cussed out, or getting threatened, or getting cell phones stolen, keys stolen. Great, phenomenal teachers . . . don't want to deal with that. They want somebody to do something about it instead of just saying I don't want my suspension rate to be up. That's why they don't suspend these kids or have any harsh consequences: because they don't want the suspension rate to be up.

Another participant exclaimed the lack of support surfaced only a few years ago and linked it to the school's policy of no suspension: "I teach middle school and a class of 34 students. . . . So it's not a majority of students that are bad. . . . Those few that are, there's no consequences for them." When more disciplinary issues occurred, teachers wanted to know that administrators supported them by implementing the necessary consequences in efforts to adjust the students' negative behaviors. Participants expressed discontentment with the way school leadership selected to control suspension rates and how that impacted their jobs. This led to their lack of trust and confidence in the support given by school administrators.

Similar to discipline support, teachers wanted to feel like administrators were providing support with parents and reinforcing school expectations. A participant shared she felt a lack of support to the point of vulnerability and anxiety during a parent meeting because the conclusion could possibly lead to the administrators siding with the parent, leaving the teacher feeling unsupported. She explained:

Parental issues—I don't feel like I have support necessarily from my administrators. And I know there's a level of diplomacy that goes on when dealing with a parent, but sometimes I feel like I'm being led to the slaughter when I have a meeting with a parent. . . . So all of that support that I was hearing before doesn't translate in that context, and that's really nerve wracking because we don't have a union, and so I could be fired at any time. And if a parent makes a big enough scene, I may be the collateral damage, and I've seen that happen at our school. And so whenever I go into situations with parents that makes me the most nervous because I don't know how my administrators are going to—All the support I thought I had from them doesn't translate in those situations.

In this particular situation, not only did this teacher feel unsupported in addressing the discipline issue, she also felt a sense of nervousness about the administrator's willingness to support her rather than siding with the parent. Generally, the lack of support from school administrators in discipline led to frustration and anxiety among participants due to having to reinforce school policies that administrators themselves do not enforce consistently. Moreover, participants feared administrators would side with students or parents on disciplinary issues rather than reinforcing teachers' decisions guided by district policies. These factors contributed to dissatisfaction.

Psychological and Emotional Impact

The final theme that emerged from the interviews was the psychological and emotional consequences the participants shared throughout their interviews. The constant rumination on their race, occurrences of the racialization of students of color, barriers to career advancement, the lack of confidence in administrators, and the absence of support have collectively led to feelings such as isolation, frustration, and anxiety among the participants.

Dissatisfaction was the keyword used in several research studies to describe the feeling of the participants when seeking to understand the reason why one might resign from their occupation as a teacher. Nevertheless, frustration was another emotion used frequently to describe the internal turmoil that was associated with their experiences. "Frustration" was

regularly stated when describing their emotions toward a situation, interaction, or experience

with their administrators. One of the teachers gave an example of how she would recommend

different ideas or resources she felt could help fix or support concerns on campus, and they were

ignored, which led to continual frustration:

> When you're seeing a lot of things going on on campus and you're like, "This could be
> better." And it's even more frustrating when you share those things . . . and they aren't
> put into motion. Even if it wasn't ignored, I would even feel better if they were just like,
> "That sounds great. . . . We want you to run with that." And then the onus is put on
> me. . . . But when no reaction happens, then that's really frustrating.

Another emotion that surfaced throughout the interviews was anxiety. For some of the

participants, anxiety was a result of different interactions with their administrators. For others, it

was the result of experiences that involved biased behaviors. Similar to the persistent awareness

of race theme, participants shared past interactions led to tendencies to overthink and, at times,

this impacted job performance. One teacher shared how comfortable she was with her previous

administrators because there was less work turmoil and she felt more at ease, resulting in her

performing at a higher level. However, when there was favoritism, she felt anxious, specifically

with classroom observations:

> Anxiety when they [administrators] came to my classroom . . . When she came to visit
> me, I forgot my name. It was, like, too much, and so I would do the opposite of what I
> know she's looking for, and when she left, I would finish teaching.

This teacher felt that she was receiving additional classroom observations by her school

administrators due to complaints by her White colleagues. Furthermore, the teacher did not feel

that she performed at her optimal level due to the anxiety of these interactions in and out of the

classroom. These interactions between White colleagues and school administrators created

anxiety that impacted her classroom observations, which contributed to her worry about the impact on her job security.

Anxiety also manifested in an opposite manner. A teacher expressed that her administrator overlooked her, and she did not receive the support she needed because her administrator felt that she was well equipped. The anxiety was present because she felt that she was overlooked for support as the administrator assumed that she did not need any additional help. However, she expressed that as a teacher, there are always new techniques and materials, that every teacher should get support, and administrators should not pick and choose who deserves the most help.

The participants' experiences with the unfair practices of administrators led to uncertainty about how they were viewed in the eyes of their administrators, leading to anxiety about their value as teachers. Although job security was not something that most participants worried about, a couple expressed their desires to not do anything that would put their jobs in jeopardy. Anxiety shaped the way some participants experienced their work environments, specifically due to the impact of discrimination because they consistently felt uncertain, targeted, and worried.

Isolation was the final element in the theme pertaining to emotional outcomes. Several participants shared different moments that made them feel isolated or that they wanted to seek isolation. One teacher shared why she preferred to isolate herself due to the continuous negative interactions with her school administrator that left her feeling targeted: "Well, it makes me want to stay in my bubble. . . . Do any type of leadership role with my colleagues? I don't want to do it." She explained the contentious negative interactions with the administrator made her

frustrated and wanting to stay to herself. This is similar to another teacher who shared she no longer desired to interact with her colleagues or administrator; she stated, "Leave me alone. I want to do my job and be left alone because I've been doing it well before you got here. But it's stressful." Another teacher also shared the sense of being observed and scrutinized. She stated, "You know, I can do one thing and the man next to me can do the same thing, and it's a totally different reaction to it." She continued to explain that her school administrators would often criticize her even though she has worked in her position for several years and received positive feedback from prior administrators. The constant condemnation caused such an impact that she isolated herself; she just wanted to come to work, do her job, and leave. Additionally, she contemplated leaving her job after working there for more than five years. These feelings of isolation, whether created due to being secluded or self-isolation, contributed to the frustration and dissatisfaction of several participants.

Conclusion

Ten teachers in Los Angeles County shared their experiences as Black teachers and the different factors that contributed to their dissatisfaction, specifically with school administrators. Six key themes emerged from the interviews, ranging from the persistent awareness of race to the lack of confidence in school administrators. The themes pointed to the salience of race in their experiences as Black teachers and how the impact of being aware of race led to anxiety, frustration, and biased experiences as teachers. Additionally, participants described they were unable to access guidance and support from school administrators, leading to overall dissatisfaction. Participants emphasized a sense of uncertainty in navigating their schools, given

their experiences, and several participants discussed leaving their school sites or waiting for their retirement while limiting their interactions with colleagues and administrators.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

Study Overview and Key Findings

This qualitative study used a phenomenological approach with 10 individual interviews to examine Black teacher dissatisfaction and the association between the dissatisfaction and school administrators. This topic was examined through a critical race theory (CRT) lens, which provided a meaningful framework for conceptualizing the issue and developing relevant interview questions to ask the participants of this study. Because the aim of this study was to better understand an experience that is shared among a group of individuals, phenomenology was used as the methodological tool to assist with data collection and analysis. Phenomenology provides a structure for in-depth inquiry with the understanding that answers are unknown and are provided by the participants, which collectively produces themes (Moustakas, 1994; Van Manen, 2014). Using CRT, which articulates the salience and permanence of race, this study examined the findings to understand the experiences of the participants, who all self-identified as Black women. The research questions guiding this study are twofold:

1. What experiences by Black teachers relate to job dissatisfaction? and

2. How is job dissatisfaction for Black teachers associated with school administrators?

While Chapter 4 described the findings, this chapter will answer the research questions and conclude with important takeaways to better situate the experiences of Black teachers teaching in urban schools across Los Angeles County, to respond to dissatisfaction, increase retention, and foster inclusivity.

An analysis of the narratives of the 10 Black teachers in the study revealed the following six themes: (a) persistent racial self-awareness, (b) the racialization of the teacher-student experience, (c) hurdles to professional advancement, (d) lack of confidence in school leadership, (e) inadequate support from administrators, and (f) psychological and emotional impact. In the subsequent section is a discussion of how these themes address this study's research questions in three premises: (a) a racialized teacher experience, (b) administrators and the multilevel impact, and (c) the toll of being a Black teacher.

A Racialized Teacher Experience

This study provided an opportunity to explore the experiences of Black teachers and different factors that contributed to their dissatisfaction. The racialized teacher experience is the overarching premise that captures the following themes: persistent racial self-awareness, racialization of the teacher-student experience, and hurdles to professional advancement. The persistent awareness of race theme highlighted how the interactions between Black teachers and their nonblack colleagues exacerbate issues of frustration, anxiety, and isolation. Though much of the discourse was grounded in the general experiences of teachers who are often met with challenges teaching in under-resourced schools, the additional layer of a heightened and persistence awareness of personalized racial interactions offered a more nuanced perspective on how Black teachers experience their roles as educators in the institution of schools.

Housed in this premise was the protectiveness that Black teachers had over their students of color, particularly Black students. They were hypervigilant about how students of color, particularly Black students, were treated and also referenced. They also had a desire to provide a counter narrative on behalf of Black students to nonblack teachers who may have negative

perceptions toward Black students (Milner, 2006). In the examples shared by participants, CRT suggests that race is very central to identities (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001), which is shared with their students, and it is an important part of the conversations surrounding how the largely White teaching staff regard students. All participants working in a teaching staff where they were regarded as a minority expressed feelings of frustration and even protectiveness in how their students were regarded.

Lastly, the racialized teacher experience incorporated the hurdles that Black teachers encountered when pursuing professional advancement. Structurally, CRT afforded us the ability to evaluate how being Black impacted their ability to get promoted, which further contributed to the racialized teacher experience. Beyond citing challenges with being protective for students of color and feeling a sense of isolation due to their race, participants also expressed how they have been passed over for opportunities. While some are content working in the classroom, many stated how they felt passed over for promotional leadership opportunities to work outside of the classroom. The complexity in this reality was the fact that while participants were on the one hand left alone or isolated because of the confidence that their administrators had in their abilities to teach, on the other hand they were pigeonholed and not offered opportunities to do anything else. Black teachers felt conflicted in this context because while isolation provided them with peace from racialized interactions, the isolation caused them to miss out on the opportunities. The racialized experience of Black teachers translated to inequalities in opportunities and this study uncovered that there should be additional ways of acknowledging and valuing a Black teacher's contributions due to their shared racial connection to students without discriminating against them for different opportunities to work outside of the classroom.

Overall, the racialized Black teacher experience led to several social-emotional feelings that can be taxing and can impact their satisfaction.

Administrators and the Multilevel Impact

School administrators have the influence, leadership responsibilities, and formal authority over teachers in ways that support their growth and affirm their contributions. Participants shared their thoughts on the ways that school administrators impacted their dissatisfaction by not demonstrating consistent leadership that was meaningful and inclusive. The analysis of these findings is presented below.

A need for tangible support from administrators. Participants expressed the desire for school administrators to have some level of teaching experience to better empathize with the needs of teachers in schools. The inabilities of participants to access guidance and leadership with curriculum and instruction, student discipline, and parent engagement provided three concrete needs that had gone unmet, thereby leading to dissatisfaction with school leadership. Participants expressed how they were unable to rely on school administrators when dealing with students and parents but still felt the pressure to comply with the expectations of school administrators.

Participants asserted that having expectations without support led to the inability to establish trust with school administrators and caused dissatisfaction with their school leadership. The participants' inabilities to trust the guidance of their school administrators compromised the relational foundation that was needed to make working conditions more enjoyable (Tschannen-Moran, 2014). Also, a lack of trust led to difficulty when receiving feedback from school administrators. Participants explained how they viewed all critique from a place of hesitation and

reservation due to a lack of trust in the administrators' abilities to do their jobs. Finally, participants acknowledged how the consistent turnover among school administrators disallowed them from getting to know the school, the students, and the teachers, which also compromised trust and led to professional advancement bias.

School administrators demonstrate biases. Due to the cycling in and out of school administrators and the district-level expectations for student outcomes, participants felt that school administrators demonstrated bias in selecting their leadership teams. Participants asserted they had been passed over for opportunities and acknowledged how it was clear school administrators brought in their own teams from previous relationships to support their leadership in the schools. Though participants felt that they were more competent teachers than some of the leadership selected, they also expressed their clear understanding that relationships facilitated these shifts in structure, leaving them unable to move out of the classroom. The biases associated with this behavior is acutely felt by Black teachers who often do not have the relationships to move out of the classroom and are also the teachers who do the best with the Black students. The result of both realities led to fewer professional advancement opportunities and frustration on the part of Black teachers who linked this to their dissatisfaction with school administrators.

Uncertainty about school administrator responsibilities. Finally, in the experiences with school administrators as not being unbiased in their leadership decisions, especially amid rapid changes on account of school performance, and with the inabilities to provide concrete support to teachers, participants felt that they were unclear about the school administrators' responsibilities. Overwhelmingly, participants felt school administrators had been unsupportive in meeting their tangible needs, leading to questions of their levels of competency. Participants

felt school administrators should have responsibility for providing leadership and fostering strong cultures but often felt that those tasks were left undone to focus on statewide expectations, such as lower suspension rates and standardized test scores.

Participants felt that they were unable to turn to their school administrators for strong leadership. When participants were met with the response that focused on school data without the tools to support teachers in the classroom, they felt unsupported and dissatisfied. Participants did not have a foundation of trust with school administrators, which could be tied to the conditions impacting school administrators and the school system at large. This does not take away the responsibility of school administrators to lead but could shed more light on the conditions that make it difficult to lead, which has a more detrimental impact on Black teachers than others.

The Toll of Being a Black Teacher

Several scholars have cited the psychological framework racial battle fatigue to express the stress associated with navigating White environments (Smith, Allen, & Danley, 2007). The concept of racial battle fatigue applies to school environments that have a majority nonblack teaching staff because racial identity becomes more pronounced as Black teachers deal with interactions with their nonblack counterparts. CRT and its tenet on the salience of race (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001) asserted that an environment where race is consistently scrutinized, especially when fellow teachers are negatively using race when referring to Black students, can be exhausting. Participants articulated how aware they felt about their race in all interactions that took place in their schools. They discussed emotions of feeling exhausted at potential scrutiny for their comments and were always concerned with how they were showing up in professional

meetings, leaving them both frustrated and perpetually anxious. Participants used words like "frustration" and "anxiety" repeatedly to describe their interactions with administrators and colleagues due to their own awareness of how their race was being looked at on a continuous basis. The continual reminder of their race led to a desire to protect themselves from scrutiny and ongoing feelings of anxiety and frustration. This exhaustion led to self-isolation in a way that contradicts the collaborative nature of teaching because this occupation entails collective work. The participants discussed how being isolated was often a last resort for feeling sane, which demonstrates how the persistent awareness of race left participants seeking isolation to protect themselves.

Also, teachers' needs to protect themselves extended to needs to protect their students with whom they shared racial connections. The attentiveness to conversations among their colleagues in the schools about Black students demonstrated how the persistent awareness of race was personalized when it came to their own experiences and also felt more broadly in the school environment. Experiences with wanting to be a teacher but always having to fight to protect one's sanity and one's students lead to a desire for isolation that could work against the very reason why one wanted to be a teacher in the first place. This encapsulated the social-emotional toll of being a Black teacher.

Professionally, Black teachers experience a toll when it comes to their advancement, due to their connection with Black students and the ways their race interacts in a school environment. As seen with previous research, the documented success that Black teachers have with Black students has led to an inability to see participants as doing anything else beyond teaching in the classroom (Griffin & Tackie, 2016). Participants felt that their lack of abilities to advance in their

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schools led to desires to leave the school for advancement opportunities or to just wait for retirement. Nevertheless, the professional toll that came with being a Black teacher led to feelings of dissatisfaction. In effect, they are pigeonholed and thought of as only competent enough to be in the classroom, thus reducing their options for opportunities outside of the classroom that came with higher pay.

The persistent awareness of race served as the major point of dissatisfaction among Black teachers due to school culture challenges, perpetual anxiety, lack of professional advancement, and overall exhaustion caused by race and racism. However, it also presented a bright spot for resilience and retention of Black teachers because it is their race that provides them with a connection to students. The complexity of race was also found in its institutionalized nature, thus counter stories presented a lens to examine how these nuanced interactions with colleagues and with students served to shape how central race is to the experiences of Black teachers.

The challenges in receiving opportunities from administrators and the unfairness associated with that were points of dissatisfaction and should be reconciled by rewarding Black teachers for their abilities to have success among student populations that are significantly Black, as opposed to leaving them pigeonholed and off the radar. The structures and interpersonal racial elements present for Black teachers were integral to understanding how they fared with administrators who were not of the same race, particularly as it pertained to professional relationships, trust, and cultivation of inclusive school cultures. Additionally, during the interviews, the participants discussed being treated unfairly and specified it was because of their race; however, the words "racism" or "racist" never surfaced during the interviews. One might consider how microaggressions or even assumptions about race and racism and how they behave

are implied in the experiences shared by participants. Future research should consider how more explicit probing of race and racism in interviews might be used to contextualize participant experiences.

Counter storytelling as a form of resilience. Being a teacher is a fulfilling yet taxing profession because of limited resources (Kersaint, 2005) and excessive workloads (Leukens, Lyter, & Foxet, 2004). As teachers wanted to help students achieve and not fall into opportunity gaps or get trapped in the school-to-prison pipeline, teachers were required to navigate complex working environments. Being a teacher was seen as rewarding but also demanding because it was an uphill battle against large societal obstacles that were outside of teacher control yet impacted their classrooms.

Working as a Black teacher in an education system that was originally fashioned to support the majority and suppress minorities can be seen as commendable but also impractical. Although there have been strides toward equality in education, there are still opportunity gaps between Black students and their White classmates that appear impossible to close. Being a Black teacher working toward this ambition can be seen as admirable and also personal due to the effect that the education system has had on their culture historically, impact on their lives personally, and the influence it has on their students' lives currently. A struggle of being a Black teacher, illustrated in Figure 2, shows this effort to teach and help students thrive academically despite the pressures from their racialized work experience, lack of support from school leadership and the exhaustion and toll of being a Black teacher.

The interview findings presented counter stories that showed different ways of thinking about the culture of urban schools and the experiences of Black teachers altogether. While Black teachers were often left without viable options to combat negative racialized experiences and
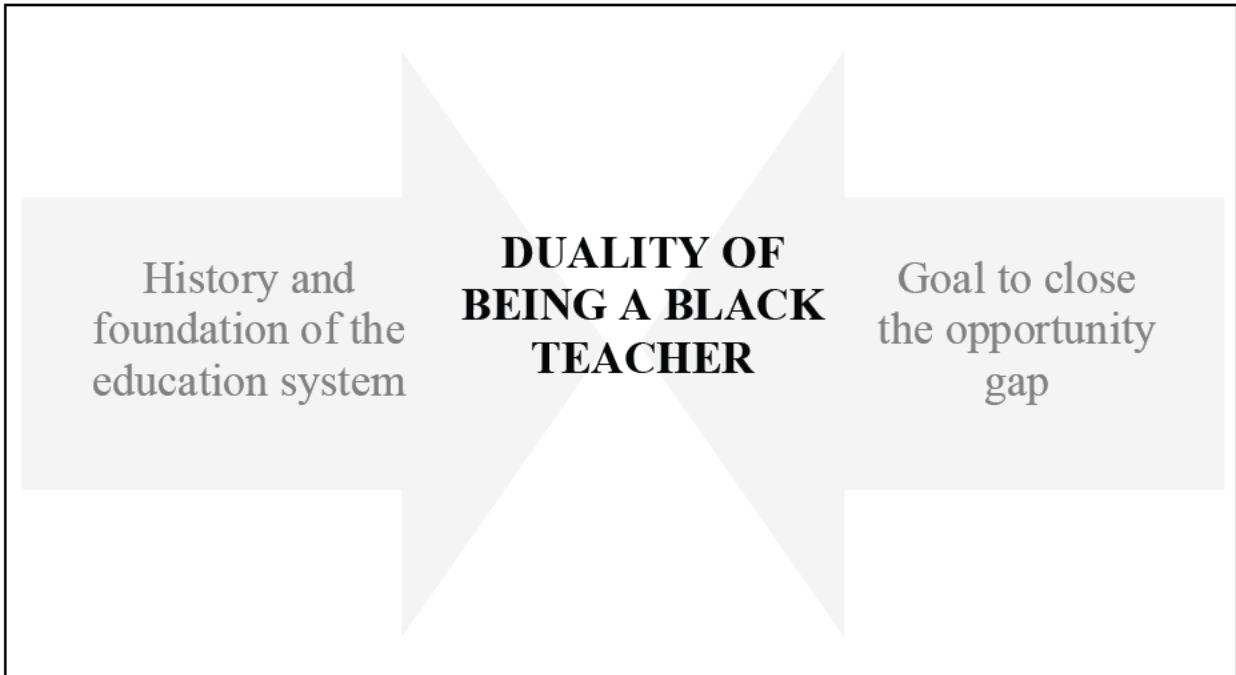

Figure 2. Duality of being a Black teacher.

were often stuck with the burden of protecting their students from their colleagues and then protecting themselves from exhaustion, this study unpacked the experiences of Black teachers, and their counter stories showed how encouraged they were by their students, with whom they identified, in spite of the challenges. It was through counter stories that this study offered to the field a different view of how teachers can relate to students and the important contribution that a shared racial identity provides to teacher satisfaction.

This study explored how vital shared racial connection is to the support students' access in schools that were traditionally under-resourced and unsupported. Participants presented different definitions for how to think about the students—often more asset based as opposed to

deficit—which suggested that their shared racial connection with students was a point of advantage as opposed to the barrier that their colleagues seemingly felt when connecting with Black students. Many of the participants agreed that their abilities to manage their classrooms and to serve as mentors for "difficult" students was afforded to them by their shared racial connection with students. Finally, all participants talked about how it was the students who brought them the greatest joy in their jobs and was often the point of resiliency, even amid concerning resources, administrative, and support challenges often found in urban schools.

As with all empirical research using qualitative interviews, findings were limited by the study's design. While the study's findings shed light the different factors that contribute to the dissatisfaction of Black teachers, some additional limitations to the research design should be considered. Specifically, additional limitations included the research timeline and resources, a small sample size due to the methodology, and a participant selection criteria that excluded Black teachers who had left the profession due to dissatisfaction. Finally, future studies might consider the influence of additional variables (i.e., holding multiple jobs and personal tragedies) that inevitably influence a teachers' perceptions of their work experiences.

Recommendations

Suggestions for Future Research

Due to the limitations of this phenomenological study, there are several suggestions for future research. The first suggestion is to strategically select the time of year to collect data from teachers. Due to the specific constraint of this research study, the availability to collect data consisted of August through October, which included teachers' summer break and the beginning of the school year. For future studies, ensure data are collected during a more optimal time that

does not coincide with school breaks and demanding times of the school year. Additionally, incentives or endorsements of school district could lead more eligible participants.

The second suggestion is to use mixed methodology for future research studies to capture a larger set of participants. A survey could use Likert-scaled questions pertaining to the themes produced from this study, such as persistent awareness of race, racialization of students, and lack of confidence in school administrators, for generalizability. Furthermore, conducting focus groups could be beneficial to future research to isolate a more collective influence of dissatisfaction.

Another suggestion is to expand the criterion to include Black teachers who have left school sites or roles due to dissatisfaction with school administration. Extending the research to understand their experiences and how they concluded in departure could create a fuller picture of the themes that were derived from this study. The participants in this study stated that the majority of them were highly considering teaching at another school or waiting for retirement due to their dissatisfaction. However, collecting data from individuals who have left could be enlightening, leading to a potential research question: What factors contributed to the dissatisfaction of Black teachers that resulted in their resignations?

The final suggestion is to use focus groups and additional lines of inquiry to help unpack the impact of teacher-student relationships on teacher satisfaction, which is a possible protective factor to curbing dissatisfaction. This would involve finding additional ways to support and reward more intentional development of teacher-student relationships.

Implications for Practitioners

There are several suggestions for different stakeholders that can have a positive impact on Black teacher fulfillment. These stakeholders include school district leaders, school administrators, teachers, and Black teacher allies. The rationale for these considerations is to help encourage practices and systematic changes that will alleviate some of the factors that contribute to the dissatisfaction of Black teachers, which may contribute to Black teacher attrition. Additionally, these suggestions are an attempt to help all stakeholders hear the often unheard voices and understand the needs of Black teachers.

School district leaders. Administration goes beyond site-based school leaders. The school district is composed of administrators who make decisions, allocate resources, and enforce policies that decide the parameters by which site-based school leaders maneuver. One recommendation is for school districts to create and sponsor safe spaces for Black teachers to convene for fellowship and to discuss concerns, resources, experiences, and best practices. Having the school district sponsor this space created for Black educators or educators of color could demonstrate the school district acceptance of this type of fellowship while encouraging mentorship, conversation in a space safe, and showing intentionality in their efforts to retain Black educators. Furthermore, this group could also provide recommendations to the school district on different practices, professional development opportunities, and additional supports that might be needed not only for teachers of color but also to support students of color.

An additional recommendation for school district leaders is to implement district wide professional development pertaining to inclusion, diversity, and biases. Having the training be mandated yearly by the district could ensure all employees were aware of the expectations to use

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unbiased practices not only with students but also with colleagues. Another recommendation for school district leaders is to monitor site-based promotions. Some site leaders have the ability to promote individuals in their school without a need of approval from the district office. Having the district provide a yearly training on how to hire and promote equitably could offer support and set expectations for best hiring practices. The last recommendation is to help support school administrators through mentorship in efforts to lower school leadership turnover and increase school leaderships' abilities to support teachers.

School administrators. Although site-based school administrators have to adhere to statewide and district mandates, there are opportunities for school leadership to understand and increase the satisfaction of Black teachers. One recommendation for school leadership is to create a culture of *active awareness* of the employee climate, including different subgroups such as race and gender. This can be accomplished through school climate surveys and focus groups. Providing a predictable opportunity, such as a school climate survey, for staff to express their concerns and needs from school administrators could increase the feelings of self-voice advocacy and inclusion; however, gathering feedback is only the initial step.

Another recommendation is to have a school leadership advisory council that is diversified in gender, race, and job titles. It is important to meet collectively and individually to ensure voices are heard and ideas shared equitability. Additionally, there should be a system for employees to provide regular feedback monthly, and school leadership or the school leadership advisory council could address these concerns. An additional recommendation is to support different teacher affinity and mentor spaces that could increase teacher morale and connectedness to the school. This could be site based or shared across different campuses.

Having school administrators sponsor this space would demonstrate support. Furthermore, someone for this group could be a representative on the school leadership advisory council. Lastly, school administrators should encourage evaluation from different stakeholders, including teachers, about their leadership. Although this method is vulnerable, this type of assessment could provide feedback toward leadership practices such as bias decision making and advocacy toward what teachers specifically need from school administrators, such as better support with classroom discipline and school resources.

Black teacher allies. Based on these findings, being a Black teacher can be difficult and result in feelings of isolation frustration, anxiety, and hopelessness. These emotions can create additional exhaustion on top of the hard work that it entails being a teacher. It is important for allies, who could include, but would not be not limited to, parents, students, and community members, to encourage and advocate for Black teachers. This could include inquiring about comprehensive data around school climate for parents, students, and teachers to ensure that best inclusion practices are occurring around the campus. An additional recommendation is to ask for an advisory committee when it comes to promotion of leadership. This can support best hiring practices by having different stakeholders involved in the process.

Conclusion

The number of Black teachers in the classroom is declining throughout the United States for various reasons, including being dissatisfied with school administrators. It was important to explore the negative experiences of Black teachers and to thoroughly understand these factors in an effort to combat them and create dynamics that can increase their satisfaction. This work is vital because the benefits of Black teachers extend beyond the academic progress of Black

students and have a positive impact on all students. Additionally, with a growing diverse population of students, continuing to diversify the teaching staff could create opportunities for students to potentially see themselves as teachers in the future.

APPENDIX A

GLOSSARY

For the purpose of this dissertation, specific terms used in this study are defined in this section.

Administrator referred to a principal, assistant principal, senior teacher, or department chair who is responsible for overseeing a department within a school and is considered a superior to other teachers through duties such as conducting observations and evaluations.

Attrition referred to teachers who leave the teaching profession altogether (Ingersoll, 2001).

Black is used to define individuals who self-identify with the African American ethnic group whose name is used to describe the descendants of enslaved Black people in the United States. Black is used interchangeably with African American (Locke & Bailey, 2014).

Cultural competence is a "set of congruent behaviors, attitudes, and policies that come together in a system, agency, or amongst professionals and enables that system, agency, or those professionals to work effectively in cross-cultural situations" (Cross et al., 1989, p. iv).

Implicit bias referred to the initial association individuals develop between people and attributes such as good or bad (Rudman, 2004).

Microaggression is defined as a subtle, intentional or unintentional, exchange that communicates offensive messages to people of color (Constantine, 2007). Exchanges can be displayed verbally and behaviorally.

Retention referred to teachers who stay from one year to the next within the same school.

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Racial battle fatigue referred to "social-psychological stress responses (e.g., frustration, anger, exhaustion, physical avoidance, psychological or emotional withdrawal, escapism, acceptance of racist attributions)" (Smith et al., 2007, p. 552).

This study defined *students of color* as those who identify as Black/African American, Latinx, American Indian, Asian Pacific American, and multiracial or multiethnic. Students of color are used to draw attention to the collective experience of those who are the targets of racial oppression in the United States (Tatum, 1997).

PARTICIPANT ELIGIBILITY SURVEY VIA GOOGLE SURVEY

1. How long have you been teaching as a credentialed teacher?
    a. 1 – 2 years
    b. 3 – 5 years
    c. 6 – 10 years
    d. 10 or more years
2. What subject do you predominantly teach (over 60% of your workload)?

    _____

3. What grade level do you teach?
    a. Elementary school
    b. Middle school
    c. High school
4. What percentage of the school's student population is on free and reduced lunch?
    a. 0%– 25%
    b. 26% – 50%
    c. 51% - 75%
    d. 76% - 100%
5. What city is your school located in? _____-
6. The school you currently work is considered what type?
    a. Traditional Public School
    b. Public Charter School
    c. Private Charter School
    d. Traditional Private School
7. Please estimate: how many Black credentialed teachers are on your school's campus?
    a. 1 – 2
    b. 3 – 5
    c. 6 – 10
    d. 10 or more

Rate your satisfaction on the follow:

(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Very dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Neither	Satisfied	Very satisfied

8. Overall experience as a teacher
    a. *General definition of experience is the process of observing, encountering, and participating as a teacher.*
9. Workplace conditions
    a. *General definition of workplace conditions consists of facilities, cleanliness, space, resources, etc.*
10. Working relationships with teachers of other cultures

     a. *General definition of workplace relationship consists of teamwork, communication, and professionalism.*

11. The role your race plays in the workplace
     a. *General definition of race/ethnic backgrounds is a group of people of common ancestry and ethnicity, determined based on the social groups you belong to.*

12. Salary and benefits
     a. *General definition of salary is fixed regular payment and benefits that include health and retirement.*

13. School administrators as individuals
     a. *School administrators include principals, assistant principals, senior teachers, or department chairs who are responsible for overseeing a department and conduct observations and evaluations.*

14. School administrators as a larger system/department
     a. *Larger system/department definition consists of the existing institution with set norms, policies, and expectations.*

15. Opportunity for career advancement
     a. *General definition of career advancement is upward mobility of an individual's career or promotion.*

16. Level of autonomy and influence in your profession.
     a. *General definition of autonomy consists of a level of freedom and discretion allowed to an employee over his or her job.*

RECRUITMENT EMAIL

Greetings,

The purpose of this email is to determine your willingness to participate in a research study. The purpose of this study is to unpack the different factors that contribute to job satisfaction or dissatisfaction among Black teachers in secondary public schools in Los Angeles County in an effort to ultimately contribute to student success. In particular, the study will investigate the role school leaders play in teachers' job satisfaction or dissatisfaction. You are being asked to be a part of this project because of your role as an experienced Black teacher of Grades 6-12.

During the audio-recorded interview, I will ask eight central open-ended questions regarding your teaching experience and your job satisfaction and dissatisfaction with potential probing questions. Additionally, this interview will explore your rapport with your school administrator and how this impacts your satisfaction and dissatisfaction. Following interview transcription, you will be asked to review the transcript of the interview to reconcile any clarifications, approve the transcription, and provide additional information if necessary.

If you decide to participate in this study, you will be asked to meet in person, if possible, for approximately a 60-90 minute interview at a time and location that is agreeable to you. If you are willing to participate, please reply to this email by indicating that you agree to participation and provide five (5) dates after 4:30 p.m. that you are available during the month of June or July 2018 on a week day or anytime during the weekend, as well as an ideal location for you to meet that would be conducive for a private interview.

Finally, and only if you are willing to participate, please find the Demographic Survey as an attachment to the email. Please complete the document to the best of your ability by completing the appropriate fields and checking the appropriate boxes that best describe you. Then save the file to your computer and attach it to your reply email.

If you have any questions at all regarding this study, feel free to reach me through the contact information below my signature. You may also contact my advisor, Dr. Fernando Estrada, at Fernando.Estrada@lmu.edu with any questions. Thank you in advance for your assistance!

Sincerely,

Geneva Matthews
Doctoral Student
Loyola Marymount University
XXXXX@lion.lmu.edu

(562) XXX-XXXX

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL AND INSTRUCTIONS

I.   Greeting
1. Thank you for your willingness to participate in this study.
2. Purpose: As you know, I am interested in public middle and high school Black teacher experiences.
3. Procedures: I'll be asking you a number of open-ended questions, some related to the demographic survey answers that you provided. As we have previously discussed, I need to tape record this interview to ensure that I accurately represent your perspectives. I will also take notes throughout the interview to record critical pieces for follow-up questions and in case there are any technical difficulties. All of the tapes, transcriptions, and notes that pertain to your participation will be altered to remove any personal or institutional identification. All documents will be secured for my access as well as the other investigator who will be active in analyzing the data that I collect.
4. Do you have any questions before we begin?
5. Review and sign two consent forms; give one to the participant.
6. Ensure that the tape recorder is loaded correctly, properly functioning, and turned on.
7. Create a comfortable atmosphere and focus with general information exchange including demographic data needed to "create voice' (e.g., educational background, years in profession, experience teaching) and then begin discussion of questions related specifically to the research questions. Move into more focused questions as appropriate.

II.   **Interview Questions and Framework (Using a Semi-Structured Approach)**
(Bold questions represent the main questions and the subquestions are the probing questions)

1. **How would you describe your overall experience as a teacher?**
   i. How would you describe your overall experience as a teacher?
   ii. How would you describe your cultural/race background?
      1. Has your culture/race impacted your experience as a teacher? If so, how?
      2. Has racism/microaggressions played into your experience? If yes, how?
   iii. What are some fulfilling or challenging aspects of your work?
      1. What is your career trajectory? How has this been influenced based on the skewed/biased/rigged larger educational system?
   iv. What school factors influence your experience? How about the workload? What about the role modeling side of teaching?
   v. How often do you think about your race in the workplace?
      1. How often do you think others think about your race at work?

      vi. To what degree do you see yourself as a survivor of a skewed/biased/rigged educational system?

2. **How would you describe the roles and the responsibilities of a school administrator?**
    i. Who do you go to for curricular support? And why?
    ii. What professional roles or titles represent or reflect school administration?
    iii. What assumptions do you make about other teachers or administers at your current job site?
    iv. How do you think school administrators perceive your work as a teacher*? If applicable, how does it compare to your previous school?*
    v. What is the principal's gender and race? *If applicable, how does it compare to your previous school?*

3. **How has school administrators influenced your overall teaching experience positively or negatively? Please elaborate.**
    i. You reported dissatisfaction with school administrators. What does it mean for you to be dissatisfied with administration (individual and larger system/ department)?
        1. What feelings and thoughts are associated with being dissatisfied? What examples can you share?
        2. Other than dissatisfied, what other words or phrases capture your experience with school administration?
        3. What factors adversely impact your experience with administrators? What factors lead to a more positive experience?
    ii. Do you feel comfortable going to school administrators (i.e. principals, AP) for help? *If applicable, how does it compare to your previous school?*
    iii. Is there a link between your decision to leave or stay in your position as a teacher and your experience with your school administrators as individuals? Please explain.
        1. Is there a link between your decision to leave or stay in your position as a teacher and your experience with your school administrators as department/larger system? Please explain.
    iv. Have you experienced racism or racial microaggressions from your school administrators?
        1. *Please provide examples.*

4. **Do you intend to stay at this school next year? What factors are influencing your decision to stay/ leave?**
    i. What were some of the factors that contribute to our decision to leave your previous school? (If applicable)
    ii. If you had an opportunity to teach at another school, would you do so? Why. Why not?

5. What experiences would you like to discuss that I have not addressed directly in a question?
-     i. Is there anything else you want to add about factors that influence your job satisfaction or decision to remain in the classroom?

6. Closing
-     i. I am extremely appreciative for the time that you have spent sharing your perspectives and experiences.
-    ii. Upon completion of the interviews, I will be preparing a transcript of our interview for review and may contact you in the event that clarification is necessary.

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