Recruitment and Retention of Black Teachers in South Carolina

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Abstract

Black teachers are an underrepresented sect of people in the American educational system. This lack of representation has a disproportionate effect on the educational journey of the Black student. The recruitment and retention of the Black educator in the state of South Carolina has school districts in a conundrum, leaving classrooms without Black educators (Koeske, 2023). This qualifying paper examines the historical context of the plight of the Black educator, the impact of post-secondary teacher preparatory programs for Black students, the importance of having a culturally relevant classroom for Black students, and the need for Black teachers for Black students.

Keywords: culture, Black educators, Black students, recruitment and retention

Table of Contents

The Recruitment and Retention of Black Educators in the State of South Carolina

Introduction

The African proverb states, "It takes a village to raise a child" (Reupert, 2022). Historically, the village in the Black community is inclusive of teachers. However, if Black educators, who are some of the most integral people of the village, are not a part of the village, the Black child's academic, social, and intellectual well-being are hindered. In comparison, the state of South Carolina is experiencing an existential crisis, just like many other states across the United States, a teacher shortage. These shortages are causing classrooms to be inadequately staffed and overcrowding in classrooms (Koeske, 2023).

The profession of a public school teacher is less alluring and appealing to high school students who are enrolling in colleges and universities. Kraft and Lyon (2022) states that first year college students selecting education as their career path has declined by 50% since 1990. According to Flannery (2022) from a report from the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, only 90,000 education undergraduate degrees were awarded to college students in 2019 compared to the 1970s where 200,000 education undergraduate degrees were awarded. This noted decline is also evidenced in the state of South Carolina. For the 2020-2021 academic school year, out of the 55,548 bachelor's and master's degrees awarded in the state of South Carolina, only 2,226 were in initial educator preparation program degrees. In the academic school year of 2021-2022 just 2,123 degrees were awarded in education (2022 Statistical Abstract provides a detailed look at Higher Education trends and data in South Carolina, 2022; Key Data from CERRA's South Carolina Annual Educator Supply & Demand Reports, 2022).

The lack of people entering the teaching profession can be attributed to a combination of factors such as low teacher salaries, working conditions, lack of resources, and geographic disparities. While few are entering the profession, there is also a max exodus of teachers leaving

the teaching profession. After the 2020-2021 academic school year, the state of South Carolina

5,995 teachers left the profession. At the closing of the 2021-2022 academic school year, 6,927

educators departed the classroom. An astounding 8,320 teachers decided not to return to the

classroom after the 2022-2023 school year (Key Data from CERRA's South Carolina Annual

Educator Supply & Demand Reports, 2022). These increasing numbers of departures do not bold

well for the state of public education in South Carolina. The post-pandemic stress coupled with

disciplinary issues in the classroom, the lack of respect from administration, parents, and

students, low salary wages, unrealistic demands, and overall teacher burnout have contributed to

either retiring or pursuing other career paths outside of education (Brandhorst, 2023; Green,

2022). Dissatisfied educators are creating gaps in teacher quality and quantity leaving many

districts with challenges in recruiting and retaining teachers in South Carolina.

Although South Carolina school districts are tasked with finding teachers, districts have

an even more significant diversity problem in recruiting and retaining Black educators for Black

students. There is a substantial racial divide among teachers in South Carolina. The South

Carolina Department of Education's Teachers by Race and Gender Data Report (2022) states

that in the 2021-2022 academic school year, 53,748 teachers worked in the state. Of those

teachers, 78% of the teachers are White in the state, and 15% are Black teachers. However,

South Carolina's public school student population is 32% Black (Active Student Headcounts,

2023). Historically, the field of education is dominated by middle-class white women who shape

the academic outcomes of students in the United States. Middle-class white women teaching a

racially diverse group of students can be viewed as difficult due to their own perceptions and

assumptions of low-income students. This identified group of educators can be considered

culturally incompetent because of their privileged backgrounds, personal beliefs, and prior interactions with minorities (Hyland, 2005; Yoon, 2012).

Thesis Statement

It is crucial for school districts in South Carolina to provide a diverse culturally responsive learning environment that offers Black students an opportunity to be educated by Black educators who foster high academic ideals, serve as role models, and contribute to an inclusive and equitable educational system that is conducive for Black students.

Literature Review

The research literature provides historical and contemporary developments that scholars can examine to have a deeper comprehension of recruiting and retaining Black teachers. These literary works examine the historical context of the early educational plight of Black people in America and in the state of South Carolina. Culturally Relevant Pedagogy is a theory explored in this literature review as well as the reasons Black teachers are leaving the field of education and why Black people are no longer joining the education workforce at a faster pace. These literary works also examine the needs of Black students being taught by Black teachers.

The Historical Context

In South Carolina in 1740, it was against the law to teach enslaved people how to read or write (Binson, n.d.). During the Reconstruction Era, Freedmen's Bureau schools were established in the South after the abolishment of slavery. The Freedmen's Bureau was established to provide assistance to Black people in order for them to establish an independent life (The Freedmen's Bureau, 2021). Enslaved people did not have the benefits of being considered a United States citizen; therefore, after the abolishment of slavery, Black people struggled immensely to be self-sufficient. The Freedmen's Bureau consisted of a six-part

program. One of the components was to establish schools to educate newly freed Black people. With the help of religious and missionary organizations, schools were established for Black students (Binson, n.d.,; Brown et al., n.d.; Young, 2001).

Black students have faced a multitude of challenges and injustices in school. Segregation in the United States lasted from the late 19th century until the mid-20th century. Legal racial separation affected all aspects of civilization during that time, including public education. Black students were not given an equitable education and had limited access to educational resources. Black students were taught by Black teachers who were paid significantly less than White teachers at predominantly White schools. Black teachers taught to the best of their ability despite inadequate spaces, resources, and opportunities (Will, 2022). Black students often received out-of-date textbooks, were made to walk several miles to school since buses were not available to the Black students, and were housed in spaces that would be deemed uninhabitable by today's standards (Fairclough, 2004). These teachers were invaluable in the southern Black community because Black teachers taught in the community in which the teachers lived. Many Southerners during segregation times engrained in their children that receiving an education would be beneficial to their children's overall well-being and allow the children to make a better life for themselves. Black teachers became a parenting figure to the students by developing a relationship with the students while placing high expectations on the students. Black teachers taught the whole child, in which the teacher was attentive to not only the child's academic needs but the child's social and emotional needs (Bunch, 2023).

The ruling of the Brown vs. Board of Education of Topeka's decision changed the trajectory of the Black student that is still impacting the Black student today. The Supreme Court ruled that segregation was unconstitutional, and the era of desegregation began (Minow, 2010).

Desegregation saw a significant reduction in Black teachers in public schools. Administrations in school districts did not hire many Black teachers to teach at desegregated schools. With many of the Black segregated schools closed, this left many Black educators without a job and Black students being taught by majority White teachers (Madkins, 2011).

The Corridor of Shame

The area of predominantly Black rural districts in South Carolina along the I-95 Highway is known as *The Corridor of Shame*. In 1993, in the case known as Abbeville County School District v. the State of South Carolina, eight rural school districts claimed that South Carolina failed at providing a minimally adequate education for students in the eight districts. The case lasted more than two decades and finally, in 2014, South Carolina's Supreme Court ruled in favor of the school districts (Brown, 2018; Bryan, 2018; Temoney & Ullrich, 2018). Nevertheless, today the state is still facing challenges providing an adequate education for the students in rural districts. The Corridor of Shame was brought to the forefront of the educational conversation in South Carolina after the release of the documentary *Corridor of Shame: The Neglect of South Carolina's Rural Schools* (Temoney & Ullrich, 2018). When politicians and presidential candidates visited the rural areas of South Carolina and viewed the harsh conditions of schools' students were attending, the Corridor of Shame became a political talking point around the nation. (Associated Press, 2007). These poverty-stricken districts are predominantly Black, with inequitable school funding and some of the lowest test scores in the state (Temoney & Ullrich, 2018). Rural school districts have a hard time finding and retaining Black teachers (Bryan, 2018). Geographic isolation, lack of financing for schools, lower teacher salaries, a lack of professional prospects, toxic work environments, and the unfavorable physical conditions of rural schools are all blamed for these challenges (Lavalley, 2018; Sealander et al., 2001;

Showalter et al., 2019). Due to the constraints in rural communities, districts in these locations see a high rate of teacher turnover. Students are left to be taught by unqualified teachers and teachers who have limited teaching experiences in a predominantly Black space (Branch, 2022). The Corridor of Shame serves as a poignant example of inequality in the educational system in South Carolina.

Post-Secondary Teacher Preparatory Programs for Black Students

Aspiring Black teachers face systematic barriers when trying to complete the requirements to become a highly qualified teacher. Experiencing whiteness and racial micro aggressions from student peers and professors in teacher preparatory programs caused Black students to be deterred and discouraged from completing an education degree (Dinkins & Thomas, 2016). Being unable to receive financial assistance such as teacher loan forgiveness, Black students are not able to work to pay the student's tuition and complete the required clinical hours for apprenticeships and student teaching (Barshay, 2023).

Black college students who are enrolled in educator programs have experienced difficulties making the required passing score on the standardized teacher certification test to receive certification to teach (Wynter-Hoyte et al., 2020). According to Wexler (2019), 62% of Black aspiring teachers do not pass the elementary PRAXIS exam after taking the exam several times. With the inability to receive the correct licensure, many Black college students are unable to complete the required upper-level coursework, resulting in those students changing majors to another career field and leaving Black students without a Black teacher in the school system (Petchauer, 2012).

Due to the fact that Black students were denied admission to White post-secondary educational institutions, Historically Black Colleges and Universities were founded to provide

undergraduate and graduate-level educational opportunities for Black students (Davis et al., 2019). The first HBCUs were founded to train teachers and preachers. Several teachers who attended these Historically Black Colleges and Universities were trained to teach at Freedmen's Bureau schools in the South (5 things to know: HBCU edition, n.d.). Historically Black Colleges and Universities pride themselves on producing skilled and committed teachers.

The Education Colleges at Historically Black Colleges and Universities are key for Black aspiring teachers. School districts that are in close geographical range of Historically Black Colleges and Universities have a higher probability of recruiting Black teacher candidates earlier in the semester. Historically Black Colleges and Universities in South Carolina are located in rural school districts. This increases the number of Black teachers for Black students (P. Davis, personal communication, October 8, 2023).

The State Higher Education Executive Officers Association works with higher education executives to ensure that an equitable education is available to college students (Pearson, 2019). The State Higher Education Executive Officers Association realized that there were some inequities in teacher preparatory programs at Historically Black Colleges and Universities and researched several issues that plagued the programs. The Association recognized that partnerships needed to be established and maintained with HBCUs and surrounding districts in order to create a pipeline that will serve support students who desire to become teachers once the students graduate high school. An increase in professional development with the school districts and HBCU to keep teachers and aspiring teachers abreast of the latest educational resources and tools. Preparing high school students for teacher preparatory programs at HBCUs, such as providing the students with more rigorous coursework during the student's high school tenure, are also suggested (Pearson, 2019). Standardized exams such as the PRAXIS are not favorable to

Black students because of the bias in the testing. The test questions do not accurately depict the student's mastery of knowledge (McMillan, 2018).

Since this research, Historically Black Colleges and Universities have been receiving financial assistance from the government to assist in diversifying the teacher workforce. By helping aspiring Black teachers, Black students will benefit, and mentorships will be formed. Learning about the importance of mentorships offers pre-service teachers valuable strategies and insights, enhancing their teaching experience. The knowledge and skills acquired through these mentorships can be utilized in their classrooms, aiding in building connections with both students and their parents. Novice teachers continue in the profession past their initial year, equipping them with the essential skills to navigate the challenges of the education sector (Hobson et al., 2012).

Critical Race Theory and Culturally Relevant Pedagogy

The Critical Race Theory examines the official American school curriculum as it highlights the Eurocentric culture as the basis of the education system, which is inclusive of instruction and assessment. This curriculum is designed to marginalize and discriminate against the Black student. Black students are not afforded the same educational opportunities as their White peers due to the systematic oppression of the Black race (Freire, 1999; Kaerwer & Pritchett, 2023; Ladson-Billings, 1998).

The Critical Race theory recognizes the inequalities and the discriminatory acts Black people face in every aspect of living. Black people are given a voice to be able to speak about the racism Black people experience in their lives. One of the pitfalls of the Critical Race Theory is that the theory centers around the notion of educational stakeholders seeing the actual value of the Critical Race Theory and using its findings to provide a better education for Black students.

11

Those in the educational community do not need to commercialize the important impact of the theory and the lasting effects it has on the educational system (Ladson-Billings, 1998; Tichavakunda, 2019).

The narrative of the public school educator comes from the power of the White educator. With White teachers in power, the teacher's particular codes are expected of their students. Unfortunately, not all students, especially Black students, are accustomed to the White teacher's communication, linguistic, and cultural styles. This places a barrier between the student and the teacher that limits the student's learning. Black students' culture is not always recognized or highlighted in the classroom. Oftentimes, Black students' cultures are minimized. The absence of Black students' cultural, historical, and lived experiences from the curriculum can contribute to feelings of alienation and marginalization, which in turn can hinder the students' academic success. (Delpit, 1988; Sampson & Garrison-Wade, 2011).

One obstacle Black students face is not having a fully implemented and embedded Culturally Relevant Pedagogical framework. Gloria Ladson-Billings developed Culturally Relevant Pedagogy as an educational theory that is constructed to educate Black students through a curriculum that embeds Black culture, which incorporates resources and teaching strategies that resonate with Black students' backgrounds (Ladson-Billings, 2009). The Culturally Relevant Pedagogy can be constructed to educate Black students through a curriculum that does not devalue the voices of people of different ethnicities. The pedagogical design in relation to planning is one of the essential components to the cultural instructional design process. The cultural design must be goal-driven that is formulated precisely, creatively, attentively, and with expertise. The design cannot be constructed using a "cookie cutter" model, and it must be tailor-made for Black students (Smith & Ragan, 2005). In this process, the Black

student is the focal point of the instruction. When students of color identify with the content being taught, it creates a conducive environment for gaining knowledge, which results in a favorable situation for all involved educational stakeholders (Ladson-Billings, 2009).

The Culturally Relevant Pedagogy theory focuses on race, social justices, and educational equality (Hernandez, 2022). Culturally Relevant Pedagogy has to be foundational in the curriculum and gives the curriculum an opportunity to be tailored to incorporate culturally relevant models that support Black students. Resources that are culturally relevant are implemented so that Black students can use prior knowledge and experience as frames of reference to have a deeper understanding of the concept being taught. Student-centered discussions and conversations must be had to build a strong rapport with Black students so that learning partnerships are formed. Teachers must be active listeners while Black students express themselves in the classroom (Christ & Sharma, 2018; Gay, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 2009; Pagan, 2022).

Culturally Relevant Pedagogy recognizes that Black students learn best when the students' lived experiences are at the forefront of the curriculum. Black students must feel affirmed in the students' identities. Culturally relevant teachers must meet students where the students are academically and socially and learn how to teach content to the students in a manner the students can understand (Ladson-Billings, 2006; Will, 2022). Culturally competent teachers must be responsible for being knowledgeable about Black students' culture. White teachers who use Culturally Relevant Pedagogy should not heavily integrate their culture into the curriculum because Black students may not have the same lived experiences as the White teacher. Culturally Relevant Pedagogy requires White teachers to constantly educate themselves in the social and political climate that Black students live in daily. With this knowledge, teachers can

become moderators as students question and challenge societal norms that are not beneficial to the students' lives. Black students develop the ability to be cultivated thinkers by asking thorough questions and producing researched solutions and results. (Irvine and Armento, 2001; Ladson-Billings, 2006; Sampson & Garrison-Wade, 2011). What Black students learn is just as important as what the Black students produce (Wilson, 2017).

Cultural vibrancy is intertwined with Culturally Relevant Pedagogy. Cultural vibrancy as coined by Sampson & Garrison-Wade (2011), emphasizes the significance of representation and the impact it can have on the engagement and achievement of Black students. A culturally vibrant educational community celebrates cultural events and traditions, includes historical cultural voices, and promotes intercultural dialogue. It is the idea that when students see themselves in the educational content, the students feel a sense of ownership and connection which improves engagement in the classroom (Sampson & Garrison-Wade, 2011).

Black Students Need Black Teachers

Through the historical lens, Black students have been overdisciplined and undereducated. However, it has been well documented that Black teachers improve Black students' schooling experience. Black teachers take on a multitude of roles beyond the traditional expectations of teachers. Black teachers become parental figures, advocates, and mentors for Black students. This holistic involvement in Black students' lives by Black teachers has a positive effect on Black student's academic and personal growth (Griffin and Tackie, 2017). Having a foundational support system that is inclusive of a Black teacher is imperative to the mental and emotional health of Black students. Black students and Black teachers share cultural experiences that allow for a deeper understanding, support, and connection that a White teacher may not have experienced. Black educators are culturally sensitive and oftentimes view their Black students as

their own children. Having this view leads to a higher set of expectations and a drive to push each student to the student's highest potential (Ladson-Billings, 2006).

The influence of Black male teachers at an early age has a profound and inspirational impact on Black male students. Black male educators who are an underrepresented sect of educators, serve as role models for Black male students. For many of these students, the Black male educator is the only father figure and positive male figure in their lives (Bristol & Goings, 2018). Being able to see a Black male in a position of authority can give Black male students a tangible example of what can be achieved. Black male educators are better equipped to understand and manage the behavior of Black male students without expelling the students, which leaves the Black student missing pertinent instructional time at school (Smith-Green, 2023).

The value of Black lives is recognized by Black teachers. Black educators are able to empathize with Black students to empower the Black race as a whole and create a safe space for Black students to embrace themselves. Black students are able to excel in Black classrooms because the Black teacher has tapped into the Black students' underdeveloped abilities. Black students who have had at least one Black teacher are more likely to graduate high school, and increases the chances of the Black student enrolling in college (Perry, 2020). This influence is because of the Black experience in the classroom. Black teachers make a connection with students that goes beyond the classroom. Black students become a part of the Black teachers' families, and the teachers keep up with the students throughout the Black students' lives, even through adulthood (Henry, 2023).

Black teachers have the ability to relate to Black students in a way that other ethnicities cannot relate to Black students. Black educators make the necessary contributions to cultivate

Black students in a manner that is not stifled by educator bias and motivates Black students to strive to break generational curses and stereotypical norms.

Why Black Educators Leave

Black teachers are more likely to receive lower evaluation scores than their White counterparts. Classroom observations are largely based on the observer's biased opinions. The constant scores are unfavorable for Black teachers, which cause the teachers to leave the profession (Will, 2019). Black teachers feel underappreciated or misunderstood in the education system. The Black teacher is not always valued by their peers and those in administration and are inundated by the demands of those in administration. Black teachers feel to always need to prove that they deserve a seat at the table even though the table was not necessarily built for the Black teacher (Watts, 2021). The micro aggressions Black educators face have a lasting impact on the well-being of the educator and make the educators not feel welcome at their educational institution. These micro aggressions, such as not feeling seen by other educators, having the Black teacher's voice silenced, and openly questioning the Black teacher's competency, do not make the Black teacher feel valued (Terada, 2021).

The Black male educator is met with stereotypes and biases. Of the educators in the state of South Carolina in 2021, only 3% of the educator population were made up of Black males (Bose, 2022). Black male educators are scarce, which leads to a sense of isolation. At times, being the only Black male educator in a school can be stressful because the man is viewed as a representative for all Black males, which can be overwhelming (Bristol & Goings, 2018). This leads to the Black male educator being viewed as a disciplinarian and not as an ally to Black students (Perry, 2020). The perception of the Black male educator as incompetent can harm the

morale of the Black male educator and have an effect on the Black male's future career advancement opportunities (Bristol & Goings, 2018).

Burnout, high-stress work environment, and low pay are also some factors that have caused Black educators to leave the classroom. Oftentimes Black educators are tasked with handling students with disciplinary problems at the school. Black educators receive some of the worst classes under the presumption that the Black educators can handle the students, which increases the workload of the educator (Terada, 2021). Novice Black teachers also tend to work hard to staff schools that have the inability to have proper resources, overcrowding in classrooms, and working in dilapidated buildings, which is stressful for Black educators (Sun, 2018). Not having a competitive salary and dealing with less than ideal working conditions causes Black educators to seek employment in another career field (Booker, 2018). When Black educators leave the classroom, it has a lasting effect on the students and the culture of the school.

South Carolina Black educators have experienced a mass exodus from the classroom because of several factors that have impacted a career change. From the stress and demands of the profession that include heavy workloads and long hours, lack of proper compensation, limited opportunities of professional growth and the state of today's political climate. Black teachers have made the decision to pursue other interest that will be beneficial to the Black educators' mental health (Green, 2022).

Analysis

Throughout the literature, pertinent themes included the historical look at the Black educator, South Carolina's Corridor of Shame, Critical Race Theory, Culturally Relevant Pedagogy, Black students' need for Black teachers, and the reasons why Black educators leave

the classroom. There is an urgent need to acknowledge and appreciate the culture of Black people and its influence on the educational system.

Cultural Perspective

Critical Race Theory/Culture Compatibility Theory

From a cultural perspective, in the United States, Black people have always had to fight to be included. The Critical Race Theory examines how racism has shaped both the educational and legal frameworks in the United States (Anderson, 2022). In the educational realm, generations of Black people were denied a comprehensive education just because of the color of their skin. How Black teachers view Black students is not the same lens of how teachers of other races view Black students. Culture is learned through a person's environment and interactions. The Critical Race Theory has been equated with having a negative connotation in the educational realm because the theory exposes the injustices, inequalities, and biases Black people have had to deal with in America. By attempting to silence the Critical Race Theory, Black students are not given the opportunity to learn about the history of their culture (Anderson, 2022; Ladson-Billings, 1998). In the classroom, culture effects what is valued in curriculum and what is not. Black educators are culturally equipped to make a personal connection with Black students. This is due to the Black educators' experiences in which the educators can empower students to have a deeper meaning and connection with schooling. Black educators known as a figurehead in the classroom, motivate Black students.

Teachers have the best knowledge of the students and should have the opportunity to make decisions that support student growth and achievement (Autonomy, 2014; Self-Determination, 2017). Teachers are life-long learners to garner the knowledge and skills needed to be an effective educator. The competence of a teacher is imperative to the classroom because

the teacher has to feel capable of teaching in an ever changing world of diverse learners (Nessipbayeva, 2012; Self-Determination, 2017). Through culturally relevant pedagogical practices, Black teachers have an innate ability to connect to Black students. The relatedness is a bond through culture, both the Black teacher and black student experience. This relatedness is foundational to motivate the teacher and the student (Guay et al., 2019; Ladson-Billings, 1998; Self-Determination, 2017).

Having an affirming school culture that celebrates Black culture is critical to the recruitment and retention of Black teachers in South Carolina. South Carolina classrooms are becoming more diverse. The Department of Education has revised standards that reflect the culture of the diverse population of South Carolina students. Through these standards, teachers are able to incorporate cultural meanings and create cultural knowledge to create cognitive growth and understanding (South Carolina Department of Education, 2021). Through culturally relevant pedagogy Black students are more engaged in the content, and with the teacher, the students can express who the students are and are less likely to receive disciplinary infractions. Black teachers are motivated create a caring, safe, encouraging, and supportive environment for students (Hodge & Cunningham, 2023). This pedagogy is why some Black teachers stay in predominantly Black schools.

Black people knew that if Black people received an education, Black people could fit the oppressive ways of the dominant White culture. The Culture Compatibility Theory means that Black students were proud of Black culture and used it as a vessel to be a representative in the educational conversation. Black students who excelled in the students were celebrated as models of academic success (Whaley & Noel, 2012). These students are considered to "break the generational cycle" as Black parents and family members pushed these students to obtain a better

occupation or career than the parents and family members. These Black students would be more financially sound and secure.

Teachers who are aware of the connection between culture and the Black student can instruct using a culturally relevant pedagogy that is relational to the Black student and can close the achievement gap between Black and White students. Black educators who teach Black students can bring awareness to the importance of teaching through a cultural lens. When Black students experience a curriculum that Black students can identify themselves in, it causes these students to be intrinsically motivated to produce positive academic outcomes (Whaley & Noel, 2012). Having a healthy racial identity makes Black people unashamed and unapologetically comfortable about the melanin of Black skin.

Historical Perspective

The Cultural-Ecological Theory of Minority School Performance

From a historical perspective, Black people in the United States were considered as second class citizens. Black students faced obstacles since the onset of Black students' schooling and has had lasting outcomes for generations. Black students have had an uphill battle to have the same educational experiences as White students (Labaree, 1997). Black teachers were considered ignorant and incompetent by White teachers (Fairclough, 2004).

John Ogbu contends that minorities in the educational system are viewed as an underperforming sect of people in voluntary groups and involuntary groups. Thus, the Cultural-Ecological Theory of Minority School Performance was created. Voluntary minority groups are classified as people who made the choice to come to the United States and immerse themselves in the dominant culture. Involuntary minority groups are classified as people who were brought to the United States against the group of people's will and made the choice not to immerse

themselves in the dominant culture and create their own. Due to the involuntary minority groups establishing the group's own culture, the dominant culture did the dominant culture's best to suppress and marginalize the involuntary minority groups (Mindnich, 2008; Ogbu & Simons, 1998).

The Cultural-Ecological Theory of Minority School Performance examines how minorities are treated in the educational system and the environmental factors that influence the educational performance of minority students. Ogbu contends that involuntary minorities feel as though there is an erasure of the involuntary minorities' culture in mainstream education. The involuntary minority groups were never given a chance to have an equitable education and had to deal with the injustices and unfair treatment within the world and the American educational system that has plagued the group since the group had the ability to receive schooling (Awokoya & Clark, 2008; Ogbu & Simons, 1998).

This theory can impact rather or not Black teachers decide to be recruited into the teaching profession and if the Black teachers who are already a part of the profession rather or not the Black teacher decide to stay in the profession. Black people experience discrimination early on in childhood (Barshay, 2023). Many of these experiences happen in the school system by White peers and White teachers. Through generational hurt, these bad experiences can dissuade a Black person from pursuing a career in education. Black educators who do choose the education field must work to support Black students so that the Black students do not gain the same mindset as those in the Black students' families who faced educational systematic oppression (Ogbu & Simons, 1998). Black educators who decide to continue teaching have to absolve the treatment the Black educators may face due to the inequities in the education system. These same inequities are reasons why Black educators decide to leave the classroom in a

growing fashion (Awokoya & Clark, 2008; Ogbu & Simons, 1998). This theory frames the obstacles and challenges Black teachers face in the educational system.

Organizational Behavior Perspective

Theory of Job Embeddedness for Teachers

From the organizational behavior perspective, The Theory of Job Embeddedness for Teachers is significant in the retention of teachers. Novice teachers are considered teachers who are new to the teaching profession and have between zero to three years in the classroom (What is a Novice Teacher, 2023). Novice Black educators are leaving the classroom at a much higher rate than the Black educators' White counterparts (Carr, 2022). This teacher turnover costs money for the districts and uses valuable resources to try to recruit educators to replace the teachers who leave the classroom if there are any available qualified teachers to recruit. School districts are in need of assistance with tools needed to implement methods to retain novice teachers. The Theory of Job Embeddedness for Teachers is comprised of three components: a teacher's fit at school, educational links, and behaviors that are self-sacrificing towards the school. Ultimately, this theory investigates what keeps a teacher at a school (Osowski, 2019; Yildiz, 2018).

Schools that create a climate where teachers feel included in decision-making, have a voice, and have the support of the teachers' peers and administration bolds well for teachers to remain at the school. These teachers feel like a vital member of the school's community. Novice teachers need strong mentorships from teachers who know every aspect of the school. The educational links indicate the interconnections the teacher feels with school's personnel, students, and community (Shah et al., 2020). Black teachers who actually teach in the community in which the Black teachers are more prone to stay in the community as an

investment to the students as well as to the community. These teachers more than likely are related to the students in the school, go to the same church as the students, or are friends with the students' parents. These teachers are viewed as parental figures in the Black students' lives. These Black teachers show up to after-school activities and are active in Black students' lives outside of school hours (Farinde-Wu & Fitchett, 2018). Districts can create a strategy that tracks aspiring teachers at college. Once the novice teacher graduates, the teachers' home district should heavily recruit the teacher to teach in the teacher's home district. This would be beneficial to the teacher and district because the teacher already has homegrown ties to the community and is aware of the district and community's inner workings. Self-sacrificing behaviors detail what the teacher would actually lose by leaving the school. If the teacher feels as though the losses would be detrimental to the well-being of the teacher's life by leaving the school, the teacher would feel inclined to stay at the school. By changing schools, a teacher could go into a much worse situation with students, peers, and administration. Teachers could lose salary wages that will impact the teacher financially (Yildiz, 2018).

The implementation of these retention strategies can support teachers and give the teachers viable options to return to the classroom. If districts utilize these strategies as a guide, it can improve retention.

To remain competitive and never complacent in the educational world, Black students have to give twice the effort as the Black students' White peers in order even to be noticed or considered. Actress Issa Rae stated at an awards show that she was rooting for everybody Black to win that night (Nyren, 2017). Racial identity is significant for Black people because America classifies almost everything by race and of a privileged society. There was a time when the majority of Black people stood firm on collective orientation, which meant Black people stuck

together and pushed each other to produce excellence because Black people only had each other for support. Rooted in a sense of community and awareness of racism, the Culture Compatibility Theory suggests that Black students do well in school because Black students understand the importance of receiving a sustainable education because of the Black students' race (Whaley & Noel, 2012). This stems back to the importance and value Black families put on education. After the enslaved people were freed, Black people faced overwhelming and daunting challenges to just go to school. Once segregation was determined illegal, perils of White people used harmful tactics against Blacks to keep them from the predominantly White schools (Fairclough, 2004; Minow, 2012).

Ethical Implications

With Black teachers leaving the classroom, Black students' academic, personal growth, development, and safety will ultimately be stunted and have an adverse effect for the Black race as a whole. There is a loss of diversity along, which leads to an inadequate educational experience. Black teachers feel the need to protect Black students. Black teachers are advocates and activists for the betterment of Black students.

White owners of enslaved Black people believed that if the enslaved Black people were educated, the enslaved Black people would no longer do what they were told and create a life of their own (Witzig, 2013). Racism is still ever present in America and deeply rooted in the school system, which puts Black students at a disadvantage before the Black students begin their schooling. Negative experiences at school have had lasting effects on generations of Black people (Raffaele Mendez, Kim, Ferron, & Woods, 2015).

Black students are labeled and stereotyped before the Black students walks into the door of a White teacher's classroom. Educational stratification causes adversarial effects on Black

students (Labaree, 1997). The curriculum and resources in the White teachers' classroom are not always representative of Black students. The power structures in American society are mirrored in the White teachers' classrooms, with White teachers having low expectations for Black students and being treated unfairly (Delpit, 1988). In the White teacher led classrooms, Black students' creativity can be suppressed, which can cause disruptions in the classroom by Black students because the Black students are unable to free to be themselves (Feire, 1993). This implicit racial bias has ethical implications because of the Black student suffers at the hands of assumptions of White teachers and those White teachers' cultural experiences pertaining to Black people. Although the biases may be subtle, Black students are treated differently than White students because Black students do not have the same lived experiences as White students. Students are observant and know when they are not being treated fairly by those in authority (Awareness of Implicit Biases, 2021; Boudreau, 2020).

Black students are more likely to be disciplined much harsher than White students. Disciplinary infractions in school strengthen the debate for the school to prison pipeline. Some of the most minor infractions marginalize Black students and keep the students from obtaining the students' education. Exclusionary practices such as a zero-tolerance policy stack the odds against Black students, which can lead to students dropping out of school and not obtaining the students' high school diploma (Keyes, 2022).

White teachers have to recognize that the teachers have implicit biases and work not to allow those biases to affect the educational journey of Black students. Black students deserve a high-quality education from a dedicated teacher (Boudreau, 2020).

Black teachers were once Black students. Growing up Black, Black teachers have experienced the challenges a Black person faces in America and the classroom. Black teachers

have felt the injustices of others and know that the odds are stacked against Black teachers because of the melanin in their skin. Black educators advocate for Black students because there are few allyships for Black students (Mustafaa, 2023).

Policy Recommendations

School districts in South Carolina must make a concerted effort to recruit and retain Black teachers. The South Carolina Center for Educator Recruitment, Retention, and Advancement, known as CERRA, is dedicated for providing recruitment initiatives for middle school students, high school students, college students, and adults seeking teacher certification in South Carolina (About Us, 2023). The Pro-Team is a middle school club that offers beginner level introductory information and experiences for students in hopes to interest the students to enter the educational field. Aimed to engage Black students, CERRA's Pro-Team follows a curriculum that assists students in setting educational and personal goals in preparation for the students' future with hopes to stirring the students into a career of education (Pro Team, 2023).

The South Carolina Teacher Cadet program has been in existence for thirty-eight years and is a course offering for high school juniors and seniors. In high schools around the state, the Teacher Cadet program allows high school students to receive college credit while in high school. The Teacher Cadet curriculum is designed as college education coursework. High school students receive a real-world introduction to teaching through actual teaching experience with younger students. The Teacher Cadet program is offered at several predominantly Black high schools in the state. Increasing the enrollment in the program in high school will aid in increasing the number of Black students entering into education colleges (Teacher Cadets, 2023).

The Teaching Fellows Program is designed to attract high school seniors into the teaching profession and address South Carolina's teacher shortage. The Teaching Fellows

Program offers scholarships in the amount of $24,000 for students who major in education at one of South Carolina's Teaching Fellows institutions. This scholarship helps reduce the burden of the high costs of a college education. Through this financial support, students must teach in South Carolina's public schools for at least four years. The Teacher Cadet program serves as a pipeline to the Teaching Fellows Program. Teachers who participated in the Teaching Fellows program are more apt to stay in the field of education than those who did not (Teaching Fellows, 2023).

One program that is geared to increasing the number of Black males in elementary classrooms in South Carolina is the Call Me MISTER program. This program, which originated in South Carolina is for Black male college students from low socioeconomic backgrounds and rural school districts in the state. Black males in the Call Me MISTER program receive financial assistance for tuition and hands-on mentorship so that the aspiring Black male teachers to be effective role models for future students. The Call Me MISTER program has increased the number of Black male educators in elementary classrooms in South Carolina by 40%. The model of this program has been so successful that other states have adopted the program to increase the number of Black males in schools (Call Me MISTER, 2023).

Alternative pathways to certification are offered to individuals in South Carolina who did not complete a traditional education teacher preparatory program. The PACE program, Program of Alternative Certification for Educators, gives individuals who have obtained bachelor's degrees or higher to teach for three years while having to complete the PACE requirements. PACE participants are required to pass the Praxis II exam and complete educator foundational courses (Program of Alternative Certification for Educators, 2023). There are several other state sponsored certification pathways. Lately, some South Carolina school districts are creating their

own *Grow Your Own* certification programs. Through these programs, teaching candidates who hold bachelor's degrees are able to obtain teacher certification by meeting qualifications from the district. Some districts are offering financial assistance to these candidates to assist the candidates with funding required course. Selected candidates must fulfill the required teaching years in the state (College of Education, 2023).

To address the teacher turnover problem in rural districts in the state, the Rural Recruitment Initiative was created to recruit and retain teachers in the rural districts. South Carolina districts that are eligible for this initiative must have an average of 11% annual teacher turnover. Most of these districts are located along the state's Corridor of Shame. The Rural Recruitment Initiative gives teachers who work in rural districts $5000 towards the teacher's undergraduate loans. The extra financing can have a positive impact on teachers and help improve the teacher retention rate in rural districts (Rural Recruitment Initiative, 2023).

South Carolina is making an attempt to recruit teachers through these mentioned initiatives still there is work to be done in retaining Black educators. Novice Black educators are in need of mentorships and support from the educators' peers and administration (Love, 2023). Time to collaborate with others and professional developments that are beneficial to the Black educator to inform them of the latest educational trends that are crucial to the vitality of a Black educator staying in the classroom. Black educators want opportunities for professional growth (Achinstein et al., 2010; Love, 2023). Black educators have a voice and do not want to be silenced. These educators know their students best and should have a say when decisions are being made about students the Black educators teach and interact with on a daily basis (Bristol & Going, 2018).

Administrations in South Carolina's rural districts have to address several issues to retain Black educators in these predominantly Black schools. For these schools to thrive and Black teachers to be retained, the districts are in need of funding and policy reform. When funding is available, teachers are able to receive resources, teach in safe conditions, and receive increased wages. Policies have to be reviewed that support Black educators (Bowers, 2021).

Figure 1

Recruitment and Retention Model
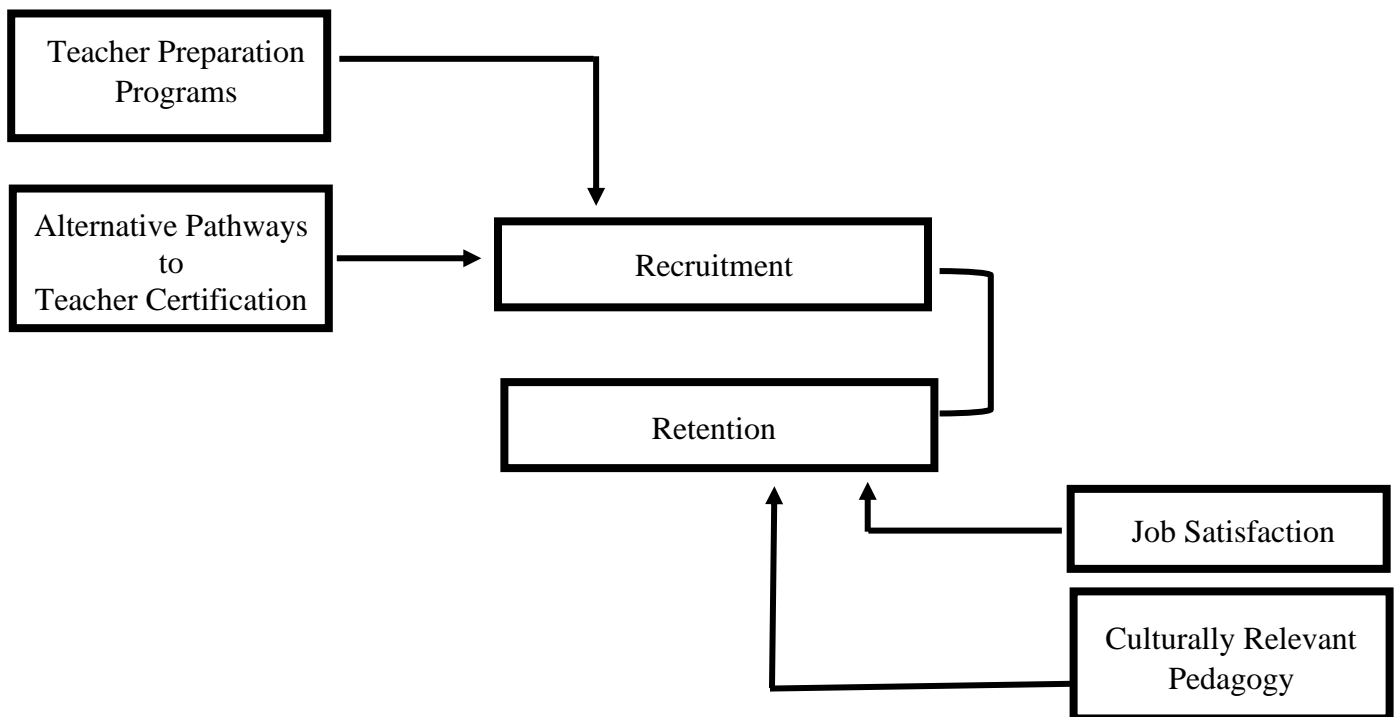
Note. This figure was conceived by the researcher.

Summary

A fundamental transformation of the education system is needed because the field of education has not been an appealing or popular job for the last several years. This is evidenced by the declining numbers of people entering as well as exiting the education profession. In the historical context of the plight of the Southern Black teacher in the South shows how a once

valued entity has now been pushed to the periphery. Black educators were once so influential that the educators were considered almost like royalty and treated as such by members of the Black community. However, after legal rulings, the once prominent figures were exiled without jobs. Black students were left to be taught by White teachers who did not understand the culture of Black students. Thus crippling the Black students' education experience and further widening the achievement gap.

Staffing difficulties in rural areas such as the Corridor of Shame are cause Black students to be taught by underqualified staff members without any teacher certifications. Non-certified staff members are not equipped with the tools needed for students to achieve positive academic outcomes.

Today's students are not the students of yesteryear. Each child learns differently. Students learn at different rates. Students' abilities and experiences are also different; therefore, students must be instructed in a manner that is beneficial for the students to gain knowledge. If students are given the opportunity to learn in a more personalized way, the learning becomes more meaningful for the students. Once the transfer of the new learning is made, the educational process begins. Students are stimulated because the teacher has tapped into the learners' cognitive abilities.

The recognition of the Black culture weighs heavily in the success of the Black student. Culture is personified in the Black teachers' classroom because Black culture is to be admired and celebrated and used as a vehicle to attain academic success. When the pedagogy mirrors the life of the Black student, the academic and social rewards are limitless. Black students are prepared to be 21st-century learners in this ever-changing world (Ladson-Billings, 1998).

Historically Black Colleges and Universities are avenues for educational attainment for Black students and create a mass amount of Black professionals. Historically Black Colleges and Universities' educational programs are meccas for aspiring Black educators. Partnerships must be created between the school districts and the Historically Black Colleges and Universities to provide significant partnerships that support Black teacher candidates. These partnerships consist of preparation for the PRAXIS exam courses, mentorships with other Black educators, and other optional workshops that can be beneficial to a first year teacher.

Black educators are paramount to South Carolina's public education system. Black educators desire to be valued and appreciated because Black educators know the lifetime impact the educators have on Black students.

Educational stakeholders must be proactive in their recruitment and retention of Black teachers. Stakeholders need to invest in researching tried and true methods and understanding cultural theories to keep Black educators who are dedicated in closing the achievement gap for Black students.

South Carolina has taken some strides to recruit teachers still, long-term sustainable improvements are needed to recruit and retain Black teachers. However, South Carolina is still lacking resources to recruit future Black educators and retain the Black educators that are currently in classrooms across the state and must prioritize strategies to end the mass exodus of Black teachers. Administrations have taken the effort to get the teachers in the classroom but are lacking in keeping the teachers in the class. Educational decisions are made by people, mostly men, who are not in the daily trenches of schools. Although the true power of education should come from Black teachers, Black teachers are the last group of people asked when making educational decisions. District administrators in South Carolina must do due diligence by

reaching out to Black teachers to glean data as to what is needed to keep Black teachers in the classroom. From this information, district administrators will become knowledgeable about what is working in the district's educational system and what is not working for Black educators. Districts must create supportive work environments and professional development trainings that empower Black teachers.

In the Black culture, representation is critically important to Black people. Black teachers are paramount to the educational system. Recruiting and retaining Black educators is going to require a combination of factors tailored to the needs of Black educators. The success of the Black student is contingent on the role and status of the Black teacher.

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