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Belonging and Support in Los Angeles Area Independent Schools: Understanding the Experiences of Teachers of Color

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Belonging and Support in Los Angeles Area Independent Schools:

Understanding the Experiences of Teachers of Color

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the

requirements for the degree Doctor of Education

by

Jason Kim-Seda

2021

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Belonging and Support in Los Angeles Area Independent Schools:

Understanding the Experiences of Teachers of Color

by

Jason Kim-Seda

Doctor of Education

University of California, Los Angeles, 2021

Professor Tyrone Howard, Co-Chair

Professor Kristen Rohanna, Co-Chair

With the backdrop of an increase in hiring of Educators of Color in predominantly white independent schools (PWIS) yet also a trend of these educators leaving PWIS at a quicker rate than their white peers because they encounter additional challenges, this mixed methods study explored the experiences of Educators of Color in the Los Angeles area. The study was guided by three goals: (1) to explore the divergent experiences of support and belonging of Teachers of Color and white teachers in PWIS; (2) to understand the extent to which the experiences of

Teachers of Color contribute to their sense of belonging and feelings of support; and (3) to build on the scant literature on the experiences of Teachers of Color in PWIS.

I constructed a survey that questioned all teachers about their sense of belonging, professional treatment, and level of leadership and institutional support. An additional twelve questions asked Teachers of Color about their racial sense of belonging and experiences of discrimination. I collected 133 completed responses, 78 from white teachers and 55 from Teachers of Color, allowing me to develop several pieces of statistically significant data. Further, I interviewed 21 of the survey respondents who identified as Persons of Color in order to more deeply understand their experiences at their schools.

The merger of the data led to several notable findings. Generally, Teachers of Color experienced less of a sense of belonging than white teachers, and this was often exacerbated by being questioned and monitored more by adults in the school community, resulting in the pressure to prove themselves. Developing a connection with other Faculty of Color, staff, and students, as well as pursuing one's sense of purpose, often promoted the sense of belonging for Teachers of Color. Additionally, Teachers of Color often experienced microaggressions and challenges related to adjusting to and fitting in at a PWIS. My findings also reflected varying levels of satisfaction and frustration by Teachers of Color when it comes to commitment to diversity work and institutional responses to racist incidents. The study suggests investment in building relationships with Teachers of Color and hiring more Teachers of Color may positively impact their sense of belonging. Recommendations based on the findings share directions for future research and implications for leadership practice and institutional change to better support and promote the belonging of Educators of Color in PWIS.

The dissertation of Jason Kim-Seda is approved.

Mitchell Chang

Lorena Guillén

Tyrone Howard, Committee Co-Chair

Kristen Rohanna, Committee Co-Chair

University of California, Los Angeles

2021

DEDICATION

To my dad, I wish we could have shared this experience while you were still alive, but I was glad all the same, knowing that you would be proud of me and my efforts, not because this is what I was supposed to do, but because I wanted to do this.

To my brother, even in our distance and amidst the busyness of our lives, I always knew you supported me in more ways than one. Thank you for always believing in me.

To my mom and stepdad, your support of my academic and professional pursuits, ever since the day you sent me off to New York City, has been steadfast. Thank you, too, for believing in me and helping me pursue this degree.

To my partner, Hanna.

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I thank my UCLA professors for the building blocks they laid during my three years in the program, as each piece of my learning assisted me in the completion of my dissertation. To Lynn Kim-John, our cohort owes you a debt of gratitude for validating and responding to our concerns, struggles, and suggestions, especially as we navigated our dissertation research during the pandemic. To my weekly writing partners, I thank you for your support and feedback, for just knowing we were in this together often gave me the energy and focus to persevere.

Finally, I thank Hanna and the Kim Family for the space, sustenance, humor, patience, and timely encouragement I needed to complete this three-year academic marathon.

VITA

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CHAPTER 1: THE PROBLEM

Overview

One of the primary goals of education is to prepare students to be culturally literate, inclusive, and critically self-reflective in an increasingly global community and to equip them to interact with a diverse range of people (Darling-Hammond, 2019; Ladson-Billings, 2014; Nieto & Irizarry, 2012, Wells et al., 2016). The positive educational impact of diversity and building interracial learning spaces and opportunities is enhanced by a diverse body of educators (Carver-Thomas, 2018). Many educational researchers call attention to how Teachers of Color benefit all students, and oftentimes Students of Color through improved academic performance (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond 2017; Cherng & Halpin, 2016; Villegas & Irvine, 2010). Yet it is a challenge to realize the benefits of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) work if schools have not cultivated cultures and practices that promote retention of teachers, especially those who might be racialized in a predominantly white work context. In independent schools, Teachers of Color face a variety of factors that undermine their sense of belonging, including unsupportive school leadership, extra workloads without compensation, and working in environments where school leaders and teachers are hesitant or afraid to talk about race (Carver-Thomas, 2018), and this can result in racial battle fatigue (Flynn, 2015) and a higher rate of leaving their job (Brosnan, 2015). Coleman and Stevenson (2013) examined the vital importance that a sense of belonging plays for Teachers of Color in K-12 independent schools. According to them, a sense of belonging is grounded on:

Perceiving school leadership to be courageous enough to face racial conflicts, to support racial questioning from parents, teachers, and students, and to take diversity action in hiring and implementing diversity mission goals is important for faculty from varying racial backgrounds to feel like they are full members within their schools. The power of racial questioning in contributing to one's sense of belonging may not be that these questions are always answered but...support for these questions reflects a safer atmosphere of intellectual inquiry and openness to change (p. 562).

Based on Coleman and Stevenson's (2013) research on belonging, the demographic patterns in independent schools, the state of DEI work at independent schools (National Association of Independent Schools, 2019), and the trend of Teachers of Color leaving independent schools at a quicker rate than their white peers (Brosnan, 2015), a perennial issue is the recruitment and retention of Teachers of Color at independent schools. Moreover, since there is a dearth of independent school Administrators of Color (Hunt et al., 2018) and one of the protective retention factors for Teachers of Color is the presence of administrative support (Carver-Thomas, 2018), this problem should be prioritized by decision-makers at independent schools. This study expanded upon the extant research by exploring the comparative experiences of Educators of Color and white teachers in predominantly white independent schools (PWIS) so that the schools and their leaders can position themselves to better promote the belonging and job satisfaction for Teachers of Color, as well as realize the benefits of teaching and learning in a diverse environment.

Background of the Problem

The Positive Impact of Learning in a Diverse Environment

K-12 leaders and policymakers can take the lead from higher education research on the myriad benefits correlated with diversity in higher education settings. If a college campus addresses the historical, structural, psychological, and behavioral dimensions of diversity, the campus climate is more likely to improve and the educational benefits associated with diversity

will be maximized (Hurtado, et al, 1999, as cited in Chang, 2002). Learning in a diverse environment broadens one's perspective through increased cultural awareness, reduced prejudice, and higher tolerance for difference (Chang, 2002). In her report supporting the University of Michigan in the noted affirmative action case *Gratz, et al, v. Bollinger (2003)*, Gurin (1999) found that students who learn in settings that include peers of diverse backgrounds not only develop empathy and cross-cultural skills that enable them to be more engaged citizens during and post-college, but also more actively engage in problem-solving thinking processes and show better intellectual growth, engagement, and motivation.

Research on the impact of a racially and socioeconomically diverse student population at the K-12 level indicates diversity's positive impact on academic achievement, especially for underserved students (Darling-Hammond, 2019). Darling-Hammond (1999) and Carver-Thomas (2018) also note the numerous positive impacts of Teachers of Color: from having significant long-term academic benefits for all students, especially Students of Color, to bringing distinct experiences and knowledge to white students to supporting each other as Teachers of Color are isolated in predominantly white schools.

Demographic Context at Independent Schools

Considering the potential benefits of a diverse student and teaching population, it is important to understand the demographic picture at independent schools. At National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS) member schools in 2018-19, 41% of students nationwide identified as Students of Color, while the total percentage of Faculty of Color was 19.1% (Hunt et al., 2018). The student population is diversifying at a faster rate than the teacher population, posing the perennial challenge of preparing culturally competent and responsive teachers to meet the needs of their students. My study focused not only on understanding the

experiences of Educators of Color in order to increase their sense of belonging and job satisfaction, but it also explored the impact that school leaders (Heads of School, Division Directors/Principals, and Assistant Division Directors/Assistant Principals) and the institutions themselves played in supporting Teachers of Color. Since the support of Heads of School is needed to drive a vision that embraces diversity, equity, and inclusion, the race of heads of school at independent schools is pertinent. In 2017-18, 92% of school heads identified as Non-Hispanic White, seven percent identified as Persons of Color, and one percent identified as International (Hunt et al., 2018). These numbers reflect the growing need of independent schools to focus on the development of culturally responsive and aware school leaders who can support the recruitment and promote the belonging of Teachers of Color, and thereby better meet the needs of a diverse student population.

While independent schools are slowly diversifying by the numbers, these data do not necessarily yield an inclusive school environment. In July 2019, NAIS published the research report "2019 State of the Diversity Practice," which compiled the responses of 346 diversity practitioners (Director or Dean of Diversity or equivalent title) to an online survey. Although most practitioners felt that their school did a good job of creating a caring community environment (54%) and being committed to ethical values and character development (53%), they viewed their schools as less successful in terms of other expressions of diversity and inclusiveness. Thirty-five percent of diversity practitioners said they received a great deal of support from their heads of school, while only 14% answered similarly for support from faculty. Considering the importance of a sense of belonging, and working with both a racially literate faculty and leadership that is willing to face racial conflicts and support racial questioning (Coleman & Stevenson, 2013), these statistics are striking. Much work is needed in the area of

developing a supportive school culture and positive sense of belonging for Faculty and Administrators of Color in order to minimize turnover.

Challenges to Retention of Teachers of Color

As mentioned in the problem overview, independent schools need to develop workplace cultures that are authentically inclusive of Teachers of Color. Yet there are many challenges to hiring and retaining Teachers of Color, including (1) the lack of preparedness of white teachers in regard to meeting the needs of a culturally diverse student population; (2) the lack of organizational training and strategy in regards to the recruitment, hiring, and retention of Faculty of Color; and (3) the lack of will to have open conversations about racism and diversity (Coleman & Stevenson, 2013). In a survey of diversity practitioners in New England independent schools, Brosnan (2009) reported that not only do white educators need to be allies to Adults and Students of Color and support diversity efforts, but they also need to step into the work of exploring their racial and cultural identities, examining how these identities impact the way they teach and lead.

According to Coleman and Stevenson (2013), few studies have developed methods to measure the racialized experiences of Teachers of Color in independent schools or examined how the culture, climate, and mission of independent schools impact the decision of Teachers of Color to stay at or leave their school. Their research was exploratory and descriptive, yet it found that Teachers of Color' sense of positive school belonging increased if the school showed a commitment to DEI goals, engaged in racial questioning, and actively dealt with racial conflict. Brosnan (2015) notes in his research that the commitment to DEI goals must be led by school leaders with a clear vision of how their schools can become an inclusive organization. Based on the challenges and opportunities to hiring and retaining Teachers of Color, the significance of my

study crystallized: in order authentically support Teachers of Color so that their potential impact on student outcomes can be realized, white school leaders need to better understand the experiences of Teachers of Color to promote their sense of belonging.

Example of the Problem

In a focus group (2019, March) I conducted with Black faculty, staff, and administrators at an independent school in Los Angeles, I explored participants' experiences working at a predominantly white institution. Aligned with the general findings from a few researchers (Brosnan, 2009, 2015; Carver-Thomas, 2018; Coleman & Stevenson, 2013), the findings from this focus group surfaced their concerns about tokenism, acceptance by the community, pressures to assimilate to white-dominant norms, and fatigue from code-switching. One Black male teacher recounted a time when he heard a student use the "n-word" by sharing his struggle with stereotypes: "How do you react, right? You don't want to fall into those stereotypes of the angry black man." Others in the focus group highlighted experiences of microaggressions, overt forms of racism, uneven support from colleagues and leaders, and a lack of institutional direction in regard to DEI efforts. One Black woman shared "I've been patted on the head by families" who were curious about her hair texture, and another Black woman sarcastically mimicked a common phrase she received from white parents after she speaks in public: "That was so impressive the way you spoke [pause for dramatic effect] with words." The group recommended that their school leaders should make DEI a priority, commit to developing cultural competence and racial literacy in all constituencies, and work on inclusion measures in order to retain Faculty of Color and Staff. A few group members noted inclusive efforts by a few leaders, yet as an institution it was clear to one person that "the numbers, building the classes, making sure tuition is paid, I see that as the priority." Even though the school embraces pluralism as a part of its mission, the

school and its leaders need to grapple with how to translate the mission into inclusive institutional and cultural change. For this school to significantly advance in the area of DEI, training in the areas of racial literacy, diversity, and cultural responsiveness and multiculturalism was recommended. There are examples of interventions of this type of training on individual teachers' development, especially pre- and early-service teachers, yet existing studies show a gap in understanding how school leaders grow in the aforementioned areas and if and how that growth positively impacts the sense of belonging for Teachers of Color.

Existing Interventions and Gaps in the Research

There is a growing body of research on supporting Teachers and Faculty of Color in K-12 and higher education, with a focus on the experiences of perseverance and development of a sense of belonging (Carver-Thomas, 2018; Coleman & Stevenson, 2013; Dickar, 2008; Smith, 2004; Stanley, 2006). A key theme in the existing research underscores the need for Teachers of Color to be consistently supported by culturally responsive school leaders and programs. Carver-Thomas (2018) highlights the importance of ongoing mentoring and support for Teachers of Color. For example, the Black Teacher Project in San Francisco, Oakland, and New York offers professional and personal growth opportunities, such as wellness workshops and inquiry groups to work through pedagogical challenges. The practice of antiracism caucuses (or affinity groups) is another intervention that shows promise in regard to developing a more inclusive workplace environment (Blitz 2012). Carver-Thomas (2018) also notes how some districts are training all teachers and staff in cultural competency, with the hope of minimizing the fatigue and frustration Teachers of Color may feel as lone advocates for Students of Color. She also calls for more principal preparation programs to require participants to "have clinical experiences in schools with diverse students and staff, and learn to create collaborative, supportive work environments

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for teachers they work with" (p. 29). In his research on successful retention practices for Teachers of Color in New England independent schools, Brosnan (2015) highlighted several important steps for school leaders: create an authentic environment that reflects the school's commitment to diversity; provide ongoing support for Teachers of Color and diversity training for everyone; develop opportunities for growth and leadership; establish meaningful relationships with Teachers of Color; give timely performance feedback; and act decisively and consistently when a racial injustice is identified.

A small body of research has developed around how some school leaders and teachers have developed their racial identity and awareness. In a study about an educational leadership training program, Gooden and O'Doherty (2015) concluded that "racial autobiography serves as a useful tool to encourage students to examine their own racial identity, which is a necessary first step toward building an awareness of race, privilege, and institutional and societal systems of racism" (p. 250), which can positively impact their leadership practice. Howard (2010) argues that educators and researchers, regardless of their years of experience, must build cultural competence and develop a practice of critical self-reflection to work in diverse school settings and ameliorate educational inequities. In particular, white educators need to question, examine, and disrupt practices that may be informed by beliefs rooted in white privilege and dominance.

These interventions highlight a few promising practices to support Teachers of Color and to develop school leaders who are better prepared to respond to the needs and concerns of Communities of Color. Even so, the literature does not adequately explore the role school leaders, especially those who identify as white, could play in creating work environments that are more supportive of the Faculty of Color and promote a sense of belonging. These interventions do not directly examine how leaders perceive and understand the experiences of support and

belonging for Teachers of Color. My research addressed this gap by gathering important quantitative and qualitative data on the experiences of Teachers of Color and how they would like their schools and leaders to understand their experiences in predominantly white spaces.

Research Questions

Considering the value of a diverse faculty for both teachers and students, and the challenges to maintaining and supporting a diverse faculty in independent schools, the research questions that guided this study are the following:

1. To what extent, do Independent School Teachers of Color feel supported by their leaders and institutions and experience a sense of belonging at their schools?

    a. To what extent, do their feelings of support and experiences of belonging differ from white teachers at their schools?

2. How do the experiences of Teachers of Color contribute to their sense of belonging and feelings of support or lack thereof?

Research Design and Methods

I utilized an explanatory sequential mixed methods design to address my study's research questions. The study employed two phases. In phase one, I collected and analyzed quantitative survey data to address research question one and identify results that informed phase two. During phase two, I conducted 21 interviews with Teachers of Color, and I coded and examined the qualitative data to answer research question two and to understand how the qualitative analysis might have impacted the findings from the comparative teacher survey from phase one (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). To provide a statistical description of the experiences of belonging and support, this design utilized a survey of all teachers (regardless of their racial or ethnic identification) in numerous independent schools in the greater Los Angeles area. The survey was

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anonymous, and respondents who identified as Teachers of Color volunteered to participate in a one-on-one interview where they expounded upon their survey responses to provide information-rich data. The quantitative design provided several pieces of statistically significant data on the experiences of Teachers of Color as compared to their white colleagues in PWIS. The qualitative interviews allowed me to explore the survey results with more depth in order to help explain confusing, contradictory, or unusual survey responses (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). A qualitative phase was necessary due to the complexity of the constructs in my study: sense of belonging, job satisfaction, experiences of discrimination, and racial awareness and support of school leadership. The results were compared to interpret their connection to my research questions and develop ideas for future studies.

Significance

The value of learning and teaching in a diverse environment yields benefits for students and teachers in K-12, and these benefits can extend into adulthood for many students. A key element of creating schools that value, promote, and support diverse learning spaces is support for Teachers of Color. Even though the percentage of Teachers of Color in the workforce has increased over the last few decades to approach a reflection of the rapidly diversifying student population, the turnover rate for Teachers of Color consistently exceeds that of their white peers. As noted by Carver-Thomas (2018), the positive news about the increasing diversity of new teacher candidates only underscores the need to focus on retention of Teachers of Color. Teachers stay if they feel supported and a sense of belonging in a school, and these feelings are tangibly cultivated by school leaders who responsibly nurture a positive, encouraging, and equity-focused school culture that is color-aware, not color-mute (Pollock, 2004) or color-blind. Unsupportive school leadership increases the likelihood that teachers, in general, will move or

leave their classrooms and school (Carver-Thomas, 2018). The pressures of assimilating to a dominant work culture, the sense of isolation at being one of the few Teachers of Color on campus, and the daily navigation of microaggressions facing Faculty of Color are often heightened due to the embedded cultural norms and ways of operation in a PWIS. Therefore, it is important to study the experiences of belonging and support of Teachers of Color in PWIS and examine how these experiences may be impacted by the level of leadership and institutional support.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

While schools are rapidly diversifying, the leadership and standard-bearers are still vastly white, which could perpetuate, at minimum, school cultures that are color-blind, leading to a lack of support and understanding of the experiences of Students of Color and Teachers in predominantly white independent schools (PWIS). The demographics of the student population in PWIS has dramatically shifted over the last decade, as the number of Students of Color in the nation has increased from nearly 17% in 2000-01 to just over 33% in 2019-20. During that same time period, the percentage of Teachers of Color in independent schools has more than doubled, from 8.3% to 20.2% (NAIS Facts at a Glance). At the administrator level, only seven percent of independent school heads identify as People of Color (Hunt et al., 2018). In 2020, there is a demographic and democratic imperative to not only hire but also to retain Teachers of Color in independent schools, as there are proven benefits of educating all students with both a diverse body of both peers and teachers, all in order to prepare them to be citizens in a diverse society (Carver-Thomas, 2018; Chang, 2002; Darling-Hammond, 1999, 2019; Gurin, 1999).

While the trend of hiring Teachers of Color at independent schools is skewing upward (Carver-Thomas, 2018), the more difficult challenge for independent schools is supporting Teachers of Color and promoting their sense of belonging and job satisfaction, as they face a variety of challenges that their white counterparts do not. These challenges include (1) informally being asked to carry a heavier workload without fair compensation; (2) facing microaggressions on a regular basis; (3) navigating a culture of color-blindness that is afraid to talk about race; (4) dealing with non-inclusive policies and operations; and (5) experiencing a lack of support from colleagues or leaders, often resulting in racial battle fatigue and a higher

rate of leaving their job (Brosnan, 2015; Carver-Thomas, 2018; Flynn, 2015). Coleman and Stevenson (2013), Carver-Thomas (2018), and Brosnan (2009, 2015) all note a significant protective factor that promotes the retention of Teachers of Color: the development of a sense of belonging through supportive school leaders who actively show a commitment to inclusion and willingly address issues of race and racial conflict. The broader literature on teacher turnover confirms that support from administrators is an important factor for all teachers, especially for Teachers of Color whose sense of belonging is elusive in predominantly white schools.

My study explored the experiences of Teachers of Color as compared to their white peers with a particular focus on sense of belonging and leadership/institutional support. The study also elevated the voices of Educators of Color by gathering on a more granular level their perspectives on administrative support, which the extant yet sparse literature shows is an important retention factor for Teachers of Color in all types of schools. The significance of my study lies in the comparison of teacher experiences based on race, as well as the specific inclusion of qualitative data from Teachers of Color about ways in which their schools and leaders can improve approaches to supporting and retaining Teachers of Color in an authentically inclusive environment that seeks to promote one's racial sense of belonging.

This chapter begins with a brief introduction of key terms and definitions that are pertinent to framing my study. Next, I present the imperative for supporting Teachers of Color in PWIS through a presentation of key demographic trends in independent schools and an exposition of the positive impact of diversity and Teachers of Color on student outcomes. The literature review further contextualizes my study by presenting the state of diversity in independent schools. The review continues by explaining the problem of teacher turnover by highlighting the major factors that impact teacher retention in general and Teachers of Color

specifically. The subsequent section is a short review of independent school case studies related to this topic. The last section presents the conceptual framework that will guide my research, which is grounded in two interrelated fields of study. First, critical race theory - and the related literatures in critical whiteness studies, intersectionality, and racial identity development - provides the lens through which to observe the everyday presence of racism and white privilege within structures, institutions, and relationships. The second set of theories speak to faculty motivation and the need to belong, providing a framework in organizational psychology and individual workplace experiences.

Key Terms and Definitions

This section outlines and explains several important terms in order to facilitate a common definitional and conceptual understanding for this study (Schmitz 2017). Kelchtermans (2017) defines teacher attrition and retention as the need to prevent good teachers from leaving the job for the wrong reasons; he also acknowledges that a definition of teacher attrition and retention is somewhat meaningless without a simultaneous discussion of what constitutes good teaching, but that topic was outside of the scope of this study.

Attrition, Retention, and Turnover

Teacher attrition generally refers to the group of teachers who leave the profession for reasons other than retirement. *Teacher retention* generally refers to the group of teachers called "*stayers*," or those who teach in the same school from one year to the next. *Teacher turnover* refers to the groups of teachers from schools who are either "*movers*" or "*leavers*." *Movers* still teach, but they change schools from one year to the next. *Leavers* are teachers who depart the profession altogether.

Private vs. Independent Schools

When discussing school outside of the public arena, the labels of private and independent schools are often used synonymously, yet it is helpful to think of private schools as the general category and independent schools as a type of private school. Simply put, *private schools* are learning institutions that do not receive public funds; *independent schools* are private schools that are overseen by a board of trustees or governors, driven by their own unique mission, and maintain their independence from any other institution (Dolin, 2019). While all independent schools are private, not all private schools are independent, as they may be overseen by an external organization and be mandated to follow certain rules, such as admissions or curricular requirements (Kennedy, 2019). There are several different types of independent schools, ranging from religiously affiliated to boarding to single gender to international schools. The site of my study was at numerous independent schools that are accredited by the National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS), which is a nonprofit membership association that provides services to more than 1,900 schools and associations of schools in the United States and abroad (NAIS, 2019). In 2017-18, there were a total of 1,573 NAIS schools, accounting for 4.8% of total private schools. NAIS students totaled 657,218 students, or 13.4% of the private school population nationwide, and NAIS teachers totaled 89,919, or 16.9%, of the private school teaching force (NCES, 2017-18). As of June 2019, the number of NAIS schools increased to 1603 schools and the number of students stands at 700,001 (NAIS, 2019).

The Imperative for Retention

Demographic Trends in Public and Independent Schools

As the United States steadily moves to becoming a nation of predominantly People of Color in just over two decades (Frey, 2018), the nation's public schools already reflect this

demographic reality, with the estimated percentage of Students of Color enrolled in public schools in Fall 2019 being 53% (NCES, 2019). At the same time, the nation's public school teachers are still predominantly white, making up 81.7% of the teaching force (NCES, 2019). The demographic picture in private schools, and the subset of independent schools, which was the population of my study, is less diverse and reflective of national population trends, as many independent schools are predominantly white in terms of students, teachers, and leaders. Of the nearly six million students in private schools nationwide in the 2017-18 school year, the racial/ethnic breakdown was: 66.7% white, 11.3% Hispanic, 9.3% Black, 7.3% Asian or Pacific Islander, and 4.9% two or more races (NCES, 2017-18). As mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, Students of Color compose 33.3% of students in NAIS schools, Teachers of Color makeup 20.2% of the teaching body, and only 7% of administrators are People of Color ((Hunt et al., 2018; NAIS, n.d.). There are two caveats related to the NAIS data. NAIS includes Middle Eastern students in its definition of Students of Color, but the U.S. Census defines Middle Easterners as white. Also, race and ethnicity are conflated when counting Students of Color, and this may skew NAIS numbers because the Census designates "Hispanic/Latino" as an ethnic, not a racial, category (French, 2018). The skewing of percentages of people groups is minimal, but it is nonetheless important to note.

While NAIS schools have doubled the population of Teachers of Color and Students over the last 20 years, the schools remain predominantly white. Furthermore, the leadership of the schools is even less reflective of the schools' diversifying populations. These demographics are surely connected to the research that Teachers of Color at independent schools often feel a lack of support from their administrators and a lower racial sense of belonging (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017; Stevenson & Coleman, 2013), which may lead to teacher turnover.

Thus, the need to pay attention to the hiring and retaining of Teachers of Color should be of paramount concern to independent schools, especially since there is a growing body of research on the positive impact of Teachers of Color on all students, especially Students of Color.

Before exploring the positive impact of Teachers of Color, I would like to address one point. While white teachers adequately trained in cross-cultural competence and culturally responsive pedagogy can effectively teach Students of Color (Howard, 2010), there are still too many white teachers who are not adequately trained or who are resistant to learning about multiculturalism and the impact of their white racial identity and privilege on their own teaching practice and classroom learning (Flynn, 2015; Hill-Jackson, 2007; Picower, 2009; Sleeter, 2017). Research continues to show that the presence of well-prepared and well-supported Teachers of Color not only benefits not only the performance of Students of Color, but it also benefits all students. Citing multiple studies, Cherng and Halpin (2016) emphasized that the demographic divide between students and teachers is concerning because Students of Color have more favorable impressions of Teachers of Color, and the positive student-teacher race matching effects often translate into improved academic outcomes such as motivation, interest, and grades. Race-matching of students and teachers is a statistical improbability, yet the positive impact that Teachers of Color have on academic outcomes and Students of Color *and* white students is well-documented and cannot be ignored (Carver-Thomas, 2018; Cherng & Halpin, 2016; Darling-Hammond 1999). That stated, the demographic racial reality, which is exacerbated in the independent school system, points to the need for decision makers and school leaders to not just hire Teachers of Color, but to also develop systems, supports, and cultures that retain Teachers of Color, as their rate of turnover is higher than their white counterparts (Carver-Thomas, 2018). Before addressing the multifaceted problem of teacher turnover and the main factors impacting

retention, especially for Teachers of Color, the positive impact of diversity and Teachers of Color on learning communities will be further addressed in the next section.

Positive Impact of Diversity and Teachers of Color

The Supreme Court grounded its landmark *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) decision on the premise that segregated schools are inherently unequal, implying intrinsic value in the creation of integrated and diverse schools. Despite *Brown*, many school districts are resegregated today. In the current K-12 policy-making climate described as "neo-Plessyism" by Wells, Fox, and Cordova (2016), the focus on standardized tests, closing the achievement gap, and educating students in today's [re]segregated schools hinders the potential educational benefits of students learning from each other in more diverse schools.

As noted in Chapter One, the benefits of learning in diverse environments are highlighted in many reports coming from higher education (Chang, 2001, 2002; Gurin, 1999). In the *Fisher II* case decided in 2016, many amicus briefs argued that exposure to diversity enhanced critical thinking and problem-solving ability, and federal courts have acknowledged the educational benefits of diverse learning spaces as a compelling governmental interest (Wells et al., 2016). Furthermore, research on implicit bias shows that students who have more interracial contact during schooling years are less likely to harbor implicit biases later in life than those students who learn in a less diverse environment (Carver-Thomas, 2018).

The impact of diversity and building interracial learning spaces and opportunities is enhanced by a diverse body of educators. Darling-Hammond (1999) notes the developing body of research that supports how Teachers of Color benefit all students, and oftentimes Students of Color, through improved academic performance. Carver-Thomas (2018, p. 5) and Carver-

Thomas & Darling-Hammond (2017, p. 20) summarize numerous positive impacts, as Teachers of Color:

- serve as resources and role models for Students of Color in hard-to-staff schools,

- can have significant long-term academic benefits for all students, especially Students of Color,

- bring distinctive experiences and knowledge to white students,

- function as role models to the student body as a whole,

- benefit each other as they may be isolated in predominantly white schools, and

- through supporting each other or receiving support from leaders, will stay in the teaching profession, thereby stabilizing schools and assisting student performance.

In particular, Black teachers have been associated with lower dropout rates, improved student achievement, increased interest in college, and positive perceptions from students (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017). Villegas and Irvine (2010) found that well-trained Teachers of Color better advance academic outcomes of Students of Color than their white colleagues, and Teachers of Color also produce positive results by having high expectations of all students, using culturally relevant teaching, developing trusting and caring relationships, confronting issues of racism through teaching, and serving as advocates and cultural brokers.

Not only do Teachers of Color often enjoy more favorable perceptions than their white colleagues, but they also impact students by raising their self-esteem or altering negative stereotypes of many students. Cherng and Halpin (2016) found that students have more favorable perceptions of Black and Latino teachers compared to white teachers on seven measures, ranging from their ability to challenge students to achieve high standards to building supportive relationships with children in order to stimulate students' interest in course material. Latino

teachers are more positively perceived by students across all seven outcome measures; meanwhile students perceive Black teachers - more than their white peers – as holding students to high academic standards and supporting their efforts, helping them organize content, and clearly explaining ideas and concepts and while providing useful feedback; for the other four outcomes, there are no differences in student perceptions between Black and white teachers (Cherng & Halpin, 2016). Researchers found "that, on average, all student groups have more positive ratings of minority teachers, including white students and Asian American students, suggest[ing] that Teachers of Color can translate their experiences and identities to form rapports with students that do not share the same race or ethnicity" (Cherng & Halpin, 2016, p. 416). Villegas and Irvine (2010) argue that it is important for students of all backgrounds to see Adults of Color in professional jobs that hold an element of societal power, such as teaching. Teachers of Color can boost the self-worth and motivation of Students of Color, as well as decrease their sense of alienation in predominantly white spaces. Being educated by Teachers of Color can dispel any ideas of racial inferiority that white students may have internalized due to socialization. Research has shown that students' perceptions of teachers are associated with motivation and achievement and that having a more diverse teaching force can help close longstanding racial achievement gaps. Stakeholders should continue to strengthen efforts to recruit and retain Teachers of Color (Guarino et al., 2006; Ingersoll & May, 2011), by providing strong administrative support for Teachers of Color (Cherng & Halpin, 2016). All of these studies referenced above either refer to public school settings or lump together all types of schools, demonstrating yet again that the literature does not shine an adequate light on the state of diversity efforts in independent schools.

State of Diversity Practice at Independent Schools

Since 2009, NAIS has surveyed diversity practitioners each year about the state of diversity practice at their schools. While the focus of the surveys is not directly related to the main topic of this study, the results shed light on how independent schools approach issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion on campus. The respondents are diversity practitioners on campus, so their responses illuminate school climate challenges that may impact the belonging and support of Teachers of Color and could inform leadership practices to support this group of teachers. Below, key findings from the 2014 and 2019 reports are synthesized in Table 1 and the subsequent description.

Table 1
Selections from Surveys of Independent School Diversity Practitioners (2014 and 2019)

Diversity practitioners who…	2014 Survey (n = 185)[a]	2019 Survey (n = 246)[b]
	%	%
...support the hiring process at their school.	65	71
...see diversity clearly visible in hiring decisions.	26	38
...assist faculty orientation on diversity topics.	51	53
...are extremely to very satisfied with their work.	62	59
...say faculty affinity groups are extremely to very active on campus.	8	15
...feel their school does a good job creating a caring community environment.	69	54
...feel their school does a good job treating everyone with respect.	57	50

[a] Out of 504 total diversity practitioners. Response rate was 37% in 2014.

[b] Out of 1245 total diversity practitioners. Response rate was 20% in 2019.

The surveys present a few encouraging findings, such as a steady increase in the percentage of diversity practitioners participating in the hiring process and faculty orientation, as well as the increased activity of faculty affinity groups. Yet there are a few findings to note with caution and concern. First, while the percentage of practitioners who see diversity impacting hiring decisions is up to 38%, that number is still relatively small, suggesting a need for those with power to reevaluate their hiring processes. Also, the percentage of practitioners who are at least very satisfied with their work is down (62% in 2014 to 59% in 2019), as well as the percentages for practitioners who feel their school is doing a good job creating a caring environment (69% in 2014 to 54% in 2019) and treating everyone with respect (57% in 2014 to 50% in 2019).

The 2019 survey expanded its range of questions to include an exploration of school climate and culture. On a scale of 0-10, where 0 means poor and 10 means excellent, 68% rated their school culture a 5 or below when it comes to engaging in issues related to white identity and privilege. Over two-thirds of schools received a low rating in regard to school culture. Just over one-third of diversity practitioners felt very supported by their school leaders, and only one in seven felt support from faculty. Also, the sizable increase in the number of diversity practitioners in independent schools from 2014 (504) to 2019 (1245) is notable. Positions for an individual to work on issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) have become commonplace at independent schools, yet in my opinion, and in the responses from these surveys, the position is reactively created because of demographics or the "everyone is doing it" rationale. This creates a position without enough definition and power or support from a coherent and integrated school vision. These findings are concerning as they relate to retention of Teachers of Color, for as will be explored in the sections below, working in safe and supportive conditions where a

sense of belonging is nurtured and a commitment to diversity is evidenced, especially for Teachers of Color, is a key retention factor. Next, this review will explore the scope of teacher turnover, the factors contributing to teacher attrition, and the opportunities to increase teacher retention, especially for Teachers of Color.

Teacher Turnover

Overview of the Problem

In 2017, there were 3.2 million full-time public school teachers and half a million private school teachers in the country (NCES, 2017-18). While reported turnover rates vary depending on the study, available data, and sector (public or private), the significant percentages indicate a persistent problem. One report estimated national teacher turnover between 13-15% each year, with private school teachers almost twice as likely to leave the profession as public school teachers (D'Ercole, 2019), while another report estimated the turnover rate to be just over eight percent (Podolsky et al., 2016). According to the various national estimates, between 19% and 41% of teachers leave the profession within their first five years, clearly pointing to the need to develop support for the longevity of teachers (D'Ercole, 2019; Podolsky et al., 2016). Two older reviews of data noted that up to 50% of new Teachers of Color leave within five years (Achinstein et al., 2010; Darling-Hammond, 1997). Achinstein et al. (2010) also cited a national study revealing that Teachers of Color suffered greater job dissatisfaction and higher turnover than did white teachers. Teachers of Color (19%) experience turnover at a higher rate than white teachers (15%); when the rates are disaggregated, the turnover rate for Black teachers was 22%, and for non-Black teachers it was 15% in 2012-13 (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017). This is concerning from an equity perspective and because a range of studies have shown that Black teachers are associated with lower dropout rates, improved student achievement, increased

interest in college, and positive perceptions from students (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017). Thus, the retention of Teachers of Color, especially new teachers, is critical to increasing their representation in the teacher workforce.

Further exacerbating this problem is the decline of enrollment in teacher education programs from 719,081 prospective teachers in 2008-9 to 464,250 in 2013-14 (Podolsky et al., 2016). Two studies for the Learning Policy Institute add much needed detail to the problem of teachers leaving. Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond (2017) and Podolsky et al. (2016) found that between 53% to 67% of teachers leave for reasons other than retirement, including dissatisfaction with testing and accountability pressures, lack of administrative support, lack of opportunities for advancement, and dissatisfaction with working conditions. Podolsky et al. (2016) noted that up to 21% of leavers were extremely to very dissatisfied with their school's administration, and the teacher exodus is also the result of better career opportunities in other fields, inadequate preparation coupled with lack of mentorship, dissatisfaction with compensation, and personal reasons.

One of the issues in the literature is the dated and limited research dedicated to consistently looking at private school teacher turnover. As mentioned above, teacher turnover rates tend to be slightly higher in private schools than in public schools. In 2000–01, 21% of private school teachers were "movers" or "leavers" since the previous school year, compared with 15% of public school teachers (NCES, 2005). Private school teachers who were reported to have left their schools (both movers and leavers) were more likely than stayers to report relatively low levels of administrative support, satisfaction with salary, student discipline, control over classroom policies, and input in school policies. Outside of (dis)satisfaction with salary at

40%, the second most reported factor was low administrative support, as reported by 28.2% of movers and leavers (NCES, 2005).

In a more current review of NCES data, Schmitz (2017) finds that teacher leaver rates are almost twice as high at private schools than at public schools. Using data from multiple *School and Staffing Surveys (SASS)* from the late 1980s to the 2008-09 school year, researchers discovered that the leaver rate for private school teachers rose from 12.7% in 1987 to 15.9% in 2008, while the rate for public school teachers rose from 5.6% to 8% during that same period. The most striking number in this report is that over fifty percent of teachers who began in 2008 left the profession within three years, a rate much higher than for public school teachers. Similar to their public counterparts, private schools have seen dramatic increases in turnover among early-career teachers. When analyzing leaver rates for groups of teachers based on experience, private school teachers leave at a higher rate than their public school peers for every group except those with 20 or more years of experience (Schmitz, 2017). When disaggregating this data by race and ethnicity of teachers, the leaver rate for Black teachers in 2000-01 was 9.1%, and in 2008-09 it was 24.2%; for Hispanic teachers, the rate jumped from 10.4% to 23.7% (NCES, 2008-09). The 2008-09 numbers from NCES must be considered with caution, for the standard error is quite high; nevertheless, the overall numbers point to a higher leaver rate for all private school teachers regardless of race and potentially point to even higher and concerning rates for Black and Hispanic teachers.

The impact of teacher turnover cannot be ignored for it creates many significant domino effects for the students and schools directly involved. Research is clear that turnover negatively impacts the achievement of all students because school stability is disrupted, as are collegial relationships, collaboration, and the accumulation of institutional knowledge. In addition,

replacing teachers is expensive, as it is estimated that it costs up to $20,000 or more for each teacher who leaves an urban district (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017). Podolsky et al. (2016) found that replacement teacher costs ranged from $4,366 in small rural districts to nearly $18,000 in large urban districts in 2007, amounting to $7.3 billion that year. The cost of teacher attrition is also experienced in non-monetary ways, as the loss of a teacher interrupts the educational processes of a school. Attrition not only diminishes instructional continuity, thereby negatively impacting student learning, but when a teacher leaves it may also adversely impact the maintenance of a positive school culture with shared norms, the development of collegiality and trust with the faculty, the diffusion of institutional knowledge, and the sense of collective responsibility to develop a quality learning environment (Kelchtermans, 2017; Ronfeldt et al., 2013). In a monumental study on the effects of teacher turnover on student achievement on 850,000 New York City fourth and fifth graders over the course of eight years, Ronfeldt, Loeb and Wyckoff (2013) found that students in grade levels with higher turnover scored lower on English and math assessments, and the effects are particularly strong in schools with more low performing and Black students. More specifically, the results indicate that within the same school and within the same year, students in grade levels that experience 100% turnover have lower test scores by 7.4% to 9.6% of a standard deviation in math and by 6.0% to 8.3% of a standard deviation in ELA, as compared to grade levels with no turnover at all. While it is common to view teacher turnover from a compositional standpoint that focuses on teacher quality, Ronfeldt et al. (2013) found turnover negatively affected the achievement not just for students directly impacted but also for students of stayers, indicating the disruptive nature of teacher turnover regardless of the quality of replacement teachers.

Factors Causing Teacher Turnover

Teacher turnover or attrition is influenced by numerous personal and professional factors, ranging from the broad category of teachers' work conditions to the more granular concerns of ability to provide input in school-wide decisions (Podolsky et al, 2016). For the sake of my literature review and the frame with which I centered my methodology, I focused on the factors of administrative support, opportunities for professional collaboration, the importance of social recognition and a sense of belonging, and job satisfaction, as these factors have been shown to affect all teachers yet their impacts can be qualitatively experienced in different ways by white teachers and Teachers of Color. This section begins with an overview of the general impact of these factors on retention decisions, and it will end with a discussion of specific challenges facing Teachers of Color, particularly those working in independent schools as they experience higher levels of discrimination than their white peers.

School Leadership and Administrative Support

Administrative support is often cited by teachers as an important reason dictating their decision to leave or stay in the profession, often outweighing even salary considerations (Achinstein 2010; Ingersoll & May, 2011; Podolsky et al., 2016). Podolsky et al. (2016) reviewed two studies highlighting this factor. In a study of principal support and teacher retention in 17 schools in a western state, teachers are more likely to remain in their school when they experience emotional, environmental, and instructional support; in a study of 45 schools in a southeastern state, researchers found schools with the lowest attrition rates tended to have school leaders that provided support through instructional resources, teaching materials and professional learning opportunities. Teachers are more likely to remain in their schools when leaders effectively communicate with them, set explicit and reasonable expectations, and provide

positive reinforcement (Podolsky et al, 2016). Another study connected administrative support and teacher influence to retention. Achinstein (2010) found that teacher turnover increased with a lack of administrative support and a lack of teacher influence in the school decision-making process.

Teacher retention is an issue for schools across the world. In a study of early career attrition data for male teachers in Australia, researchers revealed that new mandated leadership and management practices were the major contributor to an early exit (Gallant & Riley, 2017). While the practices may have yielded benefits in other areas of school management, they did not yield a positive impact on teachers, as they cited a lack of support from leaders, such as the lack of mentoring opportunities and unclear or uncommunicated expectations about the definition of good teaching. One respondent said, "Sometimes leadership loses sight of how hard some people are actually working. There are a lot of things the leadership are trying to implement…but what does that actually look like on the ground to teachers who are already overworked" (p. 903). Other teachers reported that a lack of autonomy in the classroom led to a teacher-administrator dynamic grounded in a lack of professional trust.

Opportunities for Professional Collaboration

Another important aspect of working conditions for teachers is their connectedness to a team working towards a common shared purpose and opportunities for collaboration with colleagues. Schools that create productive working conditions for teachers to collaborate across departments and grade levels not only increased teacher retention, but they also provide consistency in instruction that leads to increased student performance; strong professional environments also can have a positive effect on teacher attitudes and their desire to remain in the profession (Podolsky et al., 2016). In a study on developing the social capital of teachers,

Achinstein (2010) found that schools that provide teachers with opportunities to build social capital through networking, collaborating, and participating in professional learning communities have higher retention rates. In addition, schools that provided mentoring and induction programs that foster collegial relationships tended to have lower rates of turnover among beginning teachers (Guarino et al., 2006).

Sense of Belonging and Social Recognition

A positive by-product of working conditions that foster professional collaboration is the development of a sense of belonging and the opportunity for teachers to be recognized for their contributions. A crucial condition for teachers to stay in teaching is a sense of belonging based on a shared view of educational goals and norms in the school. Newberry and Allsop (2017, as cited in Kelchtermans, 2017) show how the lack of a sense of belonging may be caused by physical distance or by feeling isolated both emotionally and in terms of normative beliefs; without this sense of belonging or the belief that one can contribute their expertise to their school, retention is less likely (Kelchtermans, 2017).

Social recognition from colleagues and supervisors is another essential working condition for teachers, as it develops a sense of legitimacy and self-worth. Kelchtermans (2017) discusses the structural vulnerability faced by teachers, who have little control over working conditions that affect their practice; in this environment, being recognized and acknowledged is important for teachers' motivation, satisfaction, and overall well-being. Another form of social recognition that positively impacts teacher retention is horizontal promotion, which could take the form of developing curriculum and providing training for colleagues. Public appreciation of one's expertise can feel like a promotion for many teachers (Kelchtermans, 2017).

Job Satisfaction

A major factor related to job retention is the satisfaction teachers experience at work. In a study of 716 Catholic school teachers in three separate cities (Atlanta, Biloxi, and Cheyenne) exploring job satisfaction, researchers found that teachers were much more likely to report higher job satisfaction if their values aligned with those of the institution (Convey, 2014). In that study, one significant predictor of teachers' internal (self-efficacy) and external (relationships within the school) satisfaction with their school was their alignment with the school's academic philosophy and environment. Convey (2014) concluded, "While many Catholic school teachers are motivated by religious reasons, teachers will not be happy in a school nor remain there long if they are not satisfied with their teaching and classroom interactions, the school's academic philosophy, and the school's environment" (p. 21).

In another study comparing job satisfaction experienced by public and independent school teachers, D'Ercole (2019) found that independent school teachers are generally more satisfied with their jobs than teachers. The factors that had the highest impact on the job satisfaction of independent school teachers included personal accountability and autonomy, opportunities for creativity and career advancement, supportive colleagues, and regular supervision. These teachers also experience a lot of parental pressure, a heavy load of daily work tasks, and frustration with compensation; despite these negative issues, independent school teachers place higher value on the positives (D'Ercole, 2019).

A London-based study by Towers and Maguire (2017) asked if mid-career teachers experience an "identity crisis" that prompts turnover, and they found that the reasons for leaving are not clear cut, as the decision is contingent upon a variety of personal, professional, and situational factors related to one's identity as a teacher. Government statistics show that 30% of

teachers who began teaching in 2010 left within five years; the leaving rates of new teachers in London's challenging schools is even higher. The reality of new teacher "leavers" has been explored by researchers in many countries, but Towers and Maguire (2017) discovered a dearth of research on experienced teachers. Their research confirmed that many teachers' initial decision to stay is based on the relationships built with children and colleagues, but once they reached their mid-career, the increasing workload and pressure from school leaders to reach learning targets started to decrease job satisfaction. One respondent shared, "You were constantly judged [...] I don't know of any other profession that is so scrutinized as teaching. You're being judged on so many levels. I mean basically, you're held accountable for every single child" (p. 953). These accountability measures diminished teachers' sense of satisfaction, motivation, and efficacy. While accountability is important, it appears that the teachers in this study were asked to achieve often unrealistic results without the necessary leadership support to allow teachers to flourish and develop positive teacher identities. This study highlighted the need to *sustain*, not just to retain, experienced long-serving teachers.

Finally, a study on the levels of job satisfaction - both organizational satisfaction and satisfaction with the work - of public and private school teachers in Korea discovered that private school teachers experience more satisfaction due to fewer regulations or competing goals of accountability and efficiency (Chun et al., 2019). The researchers specifically found that

> private school teachers' organizational satisfaction was found to have a greater positive impact on students' academic performance than public school teachers' in the way that if they are happier with their school then they are likely to produce higher students' test scores than public school teachers (p. 714).

The authors surmise the increased satisfaction of private school teachers might be due to greater teacher autonomy. They also found that there was no significant difference between public and private school teachers relating to satisfaction with the work itself, allowing them to conclude

that work environments are as equally important to teachers as the work itself (Chun et al., 2019). The findings in the sections above have critical implications for school leaders as they seek to establish supportive and collaborative work environments that promote belonging. While the findings explored above apply to teachers of all racial backgrounds, the literature also indicates particular challenges faced by Teachers of Color.

Challenges Facing Teachers of Color

The factors described above are common for all teachers regardless of race and ethnicity, yet there are additional factors that burden Teachers of Color at all levels and in all types of schools. At the university level, Smith (2004) shows that African American faculty not only experience resistance in various forms from white students, but the faculty also deal with white administrators who downplay the physiological and psychological impacts associated with race-based stress. While Smith's (2004) study highlighted barriers to the sense of belonging and safety for Teachers of Color in higher education settings, only a few studies have explored the same topic for Teachers of Color in K-12 schools, and the research on Teachers of Color in independent schools is sparse and scattered over the last 20 years. Coleman and Stevenson's (2013) study found that an important protective factor for Faculty of Color in independent schools is the presence of white teachers or leaders who showed a "high" level of racial literacy, which primarily involved an openness to racial questioning and an ability to address racial conflict. Faculty beliefs in their school's commitment to diversity mission and action were positively correlated to positive school belonging, and teachers who perceived schools to support racial questioning were more likely to report positive school belonging; these teachers also strongly believed the school was not fearful of racial conflict and frequently resolved racial conflicts (Coleman & Stevenson, 2013).

Teachers of Color report several factors that impact their decision to stay or leave a school. Carver-Thomas (2018) noted Teachers of Color must cope with facing racial discrimination and stereotyping in their schools; in particular, Black educators reported how their teaching expertise is minimized and they are assumed to be disciplinarians or asked to take on additional roles to support Black students without compensation. In addition, Coleman and Stevenson's (2013) found that Teachers of Color in independent schools who experienced more racial discrimination were lower in perceiving their school to be committed to diversity mission and action, support racial questioning, and face racial conflict. Darling-Hammond and Carver-Thomas (2017) found that the factor that most predicted teacher turnover was perceived lack of administrative support, which considers how teachers rate an administrator's ability to encourage and acknowledge staff, communicate a clear vision, and generally run a school well. When Darling-Hammond and Carver-Thomas (2017) controlled for other factors, teachers who strongly disagree that their administration is supportive were twice as likely to leave their school or teaching than teachers who strongly agree their administration is supportive. When considering this finding alongside the fact that 93% of independent school heads are white and may not be trained in culturally responsive school leadership, feeling a sense of belonging may be elusive for Teachers of Color in independent schools.

In a thorough examination of trends of data from six cycles of the National Center for Education Statistics' (NCES) nationally representative Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS) and its supplement, the Teacher Follow-up Survey (TFS), Ingersoll and May (2011) made several interesting findings. First, in the two decades from the late 1980s to 2009, the annual rate of overall teacher turnover (public and private) increased, and Teachers of Color tended to have higher rates of turnover than white teachers, as their turnover rate increased by 28% during this

time period. Second, the researchers noted that 58% of white teachers reported dissatisfaction with some aspect of their school, and this contributed to their decision to leave or move; the dissatisfaction rate for Teachers of Color was slightly higher at 64%. Next, they discovered that organizational conditions in schools were strongly related to departures for Teachers of Color. The organizational conditions most strongly related to turnover for Teachers of Color were the level of collective faculty decision-making influence and the degree of individual classroom autonomy held by teachers; these factors were more significant than salary, professional development, or classroom resources. Ingersoll and May (2011) also noted that schools where teachers are empowered to be autonomous when it comes to classroom issues and included in school-wide decisions had lower levels of turnover. Finally, this study found that schools providing better principal leadership and administrative support (as reported by teachers) saw lower turnover rates for both Teachers of Color and white teachers. Developing these positive organizational conditions is strongly predictive of retention for Teachers of Color, as their annual turnover rates are only 12% in the schools with the best organizational conditions versus close to 21% in schools with the worst organizational conditions.

Teachers of Color in Independent Schools

As mentioned above, there is a paucity of literature on the experiences of Teachers of Color in independent schools. Amidst a few studies referenced in this literature review, there are two extended pieces of work on Teachers of Color in independent schools.

Colors of Excellence

Although published in 2003, Kane and Orsini's book on hiring and retaining Teachers of Color in independent schools still contains many relevant ideas and findings for my study, yet the world of independent schools and the demographics of the country have steadily altered

during this period. Their qualitative study is relevant as it includes a context for understanding the central problem of my research, findings that can be compared to more recent studies and highlights both best practices and challenges. The grounding of the book identifies several aspects of the positive impact of Teachers of Color, including their ability to serve as role models for all students; to prepare students to live and work in a diverse society; to shape of school culture, policy, and pedagogy; and to help white teachers reflect upon their attitudes towards Students of Color. Using data from a 1997 national survey of Teachers of Color in independent schools, Kane and Orsini learned that 86% of the 691 respondents planned to stay in teaching, but perhaps move schools because they: wanted to work in a school with more teachers and Students of Color (20% of respondents), desired opportunities for job advancement (19%), felt isolated (9%), and hoped to work with a more supportive administration (8%). More specifically, 59% of respondents felt they had more demands placed on them than white teachers to fulfill the following spoken or often unspoken expectations: to support all Students of Color and Parents, to be perfect to negate stereotypes, to be a spokesperson for their race, and/or to coordinate diversity work. This finding is significant, corroborated by Carver-Thomas' (2018) more recent research, and therefore should be a wakeup call to independent school leaders about how the extra demands placed on Teachers of Color, in addition to their experience of racial microaggressions, makes their work lives unsustainable.

Kane and Orsini (2003) also explored the best retention and recruitment practices for Teachers of Color in 11 independent schools in New York City. The study conducted 43 interviews with heads of school, diversity directors, and at least two Teachers of Color at each of the schools, focusing specifically on identifying current best practices and soliciting ideas for improved practices related to retention. Only three of the 11 schools dedicate a portion of teacher

orientation to the needs of Teachers of Color, and only four schools have mentorship programs. The responses of the heads of school indicated color blindness, as summarized in an interviewee's statement: "We are focused on new teachers in general, so it's not necessary to meet needs of Teachers of Color separately" (p. 83). According to diversity directors, the mentor systems tend to lose steam by winter. They claimed that the most useful practices are to develop forums to discuss diversity at school, to make sure each Teacher of Color has a point person to talk to at school, to have open discussions about school culture, and to develop a diversity committee and faculty affinity groups. Five out of 11 diversity coordinators note the importance of developing networks outside of school and taking advantage of professional development opportunities. Of the 21 interviewed Teachers of Color, 14 cited the importance of institutional support in the form of sending teachers to conferences or workshops and providing financial support for graduate school. Ten teachers said mentoring programs were important, and four commented about feeling valued for the talents and skills they bring to their schools. While all three groups agreed outside professional networks are important, some Interviewees of Color said they needed a clear indication about how the school prioritized this support factor.

There were several other findings about retention gleaned from this study. Seven out of 11 heads of school said retention issues are the same for all teachers, again highlighting a color-blind mentality that may hinder school leaders from being open to growth in this area. Five out of 11 diversity directors emphasized that the head of school needs to be the driving force behind hiring and supporting Teachers of Color, or it will not be an institutional priority. Twelve out of 21 Teachers of Color responded they were held to different standards, as they felt scrutinized and observed more often than their white colleagues. Many of the Teachers of Color felt burdened by the time-consuming part of their non-compensated work to offer support to and advice about

Students of Color. Lastly, teachers wanted leaders to hire more Teachers of Color to develop a critical mass, be honest and direct in dialogue around racial issues, and to provide anti-bias training to all faculty. Kane and Orsini (2003) called attention to the following: "The degree to which teachers felt supported in their respective schools correlated directly with the degree to which institutional leaders were committed to discussing issues of diversity" (95).

Race at Predominantly White Independent Schools

In her most current look at how independent schools are addressing issues of diversity and equity, French (2018) makes several pertinent observations about the retention of Teachers of Color. She states that independent schools have made progress in attracting, enrolling, and retaining a diverse group of students, but their focus on attracting and contracting Teachers of Color does not include clear policies to promote retention of them. In particular, she notes that while administrators she interviewed talked about the need for a "critical mass" of Teachers of Color, they did not engage in a substantive discussion on what their schools could do to increase retention. Teachers of Color have been supported by the development of affinity groups and mentorship programs and by going to local and national conferences for Teachers of Color, but her research showed that many schools do not proactively plan for these supports.

French (2018) also discusses how the individual characteristics that help Teachers of Color to persevere can also be burdensome in the long run. Teachers of Color are often required to display a high level of navigational capital and emotional intelligence adapting to the white, middle-to-upper class norms and expectations of schools as well as code switching to support their personal and professional needs. Yet, as the author heeds, Teachers of Color are often implicitly questioned about their "fit" at their school and reported being more closely monitored and questioned by parents. Finally, French (2018) notes, as did Kane and Orsini (2003), that

heads of school and school boards need to be drivers behind independent schools' commitment to supporting Teachers of Color. Without culturally responsive, color-aware, and proactive school leaders, Teachers of Color will continue to face independent school cultures that are hospitable at best and toxic at worst.

The problems created by teacher turnover indicate an incredible loss of valuable professional potential of teachers and begs this question: How do schools create working conditions that best ensure commitment to and support the growth of teachers, especially Teachers of Color, so they will stay and stay and enjoy a long career? The extant literature points to several common factors that promote teacher retention, including the presence of supportive school leaders, the opportunity to collaborate with colleagues, and the development of a sense of belonging. While these factors are important to Teachers of Color, they are faced with a slew of other challenges: experiencing discrimination and microaggressions, dealing with color-blind administrators with low commitment to diversity and inclusion, taking on extra "diversity" jobs without compensation, and feeling isolated due to a lack of critical mass of People of Color on their campus. There are myriad factors that impact teacher retention that will not be addressed in this study. Context also further complicates the teacher turnover problem, as each school is a living organism, impacted by their own interpersonal dynamics, resource challenges, micro-politics, and performance-based pressures. Considering the factors identified above, this study seeks to explore the intersection, or disconnection, between the support Teachers of Color need from their schools and school leaders and what actual support is provided.

Conceptual and Theoretical Framework

The conceptual framework guiding this study is grounded in two interrelated areas: (1) critical race theory and a few related principles, and (2) theories on belonging and motivation.

Critical Race Theory and Complementary Theories

The study was guided by Critical Race Theory (CRT), Intersectionality, and Critical

Whiteness Studies (CWS). As noted by scholars (Delgado & Stefanic, 2017; Harris, 2015;

Lopez, 2003), a primary tenet of CRT is the ordinariness of racism, meaning it is difficult to

address, especially if one analyzes and questions systems and institutions with a colorblind lens.

In independent schools, the support and promotion of belonging of Faculty of Color needs to be

seen through this tenet. Another important tenet of CRT is "interest convergence," which is the

understanding that subordinate groups will only have their differences recognized and embraced

and their interests met when the dominant group sees how their own interests can be met as well

(Delgado & Stefanic, 2017). When white school leaders better understand and embrace the

overwhelming benefits and demographic imperative of hiring and retaining a diverse faculty,

they will work to create a supportive professional environment that values the differences and

uniqueness of their entire faculty.

Critical Whiteness Studies

Since the school leaders who will participate in my study are predominantly white,

approaching my study with a critical whiteness framework is essential. Giroux (1997) asserted

that

> analyzing whiteness opens a theoretical space for teachers and students to articulate how
> their own racial identities have been shaped within a broader racist culture and what
> responsibilities they might assume for living in a present in which whites are accorded
> privileges and opportunities (though in complex and different ways) largely at the
> expense of other racial groups (p. 314).

One development in CRT is the analysis of the other side of the coin of oppression, namely white

privilege, and looking at privilege as the focal point of study (Harris 2015). In this approach, the

beneficiaries of racial hierarchies and power structures are asked to question what it means to be

white, how the category of whiteness is malleable for some groups, and what unmerited

privileges come with membership (Delgado & Stefanic, 2017). An examination of individual

white racial identity and that of the school itself is relevant to this study.

Racial Identity and White Racial Identity Development

Due to the demographics of independent schools, an examination of how the

development of white racial identity is linked to cultural, individual, and institutional racism

(Helms, 1990) and how it impacts one's leadership practice is an integral aspect of this study. In

general, the term racial identity "refers to a sense of group or collective identity based on one's

perception that he or she shares a common racial heritage with a particular racial group," and

racial group identification can have an impact on the development of one's beliefs (Helms, 1990,

p. 3-4). According to Helms (1990), in order to develop a healthy white identity, one must

abandon racism in phase one and develop a non-racist identity in phase two. Phase one is marked

by three stages of development: *contact, disintegration,* and *reintegration.* Individuals in the

contact stage lack an understanding of racism (or consider it unimportant), have minimal

experiences with People of Color, and see the world through a colorblind lens. A *disintegrated*

person becomes increasingly aware of their whiteness, but they experience dissonance as they

claim to be non-racist but still may hold racist beliefs or fail to see systemic oppression. The

reintegration stage is marked by a person's initial attempt to resolve their dissonance through

retreat into familiar white racial superiority narratives. Phase two is when one begins to develop

their non-racist identity, beginning with *pseudo-independence*. In this stage, a person begins to

reach out to People of Color to understand difference, yet the growth is more of an intellectual

exercise as opposed to experiential or affective, indicating the person's use of white privilege as

a distancing mechanism. The *immersion/emersion* stage is marked by an individual's grappling

with themself as a racial being, understanding the benefits of white privilege, and redefining whiteness by actively confronting racism. In the final stage, *autonomy*, an individual is less marked by guilt, accepts their role in perpetuating racism, and actively seeks ways to dismantle their white entitlement status. There is a connection between a school leader's racial identity development and their ability to understand the important of the experiences of Teachers of Color in predominantly white spaces. Developing this connection may impact a leader's level of racial literacy - and their ability to promote the racial sense of belonging of Educators of Color.

Racial Literacy

The concept of racial literacy emerged in the literature with definitions from Guinier (2006) and Twine (2004), and it has continued to evolve with more current research and conceptualization (Stevenson, 2014). Guinier's (2006) definition tended towards macro considerations, as she described racial literacy as "the capacity to decipher the durable racial grammar that structures racialized hierarchies and frames the narrative of our republic," (pg. 6) that requires us to view race as "an instrument of social, geographic, and economic control of both whites and blacks" (2006, p. 19). In her ethnographic study of white mothers of biracial children, Twine (2004) more narrowly used the term *racial literacy* to define the practices of these mothers to teach racial awareness and positive Black identity to their children. Twine (2004, , p. 18, as cited in Grayson, 2019) expanded Guinier's framework, identifying the following six criteria of racial literacy:

1. recognition of racism as a contemporary rather than historical problem,
2. consideration of the ways in which race and racism are influenced by other factors such as class, gender, and sexuality,
3. understanding of the cultural value of whiteness,

4. belief in the constructedness and socialization of racial identity,

5. development of language practices through which to discuss race and racism, and

6. ability to decode race and racialism.

In Stevenson's (2013, 2014) research on the experiences of students and Teachers of Color in independent schools, he ascribes to Twine's (2004) criteria and articulates five specific goals of racial literacy, including "the strategic deconstructions of racial information and knowledge, the building of healthy cross- and same-racial relationships, the flexible reconstruction of racial identity, the willful choosing of racial styles and self-expression, and the assertive countering of racial stereotypes" (Stevenson, 2014, p. 17). Twine's (2004) criteria and Stevenson's (2013, 2014) goals served as important parts of my study's conceptual framework, as I framed my survey and interview instruments to focus on how the belonging, support and job satisfaction of Teachers of Color are impacted by the racial literacy and awareness of their school leaders. While race is a focal point of the study, the racial literacy framework requires an analytical lens that also considers intersecting identities in target populations.

Intersectionality

Originally coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw in 1989 regarding how Black women were often rendered invisible by feminist and racial discourses, intersectionality is the notion that individuals have potentially conflicting and overlapping identities, such as race, gender, class, national origin, sexual orientation, and immigration status, that differentially operate depending on the setting (Delgado & Stefanic, 2017). For example, Levine-Rasky (2015) primarily looks at the intersections between whiteness, Jewishness, and class, noting the tensions present as Jews experience the economic benefits of white privilege, yet due to historical violence and anti-Semitism, lack absolute claims to and identification with whiteness. She also considers these

intersections of identity as they relate to school relationships, not necessarily in terms of marginalization, but in terms of the exercise of power. The intersections of race, class, ethnicity, gender, and immigration status were an important aspect of my study, which analyzed how marginalization on multiple levels might impact one's experience of support and belonging.

Theories on Motivation and Belonging

Hierarchy of Needs

Abraham Maslow introduced the concept of a hierarchy of needs in 1943, believing that people have an innate desire to be self-actualized, but must first fulfill four groups of needs (physiological, safety, love/belonging, and esteem). The desire to fulfill these needs motivates the actions of individuals (Cherry, 2019). The desire for individuals to fulfill *social needs*, including developing a sense of belonging and acceptance, and *esteem needs*, including gaining respect from and the appreciation of others, is another important piece of this study's conceptual framework.

Two-Factor Theory of Motivation

Frederick Herzberg's work expanded upon Maslow's theory, providing a more granular and empirically grounded view on satisfaction at work. In 1959, Herzberg proposed the two-factor theory of motivation. The premise is that there are job factors that result in satisfaction and others that result in dissatisfaction. *Motivational factors* are intrinsically rewarding and move employees towards superior performance. These factors, or satisfiers, include being recognized by managers, experiencing a sense of achievement, being given growth and promotional opportunities, taking responsibility for their work, and deriving meaning from their work. *Hygiene factors* are extrinsically valuable and pacify employees in the short-term. These maintenance factors, or dissatisfiers, include a reasonable and competitive pay structure, fair and

clear company policies, fringe benefits, safe and clean working conditions, appropriate and supportive interpersonal relations, and job security. While the theory does not consider situational factors, may include bias, and assumes a correlation between satisfaction and productivity, it is still widely accepted and instructive for managers to make sure work is rewarding enough for employees to work harder and better (Juneja, 2020). If motivational factors are not nurtured and prioritized, employees will merely feel "not dissatisfied" with work conditions, as opposed to being satisfied with and motivated by a deeper connection to others and their work. It is incumbent upon employers - and school leaders in my study - to understand the importance of cultivating employees' sense of belonging.

The Need to Belong

There are a few conceptualizations of belonging that inform my study. Hagerty et al (1992) define sense of belonging as "the experience of personal involvement in a system or environment so that persons feel themselves to be an integral part of that system of environment" (p. 173). They also identify two defining attributes: the experience of feeling valued, needed, accepted, and the perception that the individual's characteristics "fit" with the environment. Baumeister and Leary (1995) acknowledge that the need to belong is not new, but the theory had not been empirically tested until their research used a large body of evidence to empirically confirm the idea. Their *belongingness hypothesis* posits that humans have a pervasive drive to form and maintain at least a few lasting, positive, and significant interpersonal relationships based on two criteria: (1) frequent and affectively pleasant interactions with a few others, and (2) interactions taking place in a stable and lasting context of mutual concern (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). They also found that the need to belong impacts emotion and thought patterns, as forming strong social attachments produces positive emotions and people dedicate more favorable

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thinking processes to people with whom they are bonded. From a motivational perspective, using evidence from field and lab experiments conducted through Harvard Business School, researchers found that positive verbal interactions with colleagues, or internal beneficiaries, strengthened one's a sense of belonging to an organization and could possibly increase a person's motivation and performance (Green et al., 2017). From feeling valued to perceiving that one fits into the organization to experiencing positive interactions with colleagues, an employee's sense of belonging is an important retention factor.

In sum, the conceptual framework that guided the design and implementation of this study is grounded in two interrelated areas: (1) critical race theory and its related theories, and (2) theories on belonging and motivation. The primary CRT tenet assuming "the ordinariness of racism" and the analysis of the impact and operation of white privilege is foundational to my framework. During the data collection and analysis of my study, I inquired how the racial awareness and literacy of a PWIS, as well as intersectional and contextual factors, might impact the belonging, levels of support, and the job satisfaction of Teachers of Color. Using theories on motivation and belonging, the study also explored an individual's need to belong, feel accepted, and be extrinsically and intrinsically motivated as it related to performing well and the pervasive human motivation to develop a sense of purpose and interpersonal connections.

Imperative for This Study

Student populations continue to diversify across all sectors of schools, yet the teaching population remains vastly white. While teacher turnover is a perennial issue facing all schools, the literature shows that turnover rates for Teachers of Color are higher, as they face more challenges than their white peers, especially in independent schools (Brosnan, 2015; Carver-Thomas, 2018). Much of this body of research has been focused on the retention of public school

teachers, with a few key studies on the retention of private or independent school teachers. Studies about Teachers of Color in independent schools are few and far between, ranging from Kane and Orsini's major treatment in 2003, to Coleman and Stevenson's impactful study on racial sense of belonging in 2013, to French's examination of race at independent schools in 2018. Since research shows that Teachers of Color positively impact their schools, colleagues, and all students, especially the academic performance of Students of Color, the significance of this topic cannot be ignored. From a moral and ethical perspective, Teachers of Color need to be better supported by centering their voices in the research.

This study was dedicated to exploring the experiences of Teachers of Color in PWIS and further understanding the factors that may impact their belonging, feelings of support, level of job satisfaction, and decision to stay or leave their school. With a national independent school student population of just over 700,000 who are taught by almost 90,000 teachers, this study related to a sizable population of students and educators. In the Los Angeles area, the location where I drew my sample, Students of Color make up 46% of the population. Based on this numerical reality and the known positive impact of Teachers of Color, the demographic and moral imperative of this topic is clear.

A review of relevant literature reveals that one of the most significant factors for teacher retention is the level of administrative support. The unique contribution I provided was an exploration of the experiences of Teachers of Color compared to white teachers in PWIS, and identification of what Teachers of Color need to feel a greater sense of belonging, support, and satisfaction. With the findings, I hope to provide schools and school leaders with insight on how to better support Teachers of Color at their schools.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The number of Students of Color in National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS) across the nation has nearly doubled from 2000-01 to 2019-20. During that same period, the percentage of Teachers of Color has more than doubled (NAIS, 2001, 2020), yet there is a trend of Teachers of Color leaving independent schools at a quicker rate than their white peers because they encounter challenges that their white peers do not face (Brosnan, 2015; Carver-Thomas, 2018). Not only is the recruitment and retention of Teachers of Color at independent schools a perennial issue, but the dearth of independent school Leaders of Color (Hunt et al., 2018), as well as variability in white school leaders' level of racial awareness and how racism may be embedded in PWIS, may have exacerbated this challenge because one of the protective retention factors for Teachers of Color is the presence of administrative support (Brosnan 2009, 2015; Carver-Thomas, 2018; Coleman & Stevenson, 2013). Since many educational researchers (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond 2017; Cherng & Halpin, 2016; Villegas & Irvine, 2010) call attention to how Teachers of Color benefit all students, especially Students of Color, through improved academic performance, cultivating school cultures, systems, and leadership practices that promote the belonging, job satisfaction, and retention of Teachers of Color should be a priority at PWIS.

Using survey and interview data, my study built upon the extant yet scant research by exploring how independent schools and their leaders can better understand the experiences of Teachers of Color in their schools. These research questions guided my study:

1. To what extent, do Independent School Teachers of Color feel supported by their leaders and institutions and experience a sense of belonging at their schools?

     a.   To what extent, do their feelings of support and experiences of belonging differ from white teachers at their schools?

2.   How do the experiences of Teachers of Color contribute to their sense of belonging and feelings of support or lack thereof?

Research Design and Rationale

To explore my research questions, I employed an explanatory sequential mixed methods design in two phases. In phase one, I addressed the first research question by collecting quantitative data through a survey of 133 teachers in several Los Angeles area independent schools. The survey underwent several iterations and a thorough content validity review in order to distribute a well-crafted instrument that captured consistent and comparable information from respondents about the key constructs of my study (Fowler, 2014). In phase two of the design, I addressed the second research question by interviewing 21 Educators of Color who participated in the survey. I utilized the analysis of the survey data to help me better align my interview protocol with my survey instrument. This alignment process ensured that I used the same constructs and concepts, allowing for a more valid comparison of "the results to see if the findings confirm or disconfirm each other" (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Since the belonging, racial sense of belonging, levels of support, and job satisfaction of Teachers of Color in independent schools is understudied in the literature, I designed my study not only to provide baseline exploratory and descriptive data on important experiential factors for Teachers of Color as compared to their white colleagues, but also to center the voices of Teachers of Color in the qualitative phase by allowing them to richly expound upon their perspectives and experiences as they related to key constructs and the overall topic.

Collecting both forms of data yielded results that provided a richer and more nuanced analysis of my research questions. Without the quantitative phase, I would have relied upon my hypothesis and assumptions about the research problem to guide the qualitative phase; hence, the quantitative data informed the qualitative design by confirming or disconfirming my initial thoughts. Using only a quantitative method would have identified possible static factors related to belonging and support without understanding how the support, or lack thereof, of schools and school leaders, which is one of the key factors of retention in the literature, might impact the experiences and job satisfaction of Teachers of Color. As I aimed to center the voice of Teachers of Color, the qualitative interviews allowed me to explore the results more deeply in order to reevaluate my hypotheses and explain confusing, contradictory, or unusual survey responses (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Another argument for the importance of the qualitative phase involves the co-construction of knowledge during an interview. As Rubin and Rubin note, "Qualitative interviewing is a way of finding out what others feel and think about their worlds... You can understand experiences and reconstruct events in which you did not participate (1995, p. 1, as cited in Dilley, 2004). Interviewing should first be seen as excavation of information and next as construction of knowledge. May (2002) contends that interviewing is like an excavation, as the task of the interviewer is to create space and structure for the interviewee to provide relevant, accurate, and complete information. Since the phenomenon under research - the experiences of belonging and support of Teachers of Color in independent schools - is dynamic and contextual, unearthing information is not enough; May (2002) asserts that it is important to see the interview as a site of knowledge construction where the interviewee and interviewer collaborate in this process.

In sum, a qualitative phase was particularly necessary for my study due to the complexity of constructs that I was exploring: institutional support, school leader support, sense of belonging, motivation, and job satisfaction. Given the highly contextual nature of schools marked by interpersonal relationships, micropolitics, accountability structures, etc., and the impact context has on belonging and levels of support, a qualitative aspect of the design was essential to allow for more open-ended responses and exploration of variables related to this topic. The mixing of methods and integrating of data will provide more understanding into the experiences of Teachers of Color in PWIS.

Methods

Site, Sample, Access, and Recruitment

Site Selection and Sample of Schools

The genesis of my study began in 2019 when I conducted a focus group on the experiences of African American teachers and staff at the independent school where I worked as a teacher and an administrator. Based on those findings regarding the challenges of being a Faculty of Color or staff member at a predominantly white school and the dearth of recent data on retention of Teachers of Color in NAIS schools, I designed a new study to sample over 30 of the independent schools in the Los Angeles area in order to build upon my focus group findings, expand upon the extant literature, and point to further study of the imperative to retain Teachers of Color in independent schools. The reason for this site selection of Los Angeles was due to the concentration of independent schools in Los Angeles that have similar student and teacher demographics, as they are drawing from similar pools of applicants for admission and hiring; thus, the schools are typical and comparable. Within the sample of schools, I aimed to include all teachers.

I recruited the schools by reaching out to school leaders at over 30 Los Angeles area independent schools with the request to distribute the survey to their teachers. At some of the schools, I benefitted from having a personal connection, but several of my emails to other schools were the equivalent of a sales cold-call. Fourteen school leaders agreed to distribute the survey, while 14 school leaders did not respond to my email at all, even after a follow up email. Seven school leaders responded by encouraging me with my efforts but saying they would not distribute my survey due the burden of the pandemic teaching on their educators. Gathering data during the pandemic posed an unavoidable and vexing challenge for my study.

Due to an initial low response rate from direct outreach to school leaders, I also utilized my connections to distribute the survey through two listservs. An Assistant Head of School from my school distributed the survey to a listserv of other Los Angeles Assistant Heads with the request to distribute the survey at their respective schools. Also, a colleague distributed the survey via the SoCal PoCIS listserv on two separate occasions, and this specific outreach can be credited with the high percentage of Educator of Color responses. While this method allowed me to increase the number of surveys and oversample for Educator of Color respondents, it also resulted in a non-probability sample as some teachers may have received more chances to take the survey than others. However, the goal of this study was "to solve qualitative problems, such as discovering what occurs, the implications of what occurs, and the relationship linking occurrences," rather than quantitative questions such as *how much* and *how often*, and is an appropriate use of non-probability sampling (Honigmann, 1982, p. 84 as cited in Merriam & Tisdale, 2016).

Teacher Recruitment

In order to effectively gain access to sites and recruit participants, I allotted plenty of time to further develop relationships and connections at various school sites and with potential gatekeepers. First, I designed a clear and concise script to deliver to potential participants through electronic communication, as this was the only form of safe communication during the pandemic (see Appendix A). The script briefly addressed these questions: why I am interested in this topic; why I am reaching out to them; what I am asking of them and how much time will it require; how I plan to protect anonymity; what I plan to do with the data; and what they will receive if they participate in the study. I also promoted my study from my role as a graduate researcher, not as an evaluator; thus, I used my *ucla.edu* email address and the UCLA Qualtrics survey platform for all electronic communications. Survey respondents who identify as Teachers of Color could volunteer to participate in a one-on-one interview, where they expanded upon their survey responses to provide information-rich data.

Next, to gain more trust, I ensured that participation was voluntary and anonymous. If asked, I transparently explained my plans for the final report: to share with all interested interview participants and school leaders, and to present my findings at future conferences or in independent school publications, as opportunities presented.

By surveying all teachers regardless of racial or ethnic identification, I collected important comparative data about the experiences of Teachers of Color and white teachers, and this allowed for an additional layer of analysis. The rationale for collecting quantitative data from all teachers is grounded in the literature, the demographics of independent schools, and the imperative to center the experiences of Teachers of Color in predominantly white settings. According to the literature, the retention and job satisfaction factors for private school teachers,

overall, are fairly similar for teachers regardless of race. When disaggregated, the retention

factors for Teachers of Color crystallizes on a few key factors: administrator support, level of

sense of belonging and social recognition, and experiences of discrimination (Brosnan, 2015;

Carver-Thomas, 2018; Smith, 2004; Stanley, 2006). Demographically, the teaching body in both

public and private schools is predominantly white and female. The predominant whiteness of

private schools is even more stark (NCES, 2017-18), and the subpopulation of independent

schools can be starker, depending on region/location (NAIS Trendbook, 2018-19; NAIS Facts at

a Glance, 2019-20).

As noted in Chapter Two, research on Teachers of Color in independent schools is

scattered, with a consolidation of studies from 2003 (Kane & Orsini) and a few more studies

conducted in the 2010s (Brosnan, 2015; Carver-Thomas, 2018; D'Ercole, 2019; French, 2018).

Of recent note, Stevenson and Coleman (2013) highlighted two important retention factors for

Teachers of Color: their racial sense of belonging and the level of administrator support in

promoting that belonging. Since my study intended to provide updated data on Teachers of Color

in PWIS, surveying all teachers provided comparative data to enable stronger claims that either

confirmed or disconfirmed the experiences of Teachers of Color relative to those of white

teachers in independent schools. Follow up and voluntary interviews with 21 Teachers of Color

amplified their experiences, which can often be lumped into a colorblind leadership approach

towards supporting all teachers. I purposefully sampled interview participants and attempted to

limit my interviews to participants who worked in their independent schools for at least three

years, thereby increasing the likelihood that the interviewees could adequately report on the

culture, practices, and policies of their school. Despite this, I did interview four teachers with

two years of experiences at their respective schools in order to create a wider gender,

racial/ethnic, and school site representation. Purposeful sampling was employed "based on the assumption that [I] want to discover, understand, and gain insight and therefore must select a sample from which most can be learned" (Merriam & Tisdale, 2016, p. 96). As Patton (2015) notes, the power of purposeful sampling comes from the exploration of specific, information-rich cases, from which the researcher can learn about the central focus of the inquiry (as cited in Merriam & Tisdale, 2016).

Data Collection

The primary unit of analysis for this study were teachers in independent schools. Data collection from teachers involved a survey and follow up interviews with Teachers of Color who volunteered after taking the survey; data from both methods addressed my two research questions.

Survey of Teachers

My sequential mixed methods design first employed a survey of all teachers (regardless of their racial or ethnic identification) from various independent schools in the Los Angeles area to provide a statistical description of the experiences of belonging and support of Teachers of Color and white teachers at these schools. Prior to delivering the survey, I pilot-tested the instrument with three teachers from my ELP cohort and subsequently made minor adjustments to the organization and wording of questions, as well as the survey length.

The survey (see Appendix B) included 38 questions related to demographic information and the following constructs: sense of belonging, experiences of discrimination, and support of school leadership. Since I sought to focus more on the experiences of Teachers of Color, especially their racial sense of belonging, they were given all the questions on the survey; white teachers were only asked to answer 22 questions. The survey was disseminated directly by me,

via school gatekeepers with whom I developed a relationship, or through leaders of SoCal

PoCIS. The survey remained open on Qualtrics from the last week of October 2020 until the last

week of December 2020. I kept the survey open longer than expected to boost my response rate;

I also needed to send follow-up requests more than expected due to the burden of the pandemic.

The survey was anonymous, and respondents who identified as Teachers of Color had the option

to volunteer to participate in a one-on-one interview.

Between October 15-December 15, 2020, I ended up gathering 133 completed responses,

78 from white teachers and 55 from Teachers of Color who work at Los Angeles area

independent schools. I included nine additional surveys from Teachers of Color who finished a

significant portion of the survey, but not all 38 questions. This increased the Teachers of Color

responses to 64 for the initial 14 questions, which provided important comparative data between

white and Teachers of Color. Fifty-nine Teachers of Color completed at least 20 questions, and

56 completed 24 questions. In the tables presented in Chapter Four, I indicated the number of

respondents for the reported questions.

As one may glean from my survey recruitment process during a pandemic, calculating an

approximate response rate would be a challenge. Complicating that effort would be determining

which teachers at which schools received the survey and from what source. There were 84

responses to the optional question "*How did you hear about the survey?*" Of those responses, 40

heard from a leader at their school; 21 heard from a colleague at their school; 13 heard from the

SoCal PoCIS listserv; seven heard directly from me; and three heard from "other." Further, of

the 43 Teachers of Color who showed interest in being interviewed, they represented over two

dozen schools. Thus, I could not calculate a response rate.

I initially aimed for an 80/20% respondent split between white and Teachers of Color to reflect the demographics in NAIS schools, yet I ended up with approximately a 60/40% response percentage split, mostly due to survey recruitment through a network of SoCal Teachers of Color. These Educator of Color responses allowed me to elevate their experiences, use the data to confirm or disconfirm interview responses, and increase the pool of potential interviewees so that the interview sample would be representative based on age, race, gender, years of teaching experience.

Interviews with Teachers of Color

Upon conclusion of the survey, Teachers of Color could volunteer for a follow up interview. Forty-three Teachers of Color expressed interest, and I ended up conducting 21 interviews. To create a representative group of interviewees, from the pool of volunteers I purposefully sampled individuals with a wide range of years teaching at independent schools, a balance of gender identification, a diversity of racial or ethnic identification, and a representation from several Los Angeles area independent schools. Of the 21 interviewees, 13 identified as female and eight as male. In terms of racial and ethnic identification, six identified as African American, six identified as Latinx, three identified as Asian-American, and two identified as bi-racial. As participants could select more than one racial or ethnic identification, two teachers identified both as African American and American Indian or Alaskan Native, one teacher identified as bi-racial and Latinx, and another teacher identified as bi-racial and African American. In regard to years teaching at their current school, four interviewees taught for more than 10 years; six taught between six and 10 years; seven taught between three and five years; and four taught for two years. Two teachers were between the ages of 51 and 60; six were

between 41-50 years old; 10 were between the ages of 31-40; and three were between the ages 21-30.

During the 45-60 minute semi-structured interviews, I used several standardized, yet open-ended questions related to the important constructs of the study in order to provide space for interviewees to add their own voice and experience (see Appendix D). May (2002) encourages interviewers to devise a structure that is flexible and sensitive to context, as this allows one to listen to an interviewee's way of interpreting and experiencing the social world. The questions pertained to experiences of belonging, leadership and institutional support, and suggestions for school leaders on how to better understand the experiences of Teachers of Color in PWIS. Due to the pandemic, all the interviews were conducted and recorded via Zoom. Interview participants received a $30 electronic cash payment via PayPal, Venmo or Zelle, and one participant opted for a donation to his charity of choice.

Data Analysis

Surveys

The goal of the survey was two-fold: (1) to compare the experiences of belonging and support between white and Teachers of Color in PWIS, and (2) to gather descriptive data on the experiences of Teachers of Color that could be followed up on during the interview phase. When initially analyzing the data, I utilized the chi-square goodness-of-fit test, yet several of the survey items did not meet a required assumption for at least five expected frequencies in each group of my categorical variable. Therefore, I utilized the Mann-Whitney U test on SPSS to check for statistically significant differences between the two groups, as I met all of the required assumptions. The Mann-Whitney U test "is a rank-based nonparametric test that can be used to determine if there are differences between two independent groups" when the dependent variable

is either ordinal or continuous, but not normally distributed (Laerd Statistics, 2015). My

independent variable was racial or ethnic identification of teachers (white or Person of Color),

and my dependent variables were ordinal, as they were primarily based on four- or five-point

Likert scales. One example of a dependent variable was how much did the respondent agree or

disagree with the following statement: "I am more closely monitored and questioned by parents

than my colleagues." In order to use the Mann-Whitney U test, my data met the following four

assumptions: the dependent variables were ordinal; the independent variable consisted of two

categorical, independent groups; the observations were independent; and the data was not

normally distributed (Laerd Statistics, 2015).

I chose to present the results as differences in mean ranks or differences in distributions

of scores regardless of the shape of the distribution for any particular survey item. Also, in

Chapter Four, I only utilized survey items that registered an asymptotic *p*-value of less than .050,

thereby representing statistical significance, as "it is generally considered that the asymptotic *p*-

value is a good enough approximation to the real *p*-value when both groups [of the independent

variable] have more than 20 cases" (Laerd Statistics, 2015). For the statistically significant items

that are included in Chapter Four, a comparison of mean ranks allowed me to reject the null

hypothesis (H_0) and accept the alternative hypothesis H_A), when

H_0: the distribution of scores for the two groups are equal

H_A: the distribution of scores for the two groups are not equal

Lastly, in the explanation of the findings in the narrative and in various tables, I also compared

the percentage responses along the Likert scales for Teachers of Color and white teachers to

descriptively demonstrate any differences. Noting, for example, the percentage of Teachers of

Color (43.8%) who strongly or somewhat agreed with being monitored more by parents than

their white peers (23.1%) gave a clearer picture of the impact of racial or ethnic identification on one's sense of belonging or acceptance as opposed to two numbers indicating differences in mean ranks.

For Teachers of Color, I descriptively reported the percentage responses along the Likert scales. This also allowed me to show the variance in experience while still indicating the intensity of agreement or satisfaction or frequency of occurrence on several items. On select items, I disaggregated responses based on gender, yet the number of those who identified as male or female was not large enough to run any tests for statistical significance. Engaging in a study that specifically looks at the Educator of Color experience based on gender identification is suggested in Chapter Five.

Interviews

I recorded the interviews on Zoom and took minimal notes while interviewing so that I could be fully attentive during the process, yet also follow up when needed. After each interview, I wrote notes about my initial takeaways and emerging patterns, as well as ways in which I could improve my interviewing technique. Next, I listened to all interviews for my initial analysis and wrote short memos on any developing categories, themes, or relationships. While I used the closed captioning option on my Zoom account to capture transcripts of the interviews, the quality of the transcription was subpar, so I utilized the Rev.com AI transcription service to provide more accurate transcriptions.

I uploaded my interview audio and transcription files to *MaxQDA*, a software program. For the first round of coding, I used structural codes that were deductively developed based on data from the existing literature, my conceptual framework, my research questions, and the survey data. I utilized nine structural codes, ranging from *leadership support* to *promotion of*

sense of belonging to *differential treatment*. Structural codes acted as labeling and indexing

devices, allowing me to quickly organize and "access data likely to be relevant to a particular

analysis from a larger data set" (Namey et al., 2008, as cited in Saldaña, 2013). For the second

round of coding, I used more inductive open coding based on what arose in the responses; the

open codes could include surprising codes, or ones that were not anticipated prior to the study, or

codes of unusual or conceptual interest (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). While the second round

was inductive, I did organize the open codes into three groups: process codes, emotions codes,

and values codes. Process codes were used to identify simple observable activity and more

general conceptual action (e.g., struggling, adapting, negotiating); emotions codes helped me to

label the emotions recalled and/or experienced by the participant; and values codes concurrently

allowed me to reflect on a participant's values, attitudes, and beliefs, representing his or her

perspectives or worldview (Saldaña, 2013). For the third and final round of coding, I engaged in

pattern coding. Pattern coding forced me to group my second round coding summaries and

memos into smaller sets, themes, and constructs (Saldaña, 2013), and this helped me see the

forest through the trees and develop my findings.

Integration

I analyzed the quantitative and qualitative data separately, yet the data were integrated in

two important manners, demonstrating the advantages of an explanatory sequential design

(Creswell & Creswell, 2018). First, I used the quantitative results to plan the qualitative portion

of the design in two areas: the sampling of interviewees and the creation of the questioning route

for the interviews with Teachers of Color. Second, the qualitative results helped explain the

quantitative results when the study moved into the interpretation phase. Through integration of

data this study effectively investigated the experiences of belonging and support of Teachers of

Color in independent schools. While the quantitative and qualitative results and findings are discussed separately in Chapter Four and Five, the discussion section in Chapter Six allowed me to note areas of convergence and divergence, and when divergence occurred, I noted it either as a limitation in my study or a suggestion for further research (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Positionality and Role Management

Since qualitative research is interpretive, the topic is of personal import, and I am both a supervisor and a teacher, the study required me to carefully consider my role, positionality, and reflexivity. First, I needed to emphasize my approach as a graduate student researcher seeking to gain a better understanding of the factors that impact the sense of belonging and experiences of support of Teachers of Color in independent schools. To circumvent hesitation that participation in the study might be evaluative**,** I carefully structured the research questions to be descriptive and exploratory, and this intent was carefully communicated to potential participants.

Reflexivity involved admitting past experiences or connections to the research problem or with the participants. During this study, my reflexivity was my shadow, as I am connected to this topic in many ways. The connection included my complicated relationship with my biracial background, my personal connections with several independent school colleagues who struggle with feeling a sense of belonging, and my desire to influence leaders to be more committed to this issue based on my hypothesis that they need to grow in their own racial identity development in order to best support Teachers of Color. These connections might have caused me to lean towards certain themes during my analysis or actively look for evidence that supported my hypotheses, so I let the data speak for itself. As I proceeded through the qualitative data analysis, I wrote "reflexive" memos about how my personal experiences may be shaping my analysis and interpretation of the data and I regularly discussed my findings with a few classmates in a

dissertation writing group. Finally, in order to earn the trust of participants, I limited the discussion of my personal connections to the topic so they did not interfere with the importance and methods of the study (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Lastly, I was mindful of validity threats often inherent in "backyard" research (Glense & Peshkin, 1992 as cited in Creswell & Creswell, 2018), as the sites for the study involved my own school and peer institutions where I have personal connections. As one who is both an administrator and teacher with connections and the clout of the UCLA name, data collection may have been convenient at times. I ensured that participant concerns about anonymity were directly addressed. I also cast a net as wide as possible by surveying and interviewing participants from nearly 20 sites to protect anonymity and diffuse any perceived power differential.

Ethical Issues

Because of the small number of Teachers of Color at many independent schools, one of the ethical concerns was the protection of the respondents' anonymity and the development of their trust. While Creswell and Creswell (2018) suggest using "composite stories so that individuals cannot be identified" (p. 90), I used other methods to ensure anonymity, including using pseudonyms and/or codes for sites and participants. Also, the data was stored in password protected files or on cloud-based applications that require my username and password for access. Ensuring anonymity allowed me to gather honest and forthright narratives that will hopefully have a positive impact on leadership and institutional practices that support Teachers of Color.

Another potential barrier to trust was my positionality as both a teacher and an administrator and as a white-passing Latino. To address this ethical issue with interviewees, I needed to be transparent about my interest in and the purpose of the study, as well as how I planned to utilize the results to recommend how schools and school leaders can improve their

understanding of the experiences of Teachers of Color in their schools and promote their sense of belonging. Another issue was related to assumptions I made about what I thought I might find over the course of the study, so I needed to be open to finding unexpected results from the data collection and analysis and be committed to reporting "the full range of findings, including findings that may be contrary to the themes" (Creswell and Creswell, 2018, p. 95).

Lastly, as a white-identifying and passing researcher with privilege, I would like to acknowledge the psychological burden my study design placed on Teachers of Color in my effort to center their experiences in predominantly white independent schools. Smith (2004) coined the term racial battle fatigue to describe the psychological and physiological impact People of Color experience living in and navigating historically white spaces. I amplified the voices of Teachers of Color by exploring how they navigated white spaces, yet by asking them to contribute more of their time and mental energy to complete a longer survey and potentially sit for an interview, I also added to their fatigue. While the data I gathered will be presented to school leaders (who are mostly white) in an effort to improve how they understand the experiences of Teachers of Color, the burden of doing the educating is borne by Communities of Color. While I maintain my research design, I encourage white-identifying researchers to be mindful of their privilege in future studies, to engage in the intellectual and personal labor of decentering themselves while learning about the counter narratives of Communities of Color, and to develop research designs that minimize the emotional and intellectual burden on Communities of Color.

Reliability, Validity and Trustworthiness

To ensure the trustworthiness of my study, I needed to effectively address two key credibility threats. The two threats were my own bias and the potential reactivity of participants. To mitigate this bias, I standardized interview questions (see Appendix D) and utilized expected

codes that were grounded in the literature, enabling me to systematize the data analysis while preventing me from selecting bias-affirming responses or themes in my interpretation. After coding and analyzing interviews, I engaged in member checking, as necessary, with the interviewees to confirm that I accurately reflected their comments. In a related check, I intentionally used the rich data I collected by using ample direct quotations from interviewees to elevate their voices as opposed to my interpretation. I also engaged in peer review with classmates on a bi-weekly basis during the data collection and analysis phases to check how my assumptions might impact my analysis and interpretation. Finally, I plan to disseminate the details of the research along with the study design so that readers in the independent school community can determine for themselves the credibility of the study (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

The second threat to the credibility of the study related to how I was viewed by participants and the potential reactivity of participants saying what they think I wanted to hear. The primary strategy I used to address reactivity is triangulation. The data was collected to comparable groups (white teachers and Teachers of Color) and through two methods (surveys and interviews). In addition, I analyzed the data through two related yet distinct theoretical lenses (Critical Race Theory and theories on motivation and belonging). On a more granular level, I sought to interview Teachers of Color who were and were not members of SoCal PoCIS, as the membership in such a supportive professional network might mitigate unsupportive school site factors while lack of membership might contribute to feelings of isolation. Utilizing systematic data collection, such as asking all participants the same interview questions, also mitigated reactivity. Furthermore, I intentionally diversified the group of 21 interviewees based on age, experience, gender, and racial or ethnic identification in order to explore the varied experiences

of Teachers of Color as fully as possible in my time-bound study; this variance is reflected in the evidence presented in Chapter Four.

Summary of Methodology

This explanatory sequential mixed methods study aimed to understand how Teachers of Color prioritize, conceptualize, and realize the important factors that contribute to their feelings of belonging and support at their schools. I also aspired to shed light upon the lived experiences of Teachers of Color as compared to their white colleagues through the utilization of a comparative survey and in-depth interviews with Teachers of Color. Furthermore, since I asked interviewees what advice they would give school leaders related to understanding their experiences and providing support, my study provides practical and actionable information for school leaders. Despite the small scope of this project and the impact of the pandemic on data collection, this study can be used as a resource for school leaders seeking to enhance the experience, value, and sense of belonging of Teachers of Color on their respective campuses.

CHAPTER 4 - QUANTITATIVE RESULTS

Introduction

The extant literature and the recent data on teacher turnover both point to the aim of this study: to better understand the experiences of support and sense of belonging of Teachers of Color at predominantly white independent schools (PWIS) as compared to their white peers in order to shed light on the inclusion efforts of PWIS. The drive to diversify the teaching population is not enough for PWIS; until PWIS better understand the unique experience of Teachers of Color in their institutions, promotive experiences of belonging, leadership support, and institutional investment may continue to elude Teachers of Color.

In the next two chapters, I present the complementary results and findings from my explanatory sequential mixed methods study, which addresses the following research questions:

1. To what extent, do Independent School Teachers of Color feel supported by their leaders and institutions and experience a sense of belonging at their schools?

    a. To what extent, do their feelings of support and experiences of belonging differ from white teachers at their schools?

2. How do the experiences of Teachers of Color contribute to their sense of belonging and feelings of support or lack thereof?

Chapter Four shares results related to the first research question and derived from the survey, while Chapter Five presents findings related to the second research question and gleaned from the interviews. The interpretation and congruence of the data will be discussed in Chapter Six.

Approximately half of the survey items were asked of white teachers, while all the items were asked of Teachers of Color, as I was primarily interested in understanding their experiences working in PWIS. For the questions only asked to Teachers of Color, I sought to explore the

concept of racial sense of belonging as constructed by Stevenson and Coleman (2013) and enhanced by Guinier (2006) and Twine (2004). The data reported from these items were descriptive in nature and illuminated a core element of my research questions: how the experiences of Teachers of Color may impact one's sense of belonging and feelings of support.

Before I proceed to the results, I acknowledge how my limited study may perpetuate the monolithilization of the Black, Indigenous and People of Color community. I structured this study as a binary - comparing the experiences of white teachers with those of Teachers of Color - with the understanding that the experiences of, for example, a Black 46 year-old male teacher may differ from a 23 year old Latinx woman in her first year of teaching. While I scoured the quantitative and qualitative data for more granular points of experience based on gender or specific racial or ethnic identification, my data analysis focused on the binary to unearth general patterns of experiences in predominantly white settings. With this in mind, I aimed to interview a diverse group of Teachers of Color to honor the individuality of voices with a more intersectional lens. All the teachers participating in my study pointed to the need to feel seen, valued, and understood as layered human beings, not just defined by their race or ethnicity. In the findings put forward in Chapters Four and Five, I presented the patterns faced by Teachers of Color in PWIS, and I also honored individual experiences by centering the voices of Teachers of Color.

Results from the Survey

I explored the first research question through my survey instrument (see Appendix B), which was designed to understand the differences in experiences of belonging and support faced by Teachers of Color and white teachers. The results from my survey showed a demographically varied group of respondents (Table 2). Not only did the data analysis reveal statistically

Table 2

Characteristics of Survey Sample

Characteristic	Teachers of Color		white teachers	
	n	%	*n*	%
Total	55[a]	41.4	78	58.6
Gender[b]				
Female	44	33.1	57	42.9
Male	10	7.5	21	15.8
Age				
21-30	9	6.8	7	5.3
31-40	17	12.9	28	21.2
41-50	18	13.6	26	19.7
51-60	5	3.8	8	6.1
61+	5	3.8	9	6.8
Race/Ethnicity[c]				
white	6	4.1	73	50.0
Black	20	13.7	-	-
Latinx	19	13.0	1	0.7
Asian American or Pacific Islander	11	7.5	-	-
Bi- or Multi-racial	12	8.2	-	-
American Indian/ Native Alaskan	3	2.1	1	0.7

[a] The number of Teachers of Color who finished the complete 38 question survey, including the above demographic questions, was 55. Sixty-four Teachers of Color completed the first 14 questions, and 59 Teachers of Color completed the first 20 questions. I chose to include these partially completed surveys because their responses provided important comparative data. The appropriate *n* for each question is noted for each table.

[b] *n* = 132. One Teacher of Color respondent declined to state their gender and age.

[c] *n* = 146. Respondents could select more than one option. Five declined to state, and five indicated "other."

significant differences regarding sense of belonging of both groups and greater scrutiny of Teachers of Color from adults in the community, but it also exposed the additional burdens faced by Teachers of Color as they dealt with microaggressions and adapted to working in a PWIS.

Belonging, Acceptance, and Inclusion

A primary aim of my study was to understand the different experiences of belonging and support of Teachers of Color and white teachers. All respondents were given this operationalized definition of sense of belonging at the beginning of the survey:

> Sense of belonging can be defined as "the experience of personal involvement in a system or environment so that persons feel themselves to be an integral part of that system of environment," and one's belonging is enhanced by the experience of feeling valued, needed, accepted, as well as their fit in the organization, and the perception that the individual's characteristics articulate with the system of environment (Hagerty et al, 1992). Baumeister and Leary (1995) added to the understanding of this construct by stating humans have a pervasive drive to form and maintain at least a few lasting, positive, and significant interpersonal relationships based on two criteria: (1) frequent and affectively pleasant interactions with a few others, and (2) the interactions must take place in a stable and lasting context of mutual concern.

The above definition was deconstructed in the survey to understand feelings related to institutional and leadership support and experiences of belonging for white teachers and Teachers of Color at their respective schools. Several survey questions related to sense of belonging, acceptance, and inclusion yielded statistically significant differences in mean ranks of the ordinal variable when racial identification was the independent variable. The practical distribution of responses shows the subtle yet distinct differences between white teachers and Teachers of Color (Table 3).

Table 3

Feelings of Belonging, Acceptance, and Inclusion

I feel...	Mean Rank	U	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neither	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree
...like I belong at my school.							
Teachers of Color[a]	78.56	2044.0*	31.3%	39.1%	10.9%	15.6%	3.1%
white teachers[b]	65.71	-	44.9%	38.5%	5.1%	9.0%	2.6%
...accepted at my school.							
Teachers of Color	79.91	1957.5*	42.2%	40.6%	7.8%	9.4%	0.0%
white teachers	64.60	-	61.5%	30.8%	3.8%	3.8%	0.0%
...included at my school.							
Teachers of Color	80.48	1921.5*	23.4%	46.9%	12.5%	15.6%	1.6%
white teachers	64.13	-	46.2%	32.1%	12.8%	7.7%	1.3%

[a] $n = 64$. [b] $n = 78$.

*p < .05. **p < .01. ***p < .001.

When asked their level of agreement with the statement "I feel like I belong" at my school, Teachers of Color (mean rank = 78.56) ranked lower in their agreement compared to white teachers (mean rank = 65.71), $U = 2044.0$, p < .05. Nearly 45% of white teachers strongly agreed with the statement, while 31.3% of Teachers of Color reported the same. On the other end, 29.6% of Teachers of Color neither agreed or disagreed or somewhat or strongly disagreed with feeling like they belonged, while this was the case for 16.7% of white teachers. The level of acceptance felt by white teachers was higher than that of their Colleagues of Color (white teachers mean rank = 64.60, Teachers of Color mean rank = 79.91, $U = 1957.5$, p < .05), as

61.5% of white teachers strongly agreed with the statement "I feel accepted" and 42.2% of Teachers of Color strongly agreed. Notably, 9.4% of Teachers of Color and 3.8% of white teachers somewhat disagreed with the statement. When asked about the statement "I feel included" at my school, Teachers of Color (mean rank = 80.48) also ranked lower in their agreement compared to white teachers (mean rank = 64.13), $U = 1921.5$, p < .05. While 46.2% of white teachers strongly agreed with the statement, that percentage was nearly halved for Teachers of Color (23.4%). In addition, 17.2% of Teachers of Color somewhat or strongly disagreed with feeling included, while the same was reported by 9% of white teachers. Complementary qualitative data related to these results will be presented in the next chapter, with a more granular focus on acceptance of expertise, inclusion of voice, and solicitation of ideas and expertise.

Fit, Comfort Level, and Sources of Support

The survey data also pointed to contrasting experiences of connection and disconnection, an element of sense of belonging. Being in a predominantly white space, feelings of isolation were reflected in the survey results for Teachers of Color. In Table 4, a few data points stand out. Teachers of Color (mean rank = 82.43) tended to agree less that they fit in with other teachers than white teachers (mean rank = 62.53), $U = 1796.5$, p < .01. While 50% of white teachers strongly agreed with the statement "I fit in with other teachers," 26.6% of Teachers of Color reported the same. At the other end of the spectrum, 20.3% of Teachers of Color somewhat or strongly disagreed with the statement, and 7.7% of white teachers felt the same way. The more striking responses related to the statement "I am comfortable at my school because my background and experiences are similar to the other teachers." Teachers of Color (mean rank = 85.95) agreed less that they are comfortable at their school than white teachers (mean rank =

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59.65), $U = 1571.5$, p < .001. Almost four times as many white teachers than Teachers of Color strongly agreed with this statement (24.4% to 6.3%), while nearly three times as many Teachers of Color (18.8%) as white teachers (6.4%) strongly disagreed with the statement.

Table 4

Fit with Others and Comfort at My School

At my school...	Mean Rank	U	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neither	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree
...I fit in with other teachers.							
Teachers of Color[a]	82.43	1796.5*	26.6%	40.6%	12.5%	17.2%	3.1%
white teachers[b]	62.53	-	50%	32.1%	10.3%	7.7%	0.0%
...I am comfortable because my background and experiences are similar to other teachers.							
Teachers of Color	79.91	1571.5***	6.3%	26.6%	25%	23.4%	18.8%
white teachers	64.60	-	24.4%	35.9%	21.8%	11.5%	6.4%

[a] $n = 64$. [b] $n = 78$.

*p < .05. **p < .01. ***p < .001.

As noted by Baumeister and Leary (1995), humans have a pervasive drive to form and maintain at least a few lasting, positive, and significant interpersonal relationships. In the survey, I asked Teachers of Color about sources of support and connection. When asked about who they feel supported by, 96.6% of Teachers of Color strongly or somewhat agreed that they feel supported by other Teachers of Color at their school, and 54.2% strongly or somewhat agreed that they feel supported by Administrators of Color at their school. When asked about support

outside of their school, the two most common sources for Educators of Color were "Conferences/Workshops" (65.6%) and "Colleagues from Other Schools" (59.4%). The importance of making connections with others who look like you and share the same lived experiences will be further highlighted in the qualitative findings, as will the significance of affinity groups, mentorship, conference attendance and nurturing one's sense of purpose towards developing a sense of belonging.

Questioning About Expertise and Treatment by Adults

One's belonging may be enhanced if they feel like they are an integral part of a system or environment and if they perceive that their characteristics articulate with the system or environment (Hagerty et al, 1992). The results of a few survey items indicated that Teachers of Color feel less like an integral part of their respective schools because they are more closely scrutinized by adults in the community than their white colleagues, and Teachers of Color are also treated with less respect and courtesy than their white colleagues (Table 5). When asked the level to which they agreed with the statement "I am treated with *respect* by the adults at my school," Teachers of Color (mean rank = 80.95) ranked lower in their agreement compared to white teachers (mean rank = 63.74), $U = 1891.0$, p < .01. While 75.6% of white teachers strongly agreed with the statement, among Teachers of Color 53.1% strongly agreed. While not quite as wide of a divide as being treated with respect, when asked the level to which they agreed with the statement "I am treated with *courtesy* by the adults at my school," Teachers of Color (mean rank = 78.38) also ranked lower in their agreement compared to white teachers (mean rank = 65.85), $U = 2055.5$, p < .05. Among white teachers, 78.2% of strongly agreed compared to 62.5% of Teachers of Color who strongly agreed.

Table 5

Courtesy, Respect, and Questioning of Expertise

Survey Prompt	Mean Rank	U	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neither	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I am treated with courtesy by adults at my school.							
Teachers of Color[a]	78.38	2055.5*	62.5%	26.6%	7.8%	3.1%	0.0%
white teachers[b]	65.85	-	78.2%	20.5%	1.3%	0.0%	0.0%
I am treated with respect by adults at my school.							
Teachers of Color	80.95	1891.0**	53.1%	31.3%	12.5%	3.1%	0.0%
white teachers	63.74	-	75.6%	20.5%	1.3%	2.6%	0.0%
I am more closely questioned by parents than my colleagues.							
Teachers of Color	59.89	3239.0**	14.1%	29.7%	18.8%	14.1%	23.4%
white teachers	81.03	-	6.4%	16.7%	15.4%	15.4%	46.2%
I have had my teaching expertise questioned by other adults at my school.							
Teachers of Color	57.30	3405.0***	12.5%	29.7%	21.9%	14.1%	21.9%
white teachers	83.15	-	6.4%	10.3%	19.2%	12.8%	51.3%

[a] $n = 64$. [b] $n = 78$.

*p < .05. **p < .01. ***p < .001.

The data in Table 5 also shows that questioning of one's expertise and additional

monitoring from adults in the community were both experienced more often by Teachers of

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Color than by white teachers. When asked their level of agreement with the statement, "I am more closely monitored and questioned by parents than my colleagues," Teachers of Color (mean rank = 59.89) agreed more than white teachers (mean rank = 81.03), $U = 3239.0$, p < .01. While 43.8% of Teachers of Color strongly or somewhat agreed, that percentage was almost halved for white teachers (23.1%). When asked if "I have had my teaching expertise questioned by other teachers, leaders or parents in the school community," Teachers of Color (mean rank = 57.30) also agreed more than white teachers (mean rank = 83.15), $U = 3405.0$, p < .001. This percentage gap was wider than that of the previous question, with 42.2% of Teachers of Color strongly and somewhat agreeing with the statement, and 16.7% of white teachers responding in the same way.

The survey responses indicate a greater level of professional scrutiny felt by Teachers of Color. After teachers were asked if their teaching expertise had been questioned by teachers, school leaders, or parents, teachers could indicate the reasons why by selecting all that apply from these options: *age, years of teaching experience, gender,* and/or *race*. Teachers of Color indicated race, age, and gender as the three top reasons for why they were questioned.

Barriers to Belonging Faced by Teachers of Color

As demonstrated by the survey results, Teachers of Color, felt less of a sense of belonging than their white colleagues in areas of "fit," acceptance, inclusion, and courteous and respectful treatment. Challenges to belonging also resulted from developing fewer connections, experiencing a greater level of scrutiny and questioning of their expertise, and managing the pressure to prove themselves to their own school community members, especially to parents.

To further explore one's sense of belonging, Teachers of Color were prompted by a list of factors that may impact one's *racial sense of belonging* before they answered a dozen survey

questions that were *not* asked of white respondents. Stevenson and Coleman (2013) illuminate

that a sense of racial belonging for Teachers of Color in PWIS can be promoted or hindered by:

- the school's commitment to diversity mission and action,

- *the affirmation or lack thereof of their racial identity,*

- *their experiences of racial microaggressions or overt forms of racism,*

- the response of the school and its leaders to such forms of racism,

- the level of racial awareness and literacy of their white colleagues and leaders, and

- the willingness of the school to engage in racial questioning and face racial conflict.

Keeping these various factors in mind, I now present that results that spotlight specific barriers to

belonging that confront Educators of Color in PWIS more than their white colleagues.

Experiences of Discrimination and Expectations of Representation

According to survey responses in Table 6, Educators of Color reported being called

names, insulted, threatened, or harassed because of their race or ethnicity more often than white

educators. When asked if they have been called names or insulted due to their race or ethnicity,

Teachers of Color (mean rank = 57.11) tended to say it happened more often compared to white

teachers (mean rank = 69.61), $U = 2387.5$, p < .01. Seven percent of Teachers of Color answered

that it happens "sometimes" and 22.8% said it happens rarely; for white teachers, it happened

"sometimes" 2.9% of the time and "rarely" 7.1% of the time. Being threatened or harassed by

someone at school due to one's race or ethnicity occurred less often for both groups, yet

Teachers of Color (mean rank = 62.32) tended to say it happened more often compared to white

teachers (mean rank = 70.09), $U = 2420.5$, p < .01. Five percent of Teachers of Color said it

happened "sometimes" and 8.2% said it happened "rarely" compared to 1.4% of white teachers

who said this happened "rarely." The percentages, while small, were still statistically significant

when I compared these two groups.

Table 6

Insulted, Threatened, or Expected to Be Spokesperson Due to Race or Ethnicity

Due to my race or ethnicity…	Mean Rank	U	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
...I have been called names or insulted by someone at my school.						
Teachers of Color[a]	57.11	2387.5**	0.0%	7.0%	22.8%	70.2%
white teachers[b]	69.61	-	0.0%	2.9%	7.1%	90.0%
I have been threatened or harassed by someone at my school.						
Teachers of Color	62.32	2420.5**	0.0%	4.9%	8.2%	86.9%
white teachers	70.09	-	0.0%	0.0%	1.4%	98.6%
I am expected to be a spokesperson for my identified group.						
Teachers of Color	41.39	3246.5***	25.0%	38.3%	16.7%	20.0%
white teachers	82.95	-	3.1%	7.7%	4.6%	84.6%

[a] $n = 64$. [b] $n = 78$.

*p < .05. **p < .01. ***p < .001.

When schools narrowly focus on diversity and boosting their image or percentage share

of Teachers of Color and students, there can be a risk of tokenizing or pigeon-holing People of

Color in PWIS. In the survey, teachers were asked how often they are "expected to be a

spokesperson for my identified racial or ethnic group." The results indicated the burden

experienced by Educators of Color, especially if they are "the only one" or one of the few on campus. Teachers of Color (mean rank = 41.39) tended to be expected much more often to be a spokesperson than white teachers (mean rank = 82.95), *U = 3246.5*, p < .001. Almost two thirds (63.3%) of Educators of Color were "often" or "sometimes" asked to be a spokesperson, while this was the case for 10.8% of white teachers. Almost 85% of white educators were never asked to represent their group, while this was the case for 20% of Teachers of Color.

Teachers of Color were also asked the extent to which they agree or disagree with the following statement, "I regularly experience microaggressions at my school." The responses showed a span of experiences, with 32.2% of respondents strongly or somewhat agreeing, 25.4% neither agreeing or disagreeing, and 42.4% somewhat or strongly disagreeing. While the majority responded that it may not "regularly" happen, several Interviewees of Color attested that microaggressions in various forms and with differing impact still occurred. I elaborate on the extent and impact of microaggressions based on stereotypes and dismissiveness, as well as feelings of tokenization, in Chapter Five.

Pressures of Working in a PWIS

As discussed in the previous finding, Educators of Color sometimes carry the hurt of microaggressions and the weight of representing their racial or ethnic group at their schools more than their white peers. These pressures, coupled with the challenges of adapting to and working in a PWIS, were experienced on a more regular basis by Educators of Color than by their white colleagues (Table 7). When asked the frequency with which they are "expected to adapt to the dominant cultural norms of the school," Teachers of Color (mean rank = 50.90) tended to say they were expected to adapt more often compared to white teachers (mean rank = 71.11), *U = 2471.0*, p < .001. While 84.5% of Teachers of Color were often or sometimes asked to do so, this

was the case for 61.0% of white educators. When asked the frequency with which they "feel

pressure to perform at the highest level in order to negate stereotypes about my racial or ethnic

group," the difference between groups was more apparent. Teachers of Color (mean rank =

41.10) also tended to say they felt this pressure more often compared to white teachers (mean

rank = 79.90), *U = 2964.0*, p < .001. Seventy percent of Teachers of Color often or sometimes

felt this pressure, while 11.6% of white teachers felt the same frequency of pressure. Dealing

with the challenges of stereotype threat and fitting into the school culture at a PWIS is an

increased burden for Educators of Color that is more fully explored in the rich qualitative data of

Chapter Five.

Table 7

Expectations to Adapt and Pressures to Perform

Survey Prompt	Mean Rank	U	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
I am expected to adapt to the dominant school cultural norms.						
Teachers of Color[a]	50.90	2471.0***	44.8%	39.7%	6.9%	8.6%
white teachers[b]	79.11	-	21.9%	39.1%	12.5%	26.6%
I feel pressure to perform at the highest level in order to negate stereotypes about my racial or ethnic group.						
Teachers of Color	41.10	2964.5***	41.7%	28.3%	11.7%	18.3%
white teachers	79.90	-	8.3%	3.3%	10.0%	78.3%

[a] *n* = 64. [b] *n* = 78.

*p < .05. **p < .01. ***p < .001.

In the survey, Teachers of Color were additionally questioned about how often they are asked to do extra labor in regard to attracting and supporting Families, Students and Teachers of Color (Table 8). Nearly 60% of Teachers of Color reported that they are frequently to sometimes asked to attract and support Students and Families of color, while just under 34% were frequently or sometimes asked to do extra work to attract and support Teachers of Color.

Table 8

Additional Work for Teachers of Color[a]

Survey Prompt	Frequently	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
I have been asked to do extra work to attract or support Students and Families of Color.	16.9%	42.4%	10.2%	30.5%
I have been asked to do extra work to attract or support Teachers of Color.	6.8%	27.1%	5.1%	61.0%

[a] *n* = 59.

Teachers of Color were also asked if they were expected to serve on their school's faculty committee dedicated to issues of diversity, equity and inclusion, and 44.6% replied "Yes," while 55.4% replied "No." For those who replied "Yes" to being asked to do extra work, 75% said they were not compensated for the work, 89.3% reported these duties were not clearly delineated in their job description, and 39.3% replied they were not thanked or acknowledged for the work. More fulsome descriptions of this extra labor are presented in Chapter Five.

Institutional and Leadership Support

According to the literature reviewed in Chapter Two, administrator support is the most important factor for teacher retention, and this was true regardless of teacher racial identification or type of school in which one worked (Brosnan, 2015; Carver-Thomas, 2018; Coleman & Stevenson, 2013; Smith, 2004; Stanley, 2006). Therefore, specific survey items explored the

level of leadership and institutional support experienced by teachers. Also, the school and its leaders play a role in promoting or hindering the *racial sense of belonging* of Teachers of Color (Coleman & Stevenson, 2013). The findings below explore the potential impact of four factors on the racial sense of belonging and feelings of support experienced by Teachers of Color:

- the school's commitment to diversity mission and action,

- the response of the school and its leaders to such forms of racism,

- the level of racial awareness and literacy of their white colleagues and leaders, and

- the willingness of the school to engage in racial questioning and face racial conflict.

As the findings below reveal, Teachers of Color indicated that administrators need to develop their racial awareness and literacy, commit to building nurturing relationships with their Educators of Color, engage in conversations about race and racism, and make better strides in school-wide diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts.

Leadership Efforts Related to Diversity and Inclusion

The literature on teacher turnover repeatedly mentioned the importance of administrator support for all teachers. Thus, several of the survey items asked about the level of satisfaction with school leaders' actions or work in areas that are important to Educators of Color' racial sense of belonging (Table 9).

Table 9

Teachers' of Color[a] Satisfaction with School Leaders Work with Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

To what extent are you satisfied with your school leaders' work with...	Extremely satisfied	Somewhat satisfied	Neither	Somewhat dissatisfied	Extremely dissatisfied
...diversifying the teacher population.	12.7%	34.5%	18.2%	20.0%	14.5%
...promoting the sense of belonging of Teachers of Color.	12.7%	18.2%	21.8%	36.4%	10.9%
...supporting Families of Color in the school community.	7.3%	21.8%	23.6%	29.1%	18.2%
...increasing the ability of teachers to work in a diverse setting.	9.1%	23.6%	29.1%	32.7%	5.5%
...increasing the ability of administrators to support Teachers of Color	9.1%	27.3%	20.0%	34.5%	9.1%

[a] *n* = 55.

The level of satisfaction varied, and it is notable that the percentages of extreme satisfaction and dissatisfaction are the lowest on the scale, but a closer look illuminates a few key descriptive findings. The Participants of Color in the survey reported a mixed level of satisfaction with their school leaders' work to diversify the teacher population, as 47.2% were extremely or somewhat satisfied, 18.2% were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, and 34.5% were somewhat or extremely dissatisfied. When it comes to "promoting the sense of belonging for Teachers of Color," 36.4% of respondents said they were somewhat dissatisfied. These two data points will be discussed in more depth in Chapter Five. Nearly 50% of Educators of Color replied they were somewhat to extremely dissatisfied with the work "supporting Families of

Color in the school community." As for the work to increase "the ability of administrators to support Teachers of Color," I note that 43.6% of respondents indicated they are somewhat to extremely dissatisfied, and this data point complements some of the qualitative responses in Chapter Five.

Racial Awareness, Engagement, and Support of Leaders

One survey item asked Educators of Color to indicate their level of satisfaction with "the awareness of [their] school leaders of the presence and impact of racial, ethnic and cultural differences on the practice, policies, and institutional culture." The responses showed a sizeable split with 37.3% of respondents being extremely to somewhat satisfied, 16.9% being neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, and 45.8% being somewhat to extremely dissatisfied. Even with the split, the plurality of responses leaned towards dissatisfaction, and this item will be further addressed in Chapters Five and Six.

For Educators of Color, the willingness and ability of school leaders to engage in honest, transparent, and accountable conversations about race and racism is important for their sense of belonging (Coleman & Stevenson, 2013). As presented in Table 10, Teachers of Color (mean rank = 84.54) tended to agree less that their school regularly engages in conversations about race or racism than white teachers (mean rank = 60.80), $U = 1661.5$, p < .001. Additionally, Teachers of Color (mean rank = 84.09) tended to agree less that they felt comfortable talking about race or racism with their colleagues than white teachers (mean rank = 61.17), $U = 1690.5$, p < .001. Notably for both items, white educators strongly agreed at nearly twice the rate as their Peers of Color.

Table 10

Engagement in and Comfort Level with Conversations about Race and Racism

Survey Prompt	Mean Rank	U	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neither	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The school regularly engages in conversations about race/racism.							
Teachers of Color[a]	84.54	1661.5***	20.3%	45.3%	9.4%	12.5%	12.5%
white teachers[b]	60.80	-	43.6%	44.9%	2.6%	5.1%	3.8%
I am comfortable talking about race/racism with my colleagues.							
Teachers of Color	84.09	1690.5***	32.8%	42.2%	3.1%	17.2%	4.7%
white teachers	61.17	-	60.3%	30.8%	3.8%	5.1%	0.0%

[a] *n* = 64. [b] *n* = 78.

*p < .05. **p < .01. ***p < .001.

Three additional items were asked of Educators of Color related to engagement with and resolution of racial conflict, and again the responses reveal a variation of experience that always needs to be kept in mind. When asked their level of agreement with the statement "My school leaders directly and openly deal with racial conflict," 42.4% of respondents strongly or somewhat agreed, 18.6% neither agreed nor disagreed, and 39% somewhat or strongly disagreed. When asked their level of agreement with the statement "My school leaders are capable of resolving racial conflict on campus," 27.3% of respondents strongly or somewhat agreed, 27.3% neither agreed nor disagreed, and 45.5% somewhat or strongly disagreed. In addition, when

Educators of Color were asked their level of agreement with the statement "My school leaders act in a way that shows zero tolerance for racism," 37.3% of respondents indicated they strongly or somewhat agreed, 18.6% neither agreed nor disagreed, and a plurality of 44.1% somewhat or strongly disagreed. The spectrum of responses indicated the varied experiences of Teachers of Color, and the large percentage (approximately four out of 10 respondents) of those who somewhat or strongly disagreed with these three statements is augmented by interview selections in Chapter Five.

Lastly, two survey items highlighted the need for school leaders to focus on building relationships. When asked the extent to which they agree or disagree with the statement "My school leaders regularly ask me what I need to feel supported in my school community," Educators of Color tended to agree less than their white peers. White educators strongly or somewhat agreed with the statement at a rate of 65.4%, and the percentage for Educators of Color was 45.4%. When Educators of Color were asked their level of agreement with the statement "My school leader understands my experience as a Person of Color at a PWIS," 29.1% of respondents strongly or somewhat agreed, while more than half (54.5%) somewhat or strongly disagreed.

Summary

This chapter reported the results from my survey of Teachers of Color and white educators, describing and exploring their feelings about and experiences of belonging and leadership or institutional support in predominantly white independent schools. When comparing experiences of Teachers of Color and white teachers, the results indicated that Teachers of Color generally felt like they belonged less than their white peers and were confronted with more questioning by other adults in the community. Teachers of Color also experienced challenges

with "fit" and comfort level, instances of microaggressions and racism, and frustrations with various outcomes of their institutions' progress to become more inclusive and equitable. In Chapter Five, I present the major themes gleaned from the qualitative data and address the second research question: *How do the experiences of Teachers of Color contribute to their sense of belonging and feelings of support or lack thereof?*

CHAPTER 5 - QUALITATIVE FINDINGS

Introduction

In this chapter, I continue to present the qualitative findings from my explanatory sequential mixed methods study in order to address my second research question: *How do the experiences of Teachers of Color contribute to their sense of belonging and feelings of support or lack thereof?*

I conducted interviews with 21 Teachers of Color between January 13-26, 2021, in order to more deeply explore the second research question and help corroborate the survey results (see Appendix D for interview protocol). The interviewees volunteered after completing the survey. The key demographics of the 21 interviewees are listed below:

- 13 educators identified as female and eight as male.

- Six teachers solely identified as African American, six as Latinx, three as Asian-American, and two identified as bi-racial.

- Participants could select more than one racial or ethnic identification, and two identified both as African American and American Indian or Alaskan Native; one teacher identified as bi-racial and Latinx; and another teacher identified as bi-racial and African American.

- Four interviewees taught for more than 10 years; six taught between six and 10 years; seven taught between three and five years; and four taught for two years.

- Two teachers were between the ages of 51 and 60; six were between 41-50 years old; 10 were between the ages of 31-40; and three were between 21-30 years old.

When conducting this intimate stage of the study, theories related to sense of belonging, racial sense of belonging, and job satisfaction and motivation provided analytic guidance as I

aimed to understand how the experiences of Teachers of Color contributed to their sense of belonging and feelings of support. Four significant themes related to the second research question emerged as data was analyzed, and those themes/findings will be explained in detail in the remainder of this chapter.

Findings

Sense of Belonging and Connection

The literature on teacher turnover shows that Teachers of Color deal with additional factors that their white colleagues do not contend with. These challenges are felt in public, parochial and private schools, and they include: experiences of discrimination and stereotyping, minimization of expertise, questions about "fit," lack of compensation for extra duties, working with racially illiterate colleagues, and experiences of isolation.

One of the goals of the study's interview component was to probe the multi-faceted construct of sense of belonging, so before beginning each interview I read an abbreviated version of the operationalized definition of the term to the interviewee:

> On the survey, I defined a sense of belonging as "the experience of personal involvement in a system or environment so that persons feel themselves to be an integral part of that system or environment." One's belonging is enhanced by the experience of feeling valued, needed, accepted, and their perceived or real "fit" in the organization (Hagerty et al., 1992).

I include the definition here as a reminder of how I approached my analysis based on my desire to understand the more granular lived working experiences of Teachers of Color working at PWIS. The interview excerpts shared below show that despite feeling supported by other People of Color in their schools and connecting with one's own sense of purpose, Teachers of Color generally experienced less of a sense of belonging than white teachers in terms of being valued, needed, and included at their schools.

Inclusion of Voice and Expertise

Several Educators of Color shared that they wanted to be trusted more by school leaders, colleagues, and parents in the school community, especially when they shared their ideas. For a few teachers, the lack of trust played out when they felt their expertise was devalued by community members expressing doubt about their qualifications. A biracial teacher recounted an experience when the cultural responsiveness of his curriculum was questioned by alumni. When he was finally asked to be a part of the conversation, he commented about the racial and class power dynamics at play, noting that

> white alumni who came from very privileged backgrounds, [were] questioning me about what I'm doing in my music history class as a teacher of color, who has never actually felt that I'm a part of this community in the way that… they [the white alumni] have been.

The professional slight faced by this teacher highlighted the limit to his racial acceptance and the lack of inclusion in the community, as demonstrated by questions about his expertise.

The challenges to belonging were also felt by teachers seeking to voice their ideas and concerns or wondering if their input would be solicited. Two Asian American women told me about their experiences when they were relatively new teachers at their respective schools. After a faculty meeting, one Asian American woman asked a question about the process for sharing teacher assistants. She said a long-time teacher told her, "If you want to thrive here, you've got to assimilate." This interaction stuck with this teacher, as she reflected, "There's a limit to that sense of belonging about really feeling... where I [am] valued, how [I am] valued, and where I feel very conscious of not belonging is when I think my voice… or questioning is disruptive." Another Asian American teacher communicated one of the challenges of assimilating to her school's faculty culture: "I felt like certain voices dominated the conversation...like staff members or faculty members who are maybe there a long time or who are just more

outspoken...and frankly also like they were white and had that privilege." These two examples highlight the challenges of sharing one's voice on interpersonal and institutional levels.

The experiences of soliciting the input of Teachers of Color were mixed, but a few teachers indicated that their schools need to boost feelings of inclusion and valuation of their contributions. When commenting upon the voices heard at his school, one Latinx man noticed, "There are very specific voices that still seem to get a lot of influence or notoriety.... I don't care about...being noticed, but the influence and weight I sometimes see. It's still a very white centric voice." This teacher did acknowledge that the school has made strides in the last few years: "I see some of those shifts... it comes down to when I feel that feeling of being included in the contributing voice [of] the school as a whole." The importance of feeling included and valued was reiterated by a Black teacher who talked about his lack of involvement at parent events, commenting that he is "never asked to have any...formal role in any of those interactions with parents and things like that...You're just there, don't make waves...and take care of this component." This teacher understood his lack of involvement in these events, as well as planning for student experiential learning, as a limit to his inclusion. He observed,

> If we're having kids on campus, I would love to be involved in trying to help make their experience better. Right. Like my forte really is working with kids. Um, yeah. The only way I could get better at working with parents in those interactions is by being put in those situations where I have the opportunity to grow in that way. And I'm not looked to for that role, um, at our school currently.

As a counterpoint, some teachers do feel like their voices are valued, even if they themselves had doubts about their own value. One Latinx teacher felt

> like leadership really made it a point to solicit, um, opinions to make sure that I was at the forefront of my work. Right. Like, [I had] always been told what to do, but instead… people ask me what I thought about, whether it's curriculum, whether it's...what kind of school should we be? So in that I've always felt a deep sense of belonging because...I've always been...brought to the table.

These varied experiences highlight some of the challenges to belonging as it relates to the recognition of one's voice and expertise.

Connection with Others

In the interviews with Educators of Color, they often described contrasting experiences of connection and disconnection, and the tilt towards connection often depended on how well reflected they were in the school community by both the adults and the children. In addition to institutional "fit," interpersonal "fit" - or connection with others - plays an important role in promoting one's sense of belonging. Baumeister and Leary (1995) noted the pervasive human drive to form and maintain at least a few significant interpersonal relationships that take place in a stable and lasting context of mutual concern. For Teachers of Color, this interpersonal "fit" was often created by the comfort level they felt with other Colleagues of Color.

While the feelings of isolation can be intense for Teachers of Color in a PWIS, their feelings can be ameliorated by connections made with other Adults of Color. One Latinx woman educator recounted intense feelings that sounded like culture shock:

> I'm born and raised in LA and I've never, ever, ever, ever been in a place where there were so many white people, not just so many white people, but the lack of like, I don't, I, there's only a handful of teachers, I think that are Brown, like me, maybe three out of a hundred. Um, and I've only ever seen one child that kind of looks like me. Um, that was really hard for me for many months I would come home, and I would cry.

One woman described a similar experience as she adjusted to her school's culture and demographics. She noticed she "was the only Asian teacher, because it is still mostly white faculty...the diversity has gotten better, but...like learning the culture of the school because it was not like what I grew up going to public school." One Black man spoke of the bond he automatically felt with other Men of Color. He first recounted how "the nod" he shared with another Black man in the faculty room added to his sense of comfort. He also connected with a

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Mexican-American colleague and added, "he's got the facility guys. I'm cool with all the facility guys, too. So basically, what it becomes is like the minority men are cool with each other, but, you know, they're always working." These insights show how isolating and culturally shocking a PWIS can be for Educators of Color, especially if they do not feel reflected in the community.

Several teachers underscored the importance of connections with folks of similar experiences and backgrounds to promote their sense of belonging and deal with the isolation. In a tone of relief, one Latinx woman indicated the security she feels when she informally checks in with other Latinx women on her campus: "We just know how to speak to each other in a way that we wouldn't speak with our white counterparts." Speaking on the intersection of race and gender, a Black woman educator asserted, "It definitely matters that there are other black women at the school with whom I can have conversations, whom I can develop a sense of belonging." Lastly, another Latinx woman underscored how this connection, as well as the school's intentional diversification of its faculty, can promote belonging and communicate institutional support. At a previous job, she was "one of two Latinas and this felt very isolating. Currently, I have many other allies and fellow Latinx who allow me to see myself reflected in the school, are a source of inspiration [and] a source of mutual understanding."

Affinity Groups, Mentorship, and Networking

While supportive connections were often informally created, many teachers pointed out the positive impact of affinity groups. mentoring and networking opportunities as intentional and institutional sources of forging connections. Affinity spaces for teachers and staff, students, and parents, served to promote a sense of belonging by allowing Community Members of Color to connect and process their experiences in a PWIS. As she shared about the comfort she felt being around other Educators of Color, one Black woman said,

I felt a sense of belonging because, um, in that space you get to let your guard down and there's less of an expectation to perform professionally... I didn't have to speak complete proper English. Like I can say, um, I guess like more of our cultural language where it's not all the way perfect. I can speak in that tone and manner, and it was still taken seriously.

A Latinx woman educator mentioned that her school's People of Color affinity meetings "really helped because then I could talk to them about the struggles or the things that I've been noticing. And they'll tell me, 'I've gone through that too' or 'experienced this too.'" This empathic connection and the sense of relief it generated was emphasized by another Latinx teacher as she recounted "moments where...I feel either hurt or frustrated or when I know that I need somebody who's just going to get it and not even ask questions or need context. I go to my Latina faculty friends." Finally, a few schools represented by the interviewees offer affinity groups for parents and students, and one Black man echoed the sentiment of unspoken solidarity. He recounted

times where I feel like I had belonged... is like when I am with my black students, when I'm with my black colleagues, when I'm with black parents and they know that I am their link to the institution, um, and they can trust me in a certain way. When I [am] with my black colleagues...I know that I can express something, and I don't have to explain it.

In addition, a few teachers mentioned the importance of being mentored by an Administrator of Color. One Latinx woman teacher commented on how helpful it was to meet with a woman Administrator of Color in order "to have somebody that we can go to, that we can talk to who can guide us through how to navigate this culture, how to understand what an independent school is." As bi-racial male teacher commented about the development of his school's mentoring program to consider adjustments to a PWIS. He noted,

I didn't need much mentoring from the white [department specific] faculty that they paired me with. I needed mentoring from the faculty of color... I think that [mentoring programs] need to hit a number of different points. They need to hit the curriculum… [and] departmental things they need to be aware of, but they need to understand the identity of that teacher that's a [member of] marginalized group and how we can support that teacher and make them feel that they're not alone when they need to sound off on something.

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Not only did Educators of Color find affinity groups to be a safe place of connection and Mentors of Color as a source of support, but they also benefited through attendance at conferences geared towards Teachers of Color in PWIS, such as the annual *People of Color Conference (POCC)* run by the National Association for Independent Schools. Several teachers commented on the benefits of sending teachers to the POCC. One bi-racial teacher reflected that "POCC has been really central in helping me grow and making me feel like I have an outlet." A Black male educator valued the POCC because it "puts a lot of people who are…at predominantly white institutions together to [talk] about those shared experiences… I think… being allowed to have those spaces is huge...in terms of just feeling like you're not alone out there." One teacher who identifies as Black and Latinx noted how he can share his expertise and develop his leadership skills as a presenter at POCC. It is clear from these Teachers of Color that conferences such as POCC can be a source of support, a place of connection, and an opportunity to professionally develop.

Connection with a Sense of Purpose

Not only is the sense of belonging for Educators of Color buoyed by interpersonal connections, but their belonging was also enhanced when they connected to their own sense of purpose in PWIS. This intrapersonal fulfillment seemed to be met when Educators of Color' made meaningful connections with Students of Color and when their schools' purposefully supported Students of Color and their families.

A few Teachers of Color stressed the difference between *being* a representative for diversity purposes and *providing* representation for Students of Color. A Black male teacher simply explained, "I think it's important that black students have somebody that looks like them in their classroom. And I think that it's important that my white students have somebody who

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does not look like them in front of their classroom." To reinforce the importance of representation for Students of Color, a Latinx woman educator shared, "After talking with students of color and like them telling me what they've experienced, what they've gone through... I kind of realized, Oh, they need to… see someone that comes from the same place they came from." In addition to visual representation, another Latinx woman shared about the importance of linguistic representation, as opposed to tokenization, emphasizing "if...I can deepen my connection with a child with my language. I will a thousand percent do that. But I will not record myself for the sound bite to be put on display." For one Black and Mexican male teacher, the isolation of Students of Color weighed on his mind and making connections with his students bolstered his job satisfaction. He poignantly mentioned that at "a meeting of Black alumni...a lot of them said that they never felt seen on campus until they had me as a teacher." Another Black male teacher "jumped at that opportunity" to be the faculty representative for his school's Black Student Union, adding "that's been good to...have some honest conversations with some of our students that are Black so that I felt like I belonged."

A few teachers specifically pointed out how they find purpose through promoting inclusion for Families of Color in PWIS, as well as providing psychological safety and mental health for Students of Color. One Latinx male teacher observed, "Whenever I step on a campus... there's an interaction of families of color or seeing how the treatment of families of color is... I think about, well, my work here is to continue to help build those bridges." Another Latinx woman affirmed her purpose on campus by stating, "I want different families to be included in our interview process. Right...I want to see a representation of Latinos at our campus. So it's stuff [translation of school materials and presentations] that I... lovingly and willingly take on." In addition to supporting families, three teachers specifically expressed the importance of providing

emotional support for Students of Color from mental health professionals. Some schools may need to make this human resource investment, as one Latinx female teacher indicated, "We don't have a campus psychologist, a school psychologist, and we definitely need that for students." Two other teachers alluded to the importance of hiring a Counselor or Psychologist of Color so that Students of Color could find a sense of comfort through representation. One Latinx woman argued, "If we're going to emphasize mental health and … that is something that, you know, we want to make sure our students are [healthy], and we have two white psychologists. That's a problem." Lastly, a Black woman underscored this problem by pointing out that "when you go from four to two (counselors) and you cut the two women of color in that entire department" it hinders the ability of the school to holistically meet the needs of Students of Color.

The sense of belonging felt by many teachers as they support Students of Color and their families was evident in many interviews. One Black woman educator indicated that her connection "is not just having my colleagues who helped me create a sense of belonging. It's me thinking, like they [the school] recognize the needs of the students and they're actively doing things for our students." To show how important it is for Teachers of Color to be able to fulfill a sense of purpose on campus, one teacher emphasized,

> After the 2016 presidential elections, we at the time did not have any kind of student organization. And I arrived at school and found about 10 students in [my] office waiting for me, realizing that they just wanted a space where they could process, and they felt safe processing that with me. And that was the first time I realized that I belonged in this community. I served a larger purpose than just teaching.

While the belonging for many Teachers of Color was bolstered by the connections they made with other People of Color and the purpose they found through supporting Students of Color, the tenuous nature of belonging for Teachers of Color in PWIS was evident by instances where their expertise was questioned and/or doubted.

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Questions About Expertise

As identified in the extant academic literature and demonstrated in the discussion above, two of the challenges for Educators of Color are a minimization of expertise and a question of fit. In the interviews, several Teachers of Color shared about instances when they were questioned by adults in the school community, especially parents, thereby creating an additional burden for them to validate their own expertise as well as a disruption to their process of "feel[ing] themselves to be an integral part of" their school. In the survey, Teachers of Color identified race, age, and gender as the three main reasons why they were judged.

Parental Judgement and Doubt

Many interviewees in my study discussed these experiences of receiving judgement and doubt, confirming a survey result that Teachers of Color felt more closely monitored than their white colleagues. One Black male teacher received parental pushback when he used a collection of essays by Ta-Nehisi Coates as a supplementary text, the content of which often references white supremacy. He elaborated, "There's an element of parents that, it's not that they question my expertise... they know I know what I'm talking about, and they don't like what I'm teaching. And so they fight back on that." Parents also probed teachers' assessment practices. One Black woman shared, "The families definitely questioned my ability. Not directly to me. They would email the department chair asking questions about the content I was teaching, wanting to meet, to discuss an essay in which I graded unbeknownst to them." This teacher went on to share about the grade norming practices of her department, which she could have described if the parents would have asked her directly.

A few other teachers shared about interactions with parents where the doubt and dismissiveness were either veiled or undisguised. A Black woman shared about her treatment

during conferences with parents. She recounted, "All of the parents were white except for an Indian couple. Okay. So it might've been age...but it just felt like they weren't talking to me. They were talking to the other advisor who is Asian and white." This teacher intimated that there appeared to be racist and agist dynamics at play in these interactions. Meanwhile, a Latinx woman noted that parents question her expertise during conferences and through email: "I get the sense that they're questioning if I've made the right choice or if I'm doing the right thing." While the judgment from parents can be subtle and indirect, there are times when it is more directly offensive. Another Latinx woman, a seasoned educator, revealed,

> I've been told before by students to my face, like, oh my dad said that you're the Spanish teacher that you can't be that smart. Right, and you know, there's been instances like that where…I wonder if my male white colleagues have ever been spoken to like this.

Covert or overt, several Teachers of Color reported dealing with scrutiny from parents that is based on reasons that differ from their white peers.

Reasons for Questioning Teachers of Color

The racial background of a teacher as a reason for judgement or doubt, especially from parents, was evident in the interviews. When thinking about why his expertise has been doubted, one Black and Latinx male teacher mentioned, "I think to a big degree… there's not the assumption of competence [and] community comradery that I think some of the white faculty get." Another Black male teacher underscored that Teachers of Color may not get the benefit of the doubt that their white colleagues get until parents get to know them in person. He relayed, "When you're face-to-face... you're having these conversations with parents. They get it at the end of the day, but initially right. They questioned the methods. Um, I think more often than they do of my white colleagues." Observing that his Black peers may bear the brunt of parental judgment, one Asian American male teacher noted that his Black colleagues have "had

encounters with parents of students, I guess, questioning, or at least that perception of the questioning their expertise...Those kinds of forces are at play... but me personally, I mean, luckily I haven't felt that way."

In addition to race as a reason for judgment, Teachers of Color also noted the intersections of age and gender at play, acknowledging the specific challenges borne by Women of Color in PWIS. When asked about a time when her expertise was questioned by parents, an Asian American woman educator observed,

> I'm the only female person of color actually of...four core junior high teachers. They're all white and, um, and they're all older as well. So I don't know if that plays a part, but I think it also has to do with math and...people have strong feelings about math one way or the other and anxiety and worry.

When she shared this anecdote, she seemed to give more credence to the parental anxiety about math and discount the possible judgement that she faced as a young Woman of Color. A perspective shared by a Black woman teacher echoed the multi-layered challenges faced by educators who are members of multiple marginalized communities. When she was promoted, she "felt that being both black and female as a leader of a department put me in a position where I had to prove myself. There's a little bit of a lack of trust, but that was more from parents." She went on to wonder if her white, male counterpart would have experienced the same lack of trust from parents:

> The white male teacher who was in that counterpart role had a certain level of respect, gravitas that was partially afforded by virtue of the amount of time that he'd been at the institution, but partially afforded [by] virtue of his gender and probably race as well… Observing that kind of response impacts my ability as an individual to stand up for myself, to assert myself. I do feel wow. My leadership, my authority is questioned.

Finally, a Black male educator noted the additional burden faced by Black women at his school. He reflected, "Women of color, specifically black women of color...there's just a different level

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of skepticism that you know misogyny is applied and then combine the racism with the misogyny...because I'm a man that doesn't affect me."

Burden of Proving Expertise

To address the prejudicial judgements of school community members and even combat the stereotype threat that arises from such judgements, Educators of Color often felt the pressure to prove their qualifications and value, especially to parents. Seven of the 21 teachers interviewed reported a need to present their educational credentials in order to prove that they belong or are qualified. One Latinx woman related,

> The parents don't think I know enough because I look young. So I learned to kind of remind parents that I have a master's degree in Spanish linguistics, and...I understand how the language works and how second language acquisition works. So I always bring that up when we do 'back to school night.'

Echoing a similar experience, a Black male teacher said he "frequently tell[s] people, I have a degree in business management...my master's in education...I'm not just a dumb jock... I actually know how to run numbers. I've worked in corporate America...I got the receipts." This inequitable pressure to present "receipts" also plays out when parents compare Educators of Color to white ones. One Black woman noted how Educators of Color, especially younger ones, need to prove themselves more than older, white teachers. She remarked,

> It was very interesting seeing them interact with me and the other...teacher who at the time had been at the school over 25 years and was in her sixties. I remember walking out after 'back to school night' and seeing one of the families that I had just had in my room asking me questions about where I went to school, what degrees I had, how long I'd been teaching, [and then] being really chummy with the...seasoned teacher.

While the presentation of credentials may garner some good will for some Teachers of Color, others shared that the pressure to prove oneself is perennial. One Black woman divulged, "I know other colleagues have expressed that parents have not necessarily treated them [professionally], and it may be impacted by...race, but for me, I wonder if [professional

treatment] has anything to do with having a PhD." A Latinx woman with a PhD indicated that she does not leave any room for doubt, as she is "very clear about my title, so I don't think the parents specifically... I haven't had as much questioning of my professionalism in this position." Even with the academic credentials, one bi-racial male teacher confided,

> There is a pressure to constantly [prove] yourself. I'm not sure that it's too much better for even white colleagues, but I think right now, especially with everything going on in terms of emphasis on history, curriculums, and race, I think all teachers feel targeted and put on the spot.

> To close this section, I would like to acknowledge how the various pressures faced for

Educators of Color may evolve after years of proving oneself to their school community. A

Latinx woman narrated,

> I'm starting to feel a level of respect that, you know, I don't even question if I'm a woman or if I'm Brown, right. Because I feel like I've worked with them enough where they understand what I can produce ... bring to the table. I'm not second guessing myself about what they're thinking about me in my capacity. With my peers, I feel the same way. I feel pretty confident about my different identities. And I feel confident that regardless of the stereotypes that are out there about women of color, that I've proven myself enough with my colleagues that I don't think that affects me as much.

In this reflection, she captured a multitude of challenges encountered by Teachers of Color in PWIS: imposter syndrome, self-doubt, stereotypes based on gender and race, and pressures to adapt and perform. The interview selections in the next section build upon this reflection.

Additional Barriers to Belonging for Teachers of Color

The interviews discussed in this chapter so far reveal that Teachers of Color, on the whole, felt less of a sense of belonging than their white colleagues, resulting from their developing fewer connections, experiencing a greater level of scrutiny and questioning of their expertise, and managing the pressure to prove themselves to their own school community members, especially to parents. This section presents more specific barriers that hinder the sense of belonging for Educators of Color in PWIS; these barriers are interrelated with the concept of

an individual's racial sense of belonging as described by Stevenson and Coleman (2013). In particular, the interview discussed below spotlight two challenges to one's racial sense of belonging: the affirmation (or lack thereof) of one's racial identity, and experiences of racist microaggressions. In addition to these specific challenges, the findings discussed below substantiated that Teachers of Color not only face added pressures as they adjust to working in a PWIS, but they also shouldered extra diversity-related tasks.

Experiences of Microaggressions and Racism

During the interviews, several Teachers of Color recounted experiences of racism and microaggressions committed by all members of the school community. For white students in PWIS, sometimes their only exposure to Latinx adults may be in service positions, and this drove the microaggression endured by one Latinx woman. She commented, "I'm a Spanish teacher, which can be cliche. Latina, Spanish teacher. ...I know that oftentimes [students] referenced their nannies. So I know that they're used to seeing Latinos in certain positions." An Asian American woman described a similar situation in which students operated based on stereotypes. She remembered a small group that was "all white [and] we were doing a problem. Some of these boys said like Ching Chong, you know, like kind of that stereotypical. And I remember feeling really uncomfortable about that and not knowing how to address it." These two incidents highlight two experiences of racism where the student perpetrators drew upon stereotypes of their teachers' racial or ethnic group.

Microaggressions were also committed by parents who failed to check their own racial assumptions or conditioning or take the time to get to know the Educators of Color working with their children. A Black male teacher shared that he is one of two Black men in the classroom on campus, and one day a father of one of his students called him by the other Black man's name.

Shaking his head, this teacher explained to me: "[There are] two of us here. Your son has been in both of our classes. So it's not that you shouldn't know who I am. You just haven't done that kind of taking that time." A Latinx man relayed a similar interaction he had with a parent who said, "'Yeah, John's doing really great in Spanish. Thanks.' And I was like, 'I'm new this year.'" This teacher told me about his internal monologue: "Um, I'm the only bald teacher. So the fact that you would think I'm the Spanish teacher, which we don't even look alike. You're just like, 'Oh, Mexican guy must be this.'" Mistaking one Teacher of Color for another seems cliché now, yet it still happens, and there was a clear tone of frustration shared by the teachers above.

White colleagues and administrators also committed microaggressions of the "y'all look the same" or "are you the _____ teacher?" variety. When introducing new faculty at an opening all school assembly, the photos and names of two new Black women teachers were reversed, and the administrator did not notice the error. In the interview, this teacher painfully remembered the other woman's "picture is up there with my name in [my] department, [and] the Head of School proceeds to say that this person [in the] picture is my name to the entire school community." The error was not corrected, nor apologized for in person, and on the first day of classes, this teacher had to spend the first few moments of class convincing her observant students that she was indeed their teacher. Some teachers felt dismissed by their colleagues. A Latinx woman mentioned that the microaggressions she endures most are about her appearance. She admitted, "I don't fit that Latina look, whatever that is," and she shared that some colleagues share, "'Oh my gosh, I didn't realize.' Or 'Why do you speak Spanish so well,' or 'You don't look Latina.'" In a similar experience, a Black male teacher remembered wearing basketball shorts and a t-shirt to a casual in-service day, and he said "on three different occasions people ask[ed] me what I coached. I was like, I don't coach anything. I'm an English teacher. Right…That wasn't vitriolic,

but it was like, my professionalism was questioned." These experiences attested to the burdens

Teachers of Color face as they deal with racist words or actions grounded in stereotypes and

dismissiveness.

Tokenization

In the survey, almost two-thirds (63.3%) of Educators of Color were "often" or

"sometimes" asked to be a spokesperson for their identified racial or ethnic group. This high

percentage (as compared to 10.8% for their white colleagues), and the accompanying burden

experienced by Educators of Color, was echoed in several interviews. One Black woman matter-

of-factly stated, "That's just the nature of being a teacher of color in independent schools. You

are one of the few, but that piece of feeling like your presence is for show. That piece is

real...students feel it, too." She advised,

> Administrators should be really careful about tapping their students of color and their
> faculty of color for those PR shots and those marketing moments. Um, it's gotta be
> authentic for students to feel like, and for faculty to feel like you actually want to create a
> diverse community, as opposed to simply presenting the appearance of a diverse
> community.

The notion of appearances was not lost upon one Latinx woman teacher who was asked to speak

Spanish in a promotional video. She declined the school's request for her involvement: "They

were making a video... and if you know another language, you could say, blah, blah, blah thing

in another language. For me, I'm not signing up for that a hundred percent...I'm not for display

like that." Tokenizing can also manifest in pigeon-holding Teachers of Color into certain racially

assumptive roles. One Black woman sighed, "It used to be that I did the black history month

chapel every year and for years I did it, and they would always come to me to do it. I finally was

like, I'm not doing it [anymore]." From these few experiences, the frustration of being tokenized

or taken for granted seemed palpable for several Educators of Color.

Pressures of Adapting and Code-Switching

Teachers of Color also spoke of the challenges of adapting to their school culture and work environment, especially if it was their first time working in a PWIS. Code-switching, or the practice of shifting the languages one uses or the way one expresses themselves in conversations within a white school environment, appeared to be a regular process for several Educators of Color as they adapted to their PWIS. One Latinx woman talked about her realization of this need to adapt when she first started teaching at her school. She shared,

> I've always been with other people of color. I grew up in Compton...a black, Latino community. And so I think that was when I first started feeling I didn't belong was kind of knowing that my [new] students were from a different socioeconomic class. They were from a different, um, not just generation, but, um, way of thinking from where, from what I grew up in.

In order to adapt, some teachers modulated how they spoke. One Black and Latinx male teacher offered, "I'm an English teacher and I speak pretty good English. And I grew up here in Los Angeles and I don't have too bad of an accent. Most of the time I can code switch though." Yet even if one adapted their speech patterns, they might still need to adjust their overall presentation so as not to make waves in the predominantly white school. Another Black and Latinx teacher recounted advice he heard from an Administrator, advising him to "keep [his] head down and do what you do. Just don't do it as loudly." He added that he learned how to conform and "present [himself] at school. It was, you know, always be smiling and always be the nice guy. And if there's something [wrong], figure out a way to say it that's not going to upset." The implication was not to "upset" the predominantly white families of the students he taught. At times, this pressure to fit in could cause doubt about one's belonging at the school. One Latinx woman confided, "I've always tried to blend in and in that process, I always thought that I was the one that did something wrong or didn't get it and I've got to, you know, work at it more." These

experiences highlight the balancing act performed by many Teachers of Color as they seek their place in their schools while being authentic to themselves.

The weight and inevitability of code-switching and adapting to the culture of a PWIS manifests themselves in different ways for some Educators of Color. One teacher noted how he is uniquely aware of his presence as a Black male on campus. He mused,

> I am constantly aware of, you know, with all of my students and especially my students who identify as female, just how I engage with them...Regardless of what my intent was, the impact of my actions can put me in danger, and you know, a specific experience, kind of relating to Amy Cooper.

The matter of factness of his response, especially as he accepted how people may interpret current events in different ways, spoke to how he needs to navigate interactions in order to maintain his livelihood. Just as this teacher needed to calculate how his actions would be interpreted by white people in the school community, a Black woman teacher noted a similar pressure to make other people feel comfortable. She described,

> You're thinking about many other things that determine your value, your worth, [and] your job security moving forward. You're thinking about masking yourself, maybe code switching...because you are trying to control as much as possible. How other people respond to you…[This] can distract from... I mean, remove energy from your ability to give yourself fully to your students.

The psychological toll of shaping oneself to fit into a norm also gave this teacher pause as she wondered if she would be willing to send her own children to her school. These additional burdens borne by Teachers of Color also extended to responsibilities outside of the classroom.

Extra Labor

While most independent school teachers are familiar with a clause in their contract that states "you may also be asked to complete duties as expected," this clause appears to hold additional weight for Educators of Color. The additional "duties as expected" of Educators of Color may require a level of investment that is not equivalent to extra duties asked of their white

counterparts, especially since, as already discussed, Teachers of Color are often expected to be spokespersons for their racial or ethnic group.

The importance of this issue and its connection to one's job satisfaction and sense of purpose were evident in several interview responses. One Latinx woman teacher gladly assumed the role as a faculty representative for a Latinx student affinity group with the understanding that it might be "like a club and it was very relaxed." Yet when she started to engage in the work, she realized that it was "not easy work…. we're dealing with students and their identity and the layer of being...typically marginalized. These are students who have expressed things like their parents don't come to campus because they're ashamed of how they look." A bi-racial teacher identified that extracurricular roles on his campus may be lumped together even though some roles may be inequivalent. He assumed a DEI coordinator role at his school and disclosed his surprise when he learned that his stipend would be similar to a teacher proctoring a study hall

> who just shows up and has no lesson plan and has students do homework...After my first year of being a coordinator, I was exhausted and felt [my stipend] was not enough. So I went in with the DEI team and had a conference with the head of school and the HR director, and we negotiated a raise.

It is evident that Educators of Color want to do extra work to serve Students of Color, families, and fellow teachers. That stated, they also want their school leaders to understand that this work, which is mission critical for PWIS trying to diversify and become more inclusive, taxes one's time and energy. One Latinx woman stressed that she does translation work because she wants "different families to be included in our interview process. I want to see a representation of Latinos at our campus." She added this is a job she "willingly take[s] on without...compensation. However, I do feel that at times...more is asked of me than I can give... I know it's because of my mentality because I'm just so willingly open to do it." Even though this teacher admits to being open to the work, she intimated that the school may take advantage of

her willingness or fail to spread out these responsibilities. Balancing the workload for Educators of Color is vital to prevent burnout that is endemic for all educators, but also to reduce the racial battle fatigue that is experienced by Educators of Color (Flynn, 2015; Smith, 2004). Another Latinx woman who serves on her school's faculty diversity task force noticed the toll of the work on the co-chairs. She explained,

> Every time I see them at staff meetings, they look so exhausted…I feel like there's… just extra work that was added on [for them]. The chairs get paid extra finally, but...all the other people on the committee, we're just doing that on our own time.

The time and emotional and physical energy and time spent on this work is evident from the voices of Educators of Color, and they are asking their schools to acknowledge, compensate, and create more equitable conditions for them.

Experiences of Institutional and Leadership Support

The academic literature on teacher turnover repeatedly mentioned the importance of administrator support for all teachers. Also, as examined in previous chapters, the school and its leaders can play an important role in promoting or hindering the *racial sense of belonging* of Teachers of Color (Stevenson & Coleman, 2013), especially when it concerns the school's commitment to diversity work, the response of leaders to racism, the racial awareness of leaders, and the willingness of leaders to engage in racial questioning and face racial conflict. Therefore, specific interview questions set out to investigate the level of leadership and institutional support experienced by teachers related to these areas. As the interview selections reveal, Teachers of Color reported varying levels of satisfaction, frustration, and belonging with their respective school's progress in diversity work, especially in the areas of racial awareness of leaders, engagement in conversations about race and racism, and intervention with parents.

Racial Awareness of Leaders

Several Teachers of Color reported that their school leaders try to understand their experience as marginalized persons at PWIS, but teachers are also frustrated with the limits to that understanding due to leaders' lack of racial awareness. Regarding the lack of awareness of some of her school leaders, one Black woman shared, "I can't just be a teacher. I'm always a teacher and like I'm a black teacher...They just see me show up and do my job and assume it's the same way they [white teachers] approach their[s]." Elaborating on her point and the frustration she has with the Head of School, she added,

> I don't think she gets what it's like on our campus. I think she understands what it's like in the larger world, but not when I get in the classroom. And I'm talking about the internment camps. I'm talking about the Harlem Renaissance. I'm talking about the Trail of Tears. What it's like for me to communicate those things versus one of my white counterparts, that's lost on her.

The leader's seemingly color-blind mentality did not allow her to see the challenges that Educators of Color may face when teaching about certain historical events that may be more charged in this political backdrop.

There are also examples of supportive administrators. When speaking about her direct supervisor, a teacher offered, "I think my...director appreciates my presence... that, you know, I have to handle some challenges that my white colleagues don't because I'm [a] fairly younger black woman." Another Black woman educator appreciated the efforts of a supportive department chair who she categorized as "very aware, very open. She will just listen." She continued that this supervisor "gets what it's like to be a teacher of color," and is actively trying to diversify her department by recruiting "a socioeconomic diversity... racial diversity, [and] sexual orientation. She is trying to mimic the society that exists outside of the four walls."

Even with evidence of progress, another teacher's experience highlights the need for on-going growth and continuous training. A bi-racial woman noted the importance of allyship from an administrator. She confided that one of her administrators "cares very deeply about DEI work. He's actually led some white groups at POCC several times…. You really need that person, you know, that will help... move things forward." While she appreciated this show of continued support, she also noted DEI work is a team effort that requires ongoing training. When asked about how her administrators could grow in their racial literacy and awareness, she suggested,

> Like regular, you know, study [of] cultural competency, what it means to be in an inclusive school. What are ouch moments for people of color or... just all these little like complex things that...you have to spend time with. You can't have an hour for Rosetta Lee (an independent school DEI consultant) and think you're done. That's the frustration. It doesn't penetrate because there isn't enough interest or there isn't an expectation.

Engagement in Conversations About Race and Racism

For Educators of Color, the willingness and ability of school leaders to engage in honest, transparent, and accountable conversations and race and racism is crucial for their sense of belonging, and more specifically their sense of safety, support, and well-being on campus. The variation of experiences based on race, gender, and experience or age was captured in my interviews, yet the responses tended more towards revealing frustration with the lack of engagement and reckoning of a leader or institution. One Asian American woman acknowledged that her school leaders try to initiate such conversations with faculty, yet it does not seem to be a priority. Sharing about how this might be connected to whether she stays or leaves her school, she mentioned, "I don't want to bolt because I and a few other colleagues are the ones who often have to bring up the uncomfortable conversation because [our school] has been a really comfortable...very homogenous place for a long time." Holding on to a sense of purpose to make her school a more inclusive space grounded in transparency was also the hope of another Black

woman, but she was not sure if her school wanted to have such difficult conversations. She hoped that her school leaders could "go back to maybe our... earlier years and talk about why [they] were hesitant...to have affinity groups. Why [the hesitancy] if a particular student was experiencing racism from their fellow students?" While this teacher was generally content with her belonging at her school, she specifically worried about the experiences of young Black males and wondered if the administrators would address this ongoing concern.

A few other participant responses focused on their leaders' willingness to honestly engage with difficult and painful conversations. One Latinx woman educator recognized the "Black@" Instagram account connected to her school as an attempt by Students of Color and alumni to pressure leaders into honest conversations about the school culture after George Floyd's murder. She lamented,

> When we started reading [the posts] as teachers, we were like, Oh my God... and the head ...did not respond in the way that I think I would have responded. To this day, we have not as a faculty had a discussion about that Instagram account.

Whether this necessary conversation was avoided or dismissed was not clear, yet this teacher's discouragement, expressed on behalf of her students past and present, was palpable. She did add that this experience fortified her sense of purpose to remain at her school and support her Students of Color. Zooming out from a specific incident, a Latinx and Black male teacher outlined a historical reality that merits a reckoning in many PWIS. He elaborated,

> The problem is you have people who deny that they're acting on a prejudice because they haven't done the work and they think it's normal. So for school leaders to say, 'Hey, this...school, culture and environment was not created with students of color in mind, with families of color in mind...' If you look at the founding pictures, there were no black teachers. So what's curriculum look like? What does your culture look like?... You have to start asking those questions once you've admitted that the school was not designed [with Communities of Color in mind].

As illustrated in the above selection of interviewee responses, Teachers of Color called for an honest discussion about race and racism as necessary on campus, and they would like their administrators to take the lead.

Intervention with Parents

Oftentimes school leaders are called upon to engage in conversations about race and racism with the predominantly white parent population, yet Interviewees of Color reported varied levels of support from their respective school leaders. Leaders seemed hesitant to take a stand on curricular or programmatic issues, perhaps without knowing the potential physical risk and probable emotional impact such hesitation had on Educators of Color. One female educator recounted the uncertainty she felt when dealing with potential donor parents as a Woman of Color in an educational leadership position. She shared,

> For my first three years, [I felt] a lack of security...because this is an independent school. So if one of those parents who happens to question [my department] is a donor, or has an ear, you know, has a power lever, will I be trusted or will it be the parent?

One Black male teacher did not need to wait and see who would be "catered to," as he was asked to make changes to his reading list. He remembered, "I've been asked to switch the two [and] make the anchor text the traditional book, and then make Kendrick [Lamar lyrics] the supplemental. That's an example of when I feel I don't belong." This teacher changed his curriculum to appease parents, but he even received threats from parents who called his curriculum anti-Semitic. Parents demanded "that [we]... meet on the football field… accusing me of indoctrinating students...and I feared for my physical safety." His head of school eventually "in his weekly newsletters or whatever, like he addressed it. He said that this is unacceptable. He supported my curriculum," yet this support displayed a hesitant reaction that potentially put a Teacher of Color under his care at risk of physical harm.

The inclination to appease the predominant white parent community can also indirectly impact Educators of Color who are advocating for the marginalized Parent of Color community. One Latinx woman educator who is responsible for sharing about speaker events with the community suggested that her school has "prioritized fragile white families over empowering our black and Brown families." More specifically, she "noticed that if it's something that...touch[es] on white supremacy…I think that there's this, like, we're not going to share that because it's going to upset families and it's like, yes, but it's going to empower other families." When leaders did intervene and support Teachers of Color or the school's diversity mission, several teachers reported that this action promoted their sense of belonging and safety. One Black and Latinx male teacher pointed out the pre-existence of a meaningful relationship contributed to why his administrator would defend him when parents crossed a line. This teacher shared,

> My relationship with him was such that he was leaning on me or asking me questions about issues of diversity, about my experience, and he has been supportive. I know for a fact that he has told some parents to go check themselves before they come this way, um, because they're coming at it from the wrong perspective.

This school leader appeared to understand that investment in relationships with Teachers of Color can lead to more equitable and inclusive communities as well as more satisfied and secure Educators of Color in a PWIS.

Individualized Relationship Building

Several Teachers of Color expressed wanting their school leaders to better understand the experiences of People of Color in predominantly white schools *and* get to know them as individuals with unique skills, interests, and expertise. An important first step for school leaders is to first understand that the experiences of Teachers of Color are different from their white colleagues. Some teachers appeared exasperated by leaders' lack of understanding as they shared with a tone of resignation. Identifying the feeling that Teachers of Color can just be seen as

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notches in a belt of diversity, one Black woman educator bemoaned, "I don't know if [my school leaders] will ever understand what it's like to teach as a person of color at -------. I don't think she values it as a retention tool...She's very much just into the...bottom line." A Latinx woman shared a similar sentiment about her school leader, yet the perceived lack of awareness of her identity and language skills, especially since she taught a few ELA students, was striking. She had "a feeling that [her school leader] doesn't know my name. When she sees me in the hallway and smiles, but I don't think she knows who I am… [or that I] speak Spanish." Lastly, when I asked a Black male teacher if his school leaders understood what it is like to be a Teacher of Color as his school, he referenced their color-blind approach. He said flatly, "I think they assume everyone is the same...Like [one leader] is a woman of color...She's the closest to having this sense of understanding, but no, I don't think they understand. I don't even think it's a thing."

If there is an awareness of different experiences for Educators of Color, and this awareness leads to understanding in a relationship, this may increase a teacher's commitment to the school. One Black woman teacher observed, "When you have that sense that you are...as a person valued, not just what you do, not just the service you provide, but the spirit which you bring. When that's valued, then you're much more willing to give." Even if there is a personal and relational investment, it needs to be grounded in an openness to listen and learn from Teachers of Color. An Asian American woman educator reiterated the need for school leaders to understand that the white experience is not the norm. To illustrate the point, she recalled, "Last summer's [faculty read] was *White Fragility*. I was gonna read it anyway, but I was upset that that was [the book]. Again, it's like centering the white experience and we're already a predominantly white school." Lastly, a Black male teacher recommended leaders to be intentional about inviting Educators of Color into a relationship. He shared, "I would advise

leadership to make space for advocacy because we, as people of color, as marginalized groups need to feel like we can express when we feel marginalized." By developing awareness through listening to and learning from Educators of Color, school leaders can promote belonging and offer authentic support.

Trust and Autonomy

On the other side of the coin of questioning and scrutiny from adults in the school community lies the desire of many Educators of Color to be trusted and given autonomy by their school leaders. Several teachers expressed a desire for trust to be given - as opposed to trust earned - to be able to implement curricula and pedagogical approaches that matched their expertise. At the most basic level, Teachers of Color wanted their leaders to show trust through listening, for they are talented and experienced educators. A Black woman educator emphasized that Teachers of Color "want the school to realize that...many of us feel like even if we don't have, you know, a master's in American studies or we're not DEI people, that we actually are pretty gosh, darn close." In regard to his ideas about teaching during the pandemic, an Asian American male teacher wanted his administrators to "at least hear people out and not just be dismissive right off the bat is, um, something that's super important…. It also helps to build good relationships with teachers." A Latinx woman echoed this sentiment: "We have ideas that work. I know that you probably want to research all our ideas, but give us some credit, you know. Trust us."

Underlying these pleas for trust are feelings of frustration, and the continued dismissal of ideas can lead to feelings of disrespect that hinder a sense of belonging. One Black male teacher confided, "If I do make a suggestion, I feel like it's just kind of glossed over or continuously being interrupted...Those sorts of things occur on a regular basis and that's frustrating." He also

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intimated he tends to be quiet at faculty meetings, and it makes me wonder if he is quiet because he often feels dismissed. A Black woman shared a specific incident about how her expertise and hard work was discounted by her school leader. She recounted that she and

> this other colleague, who's a person of color…[did] this research [about processes to support struggling students]. And it was like maybe we (the two women and administrator) should talk to this person before we start to actually do it. Then another white colleague says something about it, maybe about a month or two later. And it was all of a sudden put into action... And none of these people were like [trained] researchers. And I just thought, wow.

This teacher expressed frustration at being undervalued for her expertise and for not being trusted, even though she and her colleague had more research skills than their white peers.

On the other hand, when trust is given and this leads to autonomy for Educators of Color, it can engender feelings of belonging and beget positive educational by-products for students. One Black and Latinx male teacher appreciated the creative space he received from his department chair and principal that led to his culturally responsive curriculum. He boasted, "I've been doing that for almost 30 years, man...In my classes, this is nothing new. I've always taught a diverse curriculum [that] is justice oriented. It's just who I am." Echoing this appreciation of some pedagogical and curricular freedom, a Black woman shared, "My middle school director is great…. She's very hands-off. I feel tons of autonomy...I think other people want more direction. I don't want or need that. So I feel like she backs me up." Lastly, a Latinx woman educator acknowledged that her division head "let's us have the autonomy in our classroom....I feel like that translates into you trust us to do our job. That it's kind of hands off." As opposed to feelings of frustration, these educators expressed a sense of empowerment. Not only is this empowerment necessary on an individual level to promote a sense of belonging and support, but several Educators of Color also called for the empowerment that comes from increasing their representation in the faculty and administration.

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Hire and Empower Educators of Color

Many Teachers of Color also shared that they would like to move beyond comfort to belonging, and they recommended that schools focus on hiring and empowering Educators of Color and leaders. Some interviewees mentioned they are more likely to stay at their current school if they see an intentional effort to hire more Teachers of Color, conveying a feeling of tentative optimism as their schools focused on increasing the diversity in the faculty. One Black and Latinx male teacher clarified, "There's a difference between representation and representatives...we don't want to hire somebody just because they, um, help our diversity numbers. We want to hire someone who actually walks the walk, talks the talk, and does the work." To ensure that representation may be reached, People of Color need to be involved in the hiring process. One Black female teacher patiently shared, "I have asked all four years as the director of DEI to be part of, because it's part of our mission, the hiring process. So I think because we have a new board president that it's happening this year." The presence of People of Color on hiring committees can have a positive impact. One bi-racial male teacher was encouraged to see "administrators of color in my interview. That was comforting to me to see authority figures in the school leaders." Yet, as one Latinx male teacher stressed, the Leaders of Color must be empowered to create more inclusive schools. He explained, "We hire Teachers of Color...not really thinking about administrators of color. It creates an institutionalized system that perpetuates the same hierarchy...we want diversity, but diversity is seen through people who don't have that same shared power." Not only can better representation attract diverse talent, but it can also aid retention efforts, as expressed by a Black male educator. He shared,

> [The] vice principal, he is a black man...He was able, in spaces with the other admin, to give language. He had the tools to be able to support me and explain, you know, what was happening...And he's a big reason why, you know, why [my school] has retained me because I know I had that support from an administrator the way he has my back."

Even though some teachers benefited from the support of Administrators of Color, experiences of isolation appeared to be more prevalent. One Asian American woman educator spoke about the toll it takes to be one of the only or few Educators of Color in a PWIS as she talked about her mentor, another Woman of Color. She wondered, "I don't know how many head Teachers of Color there ever have been. But she really is powerful. She is also exhausted…. I was like, Oh my God, I can't believe she's by herself for so long." Making the point more directly, a Latinx and Black male teacher appealed, "That's what faculty of color need on these campuses. To be able to say...I'm not siloed here. I have people like me who have shared experiences, who I might be able… [to] share my worries and fears with." To fill this need, teachers alluded to a critical mass, but that number may differ from school to school. A Black male teacher elaborated,

> If there were more Teachers of Color or more men who looked like me, would that contribute to a sense of belonging or decreased a sense of isolation that I may feel? Yes, absolutely. What would that mean… If there were 10 Teachers of Color, I would feel okay. Or 12, I'd feel great, and 15 would be awesome.

The importance of fortifying, supporting, and empowering the group of Educators of Color at a PWIS is integral. To move away from the numbers game, one Black woman articulated a hope that school leaders would think about the tangible and undeniable benefits that accompany a more diverse faculty:

> I would ask administrators to change their mindset from numbers, percentages, or ratios into the human fabric. What is this person's experience going to communicate or demonstrate for our student population? How will it help them grow? How would it expose them to things that they may not see in their daily lives?

Lack of Clarity in Policies or Consistent Enforcement

In the interviews, one specific frustration that arose from a few teachers was the lack of clear discipline procedures when students commit a racist act or behave inappropriately towards

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a Faculty Member of Color. While at times a case-by-case disciplinary approach may work, such

malleability of a stated "zero tolerance" policy struck Educators of Color as detrimental to the

wellbeing and safety of all People of Color on campus, especially students. One Black woman

emphasized the detrimental impact caused when such violations are ignored or de-prioritized.

She observed,

> If you don't acknowledge it, you can just sweep it under the rug and move right along.
> That's what we've done for way too long. And that makes it so Teachers of Color don't
> want to stay...cause they don't know when that next moment that they're going to see a
> student who does that and then it gets ignored.

The frustration in her voice was clear as she insinuated the school has poorly handled these

situations "for way too long." She indicated the cumulative impact of this pattern may negatively

impact Teachers of Color, and when sharing about a specific incident, she explained how such

sweeping "under the rug" may hinder the sense of belonging for Students and Teachers of Color.

When talking about the lack of follow-up by an administrator after a white student mimicked a

rapper by wearing an Afro wig on Halloween, she criticized, "There was no accountability...no

public reminding of the students [of] the standards of decorum and talking about why this isn't

acceptable...there's part of the sense of belonging that's contributed to by being more honest as a

school." Ultimately, the harm of such disregard or mishandling of incidents has "lasting impacts,

I believe on these kids," shared a Black male teacher. He went on to lament about the lack of

accountability for using racist language at his school:

> Let's just say [someone uses] the N word, right...There are people of color who are
> faculty, people of color who are students. They can't get away from that...There's not
> enough that's being done to try. Acknowledge that there is a problem one, and then the
> steps taken towards fixing those problems.

This teacher was calling on his school leaders simply to be willing to engage in conversations

about racism, for if this type of language is tolerated, it will continue to harm the Community of

Color on campus. More specifically, two teachers mentioned that such continued tolerance or indifference causes them to question if they would send their kids to the school.

Favoritism Shown to Students and Families

Six of the interviewed teachers noted the favoritism shown to, or lack of accountability demanded of, certain students and families. This indicates an embedded roadblock to ensuring accountability and developing a more respectful school culture. A few teachers specifically mentioned how they, or Students of Color they teach, have been harmed by such special treatment. One bi-racial teacher of Mexican descent divulged a painful experience he endured in Spring 2020 in which there was no commensurate accountability or amends. He divulged,

> I was prank called 12 times in the middle of the night...all in fake Mexican accents, um, which I felt was a direct attack on my racial identity...I brought all of this to the attention of the school...and of course nothing was done...not even a detention. All of these students…started [at the school] in kindergarten and were about to graduate. [These] students could pretty much burn the building down and, and they're still going to be given a diploma...In a follow-up meeting, it was horrific. I mean, I was in tears.

With this incident, the school chose to show favoritism to the student perpetrators at the expense of the emotional well-being and sense of safety of a Teacher of Color. Another Latinx woman teacher shared about a similar incident that undercut her sense of belonging at her school and complicated her adjustment to a new school environment. She recounted,

> I had a student...who would make openly racist comments or jokes during our advisory period, I had no idea how to respond...That's one of the frustrating things...When it came to those instances, there wasn't a process that I knew that I could follow...besides just talking to the Dean... It wasn't until that student put his hands on me, that he was removed from my advisory...That kid got a slap on the wrist and then [he] was gone from my advisory, but he was still at that school.

When this teacher talked to her colleagues about this student, they mentioned his past history of misbehavior without consequences. Again, this incident exemplified how this institution and its leaders failed to address a racial incident directly and concretely. By siding with the student and

meting out minimal consequences, they enabled behaviors that both emotionally and physically put this teacher in a situation where she was harmed.

One teacher directly commented on how his school leaders may side-step their stated zero tolerance policy towards racism by siding with a child of a large donor. A white student used the N-word in a possessive way towards his Black classmate. The white student, after claiming ignorance when asked about the impact of the N-word, only received a minor consequence. This Latinx male teacher heatedly described the incident:

> You're going to tell me that by 2018 we haven't realized the power of the N word. You can't say that he did not understand that because he [the white student] had to ask [the Black student], 'Is it cool that I do this now?' The problem was that the family was a large donor. So we have to make a point of like, 'You can't do this.' But we can't make too large of a point because we don't want to rock the revenue stream.

These incidents reveal the double impact of racism that Students of Color and teachers have to cope with at PWIS: the impact of the incident itself, as well as the effect of inconsistent and inadequate responses that cater to those who hold more power or history in the school community. This dynamic adds to the challenges faced by Teachers of Color who are trying to establish a sense of belonging and find support at their schools.

Summary

This chapter reported the findings I derived after analyzing the data from 21 interviews with Educators of Color. The analysis focused on how the experiences of Teachers of Color might contribute to their sense of belonging and feelings of support. In general, Teachers of Color experienced less a sense of belonging and connection than their white colleagues; however, belonging was promoted when there were opportunities to connect with other People of Color at their school. Due to their experiences of being questioned and scrutinized from members of the school community, especially parents, many Educators of Color regularly felt

pressure to prove their value and expertise. Additional barriers to belonging were erected by experiences of discrimination, challenges when adapting to a predominantly white school, and managing the extra responsibilities that were expected of many Teachers of Color. Lastly, the findings showed that Educators of Color experienced varying levels of satisfaction with their institutions' progress to become more inclusive and equitable. Furthermore, they desired better relationships with school leaders and institutions in order to promote trust and empower Educators of Color, and they called for their schools to be more accountable to the Community of Color when racist incidents happen on campuses.

In Chapter Six, I integrate and discuss the quantitative results of the survey with the qualitative themes/findings of the interviews, and I connect this interpretation to the literature presented in Chapter Two and my research questions. Chapter Six also includes a discussion of the implications for practice, the limitations of the research, and a few suggestions for future research, including the aspirational notion of belonging as it might connect to teacher retention.

Chapter 6: DISCUSSION

Introduction

Moving beyond notions and numbers of diversity motivated this study. While a diverse teaching body has proven for decades to have a positive impact on student achievement for all students, especially Students of Color (Carver-Thomas, 2018; Chang, 2002; Darling-Hammond, 1999 2019; Gurin, 1999), the literature also concernedly points to higher turnover numbers for Teachers of Color. While all teachers face perennial challenges, such as lack of administrator support, accountability pressures, and fewer opportunities for collaboration, Teachers of Color must also contend with experiences of discrimination and isolation, questions about fit, extra duties without fair pay, and colleagues lacking racial literacy and awareness (Carver-Thomas, 2018; Coleman & Stevenson, 2013; Darling-Hammond & Carver-Thomas, 2017; French, 2018; Ingersoll & May, 2011). The compound challenges confronted by Teachers of Color partially explain their higher turnover rates, as well as the elusive sense of belonging and varying levels of institutional and leadership support they experience at predominantly white independent schools (PWIS).

Diversifying the faculty is a first step. However, if schools only remain satisfied with statistics, they may be simply using Teachers of Color in order to look like a United Nations photo opportunity for attracting potential new hires, students, and donors in the world of PWIS. As noted in an essay by Dr. Dafina-Lazarus Stewart (2017), a simplified notion of diversity asks the question, "How many more of this group do we have this year than last?" Not only does this question ignore the demographic reality of the United States becoming a majority minority country by 2045, and the Latinx population in California already becoming the largest racial/ethnic group in 2014, but it also fails to consider the institutional, human resource, and, in

my opinion, moral imperatives that PWIS must address if they are serious about authentic equity, inclusion, and justice efforts in their school community. The voices of Teachers of Color in my interviews echoed the questions Dr. Stewart calls school leaders to ask: in regard to inclusion (*Is this environment safe for everyone to feel like they belong?*); related to equity (*What conditions have we created that maintain certain groups as the perpetual majority here?*); and with respect to justice (*Whose safety is sacrificed to allow others to be comfortable maintaining dehumanizing [and status quo] views?*). These questions align with the results of my study. The overarching implication is a call for school leaders to better understand what experiences of Educators of Color that lead to job dissatisfaction, racial battle fatigue, and possibly turnover at their own schools, as well as practically consider how to stem the potential loss of talented Educators of Color by promoting their sense of belonging.

Some schools represented in the sample of my study are further along in responding to this call, yet I grounded my study most firmly in the areas of inclusion and belonging in order to better understand the experiences of Educators of Color related to how they feel supported, heard, valued, connected and safe in their schools. The research questions that guided this inquiry were:

1. To what extent, do Independent School Teachers of Color feel supported by their leaders and institutions and experience a sense of belonging at their schools?

   a. To what extent, do their feelings of support and experiences of belonging differ from white teachers at their schools?

2. How do the experiences of Teachers of Color contribute to their sense of belonging and feelings of support or lack thereof?

This explanatory sequential mixed methods study employed a survey that gathered 133 completed responses (78 from white teachers and 55 from Teachers of Color) and included 21 interviews with Teachers of Color who completed the survey. This approach allowed me to compare the experiences of Teachers of Color and white teachers as they related to belonging and institutional and leadership support, as well as take a deeper look at the particular challenges to support, belonging, and job satisfaction faced by Educators of Color in several Los Angeles area schools.

The results of this study contribute to the limited scholarly literature on the experiences of Educators of Color in PWIS and confirm the existing research and data on the additional turnover factors faced by Teachers of Color. Moreover, insights from my study provide a more granular and current understanding of these turnover factors for Educators of Color, which include: incidents of discrimination; hindrances to belonging related to questions about expertise and fit; frustrations with lukewarm leadership and institutional support; and experiences of isolation as they try to adapt to their school culture, connect with others, and create a sense of purpose for themselves.

In this chapter, I first summarize and interpret the significant findings and explain this study's contribution to the existing body of research. Next, I present implications for practice for school leaders. Then I identify the limitations of my study and suggestions for future research. Finally, I share my concluding thoughts and reflection.

Interpretation of Findings

The purpose of my study was to compare the experiences of Teachers of Color and white teachers in predominantly white independent schools in the Los Angeles area, and then more deeply explore how the experiences of Teachers of Color contribute to their sense of belonging

or feelings of support. When the quantitative results and the qualitative findings are integrated, there are four notable findings regarding the experiences of Teachers of Color as compared to their white peers; each of the four findings will be discussed in the following subsections. This study revealed how Teacher of Color experiences promoted or hindered their sense of belonging and feelings of support, thereby confirming several points in the existing literature about factors that impact turnover for Teachers of Color. In addition to confirming these factors, my study is notable because it enhances the limited discussion on the experiences of Teachers of Color in predominantly independent white schools. As each theme is discussed and interpreted below, I also address the interconnection of the themes due to the multi-contextual nature of the constructs of belonging and support.

Teachers of Color Experienced Less Belonging and Connection than White Teachers

The notion of belonging is complex and contextual, yet one clear through line of the Teacher of Color experience was in the impact of inclusion, acceptance and "fit" on one's sense of belonging. The study participants' experiences parallel what the literature suggests: retention is more likely if schools provide teachers with opportunities to network and collaborate and if teachers feel connected to their school both emotionally and in terms of normative beliefs (Achinstein, 2010; Kelchtermans, 2017; Newberry & Allsop, 2017). When asked about their level of agreement with the statement "I feel included" at my school, a stark difference appeared between the two groups. Over 46% of white teachers strongly agreed with the statement, while the percentage was nearly halved for Teachers of Color (23.4%). While inclusion can mean many things, this statistically significant difference should give pause to school leaders, as nearly half of white teachers report feeling included, while this is only the case for less than a quarter of Teachers of Color.

On a more granular level, inclusion can be impacted by how others may or may not accept one's expertise. This was a regular contention for Teachers of Color, as they shared how their expertise may be challenged - often implicitly and sometimes explicitly - by students, colleagues, and parents. When it comes to being accepted by colleagues, if the school leader is not skilled at facilitating a space that invites all voices, this may hinder Teacher of Color participation in faculty discussions. During the interviews, a few teachers mentioned how the voices of white teachers (e.g., the old guard, the tradition bearers) dominated faculty spaces; this may be an implicit part of the school culture that needs to be addressed. Solicitation of one's voice and expertise, while important for all teachers, can be particularly powerful for Teachers of Color seeking to "fit" in at their school and feel valued for their expertise and connected to others.

In her study about race at PWIS, French (2018) observed that Teachers of Color are often questioned about their "fit" at their school, and in my study this idea of "fit" materialized in the form of internal and external pressures for many teachers. In both phases of my study, Teachers of Color reported experiencing less of a "fit" and feeling less comfortable at their schools than their white peers. Similar to the numbers related to inclusion, 50% of white teachers strongly agreed with the statement "I fit in with other teachers," while only 26.6% of Teachers of Color reported the same. For the more specific statement "I am comfortable at my school because my background and experiences are similar to the other teachers," close to four times as many white teachers than Teachers of Color strongly agreed with this statement (24.4% to 6.3%). When asked, nearly all Teachers of Color found a source of support and connection with other Teachers of Color, and this connection point is vital to consider when thinking about the two-headed coin of inclusion and isolation.

For some Teachers of Color, when onboarding at a PWIS began, so did the culture shock. As one Latinx woman noted about her campus, there were "so many white people," and another teacher acknowledged this was "not like where I grew up." While this experience may not be the case at all the schools where the interviewees work, the compounded isolation due to a lack of critical mass of Teachers of Color or spaces for connection did create a challenge for many. This challenge was reflected by the literature in French's (2018) study, as she noted independent schools need to proactively promote retention of Teachers of Color by developing affinity groups and mentorship programs where supportive connections can be nurtured.

Connection with others who they look like and have shared experiences with cannot be overlooked, as my study indicates that these connection points, whether in passing or during an affinity meeting or through mentorship, create a sense of safety and mutual understanding. One Black male teacher indicated that "the nod" he shared with another Black man in the faculty room added to his sense of comfort. A Latinx woman shared how her occasional brief check-in conversations with other Women of Color bring her relief because she does not need to share any context before she is validated. These informal connections must be buttressed by more formal programming related to creating a support network for Teachers of Color. Inclusion work happens after hiring, and several teachers underscored the importance of mentorship from more experienced Teachers or Administrators of Color and the value of affinity groups with Colleagues, Students, and Parents of Color (or of similar racial and ethnic identity if numbers permit.). The value of these groups was echoed in the words of one teacher who found refuge as she shared about "the struggles or things [she's] been noticing," and having her Colleagues of Color respond they have "gone through that too." Another teacher experienced relief during her school's affinity group meetings because she was not "performing professionally" and could

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speak "more of our cultural language." In a predominantly white space where the pressures of fitting in, code-switching, and adapting are experienced daily by Teachers of Color, creation of these spaces and mentorship opportunities can be seen as a mental health strategy.

One of the surprising elements to emerge within this theme was finding that if a teacher could connect with a sense of purpose, this could serve as an adequate proxy for a sense of belonging. Specifically, a few Educators of Color noted the joy and satisfaction they experienced when their personal vision of helping and serving Students and Families of Color was realized. If they themselves were not experiencing a sense of belonging in the institution or if they felt like they were isolated, they created their own belonging by promoting the comfort and safety for their Students of Color and their families. A Latinx woman conveyed this vision was "personal [for] me," as she wanted to help her school become a "place where Latino families would walk around and feel like they are at home." While Teachers of Color generally experienced less of a sense of belonging than their white peers, they enhanced their belonging through connections with other People of Color and fulfilling a sense of purpose. Even so, Educators of Color further grappled with acceptance at their schools as they dealt with external pressures, especially from parents.

Teachers of Color Experienced More Judgement and Pressure to Prove Themselves than White Teachers

If there was a revelation from my study that burned brighter than others, it is captured by this theme. Not only does the discussion below continue the through line about questions of "fit," but it also aligns with the existing research on turnover factors that impact Teachers of Color, namely the minimization of one's expertise (Carver-Thomas, 2018). The significance of this finding lies in the source of the "minimizers," the reasons for minimization when race is a factor, and how these burdensome judgements and microaggressions impact Teachers of Color.

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The numbers do not lie for this topic, especially when it comes to uneven levels of respect and being more closely monitored and questioned on campus. With regards to being "treated with respect by the adults at my school," nearly a quarter fewer of Teachers of Color (53.1%) strongly agreed with this statement than their white colleagues (75.6%). When viewed in another way, this means just over half of Teachers of Color strongly agreed that they are treated with respect, a key ingredient to feeling like one is a valuable member of a community. The lack of respect can be tied to the fact that Teachers of Color reported being "more closely monitored and questioned by parents than" their white peers at almost double the rate. More pointedly, Teachers of Color strongly or somewhat agreed (42.2%) that their teaching expertise was questioned by adults in the school community, much higher than reported by white teachers (16.7%). As divulged in the interviews, parents would question Educators of Color about what is taught, how it is taught, and how it is assessed. In addition, sometimes parents would ask indirectly and directly, if a Teacher of Color was qualified enough to teach their child. This discovery provides nuance to the existing discussion on the impact of classroom autonomy and input in school-wide decisions on lowered turnover levels (Ingersoll & May, 2011). Several interviewees confirmed the importance of autonomy, respect, and trust in their expertise as important for their professional well-being.

While the connections made with other Colleagues and Students of Color ameliorated the impact of parental doubt, several Educators of Color still felt burdened to prove themselves to parents. Seven of the 21 teachers interviewed reported a need to present their educational credentials in order to prove that they belong or are qualified. One teacher echoed the lingo of his students, stating that he has to show "the receipts." In a meritocratic-obsessed society, a few

teachers implied that their PhD could buy some good will or deflect judgment, but for most

Teachers of Color, the pressure to prove oneself is perennial.

My survey results revealed and the interviews confirmed that race was often a reason for

judgment of Teachers of Color, and its intersection with gender seemed to be at play for Women

of Color. Whether covert or overt, the scrutinous slights delivered by parents manifest a

psychological weight for Teachers of Color that white teachers do not carry, and this weight may

cause a Teacher of Color to question their belonging at their school. This begs the question, are

white teachers also asked to recite their pedigrees? One Black woman reflected that a white,

male colleague in a parallel role "had a certain level of gravitas [and] respect" with parents that

was "afforded [by] virtue of his gender and probably race as well." The impact of this

experience was "very palpable," impacting her "ability...to stand up for herself" because she

wonders "if it's going to be pushed back." If there is "complexion protection" for white teachers

in PWIS, then school leaders need to actively address inappropriate and boundary-crossing

parental behavior. For leaders, they need to increase their comfort, fluency, and perhaps courage,

when it comes to supporting their Teachers of Color and the school's DEI mission.

Teachers of Color Faced Additional Barriers to Belonging in the Areas of Discrimination, Workplace Adaptation, and Extra Labor

Not only did Teachers of Color grapple with external pressures of judgment about their

expertise and the pressure to prove themselves more than their white peers, but they also

contended with other challenges of working in a PWIS, including microaggressions,

tokenization, and adaptation to school culture. My study's findings align with the existing

research that shows Teachers of Color face racial discrimination and stereotyping in their schools

and working with white leaders who exhibited low levels of racial literacy negatively impacts

belonging (Carver-Thomas, 2018; Coleman & Stevenson, 2013). My study also revealed the

impact of specific barriers, such as the daily weight of acculturation and the expectations to do extra "diversity" work.

Educators of Color reported being called names, insulted, threatened, or harassed because of their race or ethnicity more often than white educators. Teachers of Color were specifically asked the extent to which they agree or disagree with the following statement, "I regularly experience microaggressions at my school." While the majority responded that it may not "regularly" happen, nearly one-third of the respondents strongly or somewhat agreed with the statement. Several interviewees attested that microaggressions in various forms and with differing impact still occurred. According to a few teachers, the comments of the microaggressors were based on ingrained stereotypes or dismissive ignorance that may result from being in a predominantly white community and white folks' lack of interaction with People of Color. For school leaders, I emphasize two notes. First, these experiences create an emotional toll that may hinder belonging, and there is a need for white colleagues, especially administrators, to interrupt these hurtful comments or actions. Second, this finding confirms another theme in the literature: the positive impact of Teachers of Color for all students. In particular, white students need to have greater exposure to diverse teachers in order to dismantle their stereotypes of other racial and ethnic groups. These experiences serve as a reminder that the recognition and affirmation of the racial identity of an Educator of Color, as well as their individuality, may remain elusive in PWIS if racist behaviors and words are not interrupted.

As noted above, one unique (but perhaps not surprising) revelation of my study was the challenges Women of Color experience working in predominantly white spaces. For example, three out of 10 Men of Color reported that a school leader committed a racial microaggression against them, yet 19 out of 44 Women of Color reported the same. When asked if they were

comfortable approaching a school leader after experiencing a microaggression, nearly 23% of Women of Color somewhat or strongly disagreed. While these points are based on a small sample of Teachers of Color, the implications of this data should give direction to future research.

In addition to dealing with microaggressions, Teachers of Color often faced the energy-sapping process of navigating predominantly white school spaces, cultures, and traditions. As reported in the survey results, Teachers of Color (83.8%) were often or sometimes "expected to adapt to the dominant cultural norms of the school," nearly one quarter more than their white counterparts (61%). More starkly, seven out of 10 Teachers of Color often or sometimes felt the "pressure to perform at the highest level in order to negate stereotypes about my racial or ethnic group," while this was the case for just over one out of 10 white teachers. This pressure could sometimes require Educators of Color to adapt to the existing culture and fulfill certain roles even at the expense of bringing their authentic selves to their teaching. It is important for school leaders to understand that the acculturating and code-switching may begin from the moment of the interview and can continue well into a seasoned teacher's career.

One of the specific acculturation pressures for a Teacher of Color in a PWIS appeared to be the nuanced experience of supporting a school's diversity mission while not being tokenized as a diverse representative of the school. As one Black and Latinx male teacher asserted during an interview, there is a difference between being a representative and true representation. The lesson of this finding is that when schools narrowly focus on boosting their public image to attract prospective Teachers and Students of Color, there can be the risk of pigeon-holing People of Color into superficial spokesperson or representative roles. Almost two-thirds of Educators of Color were "often" or "sometimes" asked to be a spokesperson, while this was the case for

roughly one in 10 white teachers. When Educators of Color shared their stories of, for example, doing outreach work, it was tinged with a sense of resignation to the forces at play in a PWIS; namely, we (the school) would like to use you (the token teacher) to celebrate our current diversity numbers so we can increase those numbers during the next admissions season. As one teacher candidly put it, "that piece of feeling like your presence is for show...is real." Interviewees understood this was part of the numbers game and affects the bottom line, yet there were clear notes of advice to school leaders to be mindful of tokenizing both Teachers and Students of Color and to see the value of People of Color beyond their skin color.

Related to being a spokesperson for their identified racial or ethnic group was the expectation to fulfill extra diversity-related tasks to support Students and Families of Color. Nearly 60% of Teachers of Color reported that they are frequently to sometimes asked to do extra work to attract and support Students and Families of Color, while one-third were frequently or sometimes asked to do the same work with Colleagues of Color. Notably, 75% of teachers asked to do this extra work were not compensated, and nearly nine out of 10 teachers said these duties were not included in their job description. Complicating this dynamic is the importance of this work for many Teachers of Color, for it is connected to their job satisfaction and sense of purpose. The tension was evident in several interview responses, as several Teachers of Color relayed the joy and fulfillment they garner from working with Communities of Color at their schools. Yet they were frustrated by a very real inequity - as one teacher called it, "a micro-inequality" - that existed when, for example, a teacher proctoring a study hall or Chess Club was compensated in the same manner as a Teacher of Color representing a student affinity group and helping several students socially and academically navigate a predominantly white space. With the understanding that there are pressures to fit in, to combat stereotype threats, and to disprove

those who doubt their expertise, school leaders should consider that saying "no" to requests to do extra work for Students of Color and Families or to photo opportunities for the admissions department may not be an option for Teachers of Color. As one teacher shared, the emotional toll of the acculturation and adaptation process detailed above can "remove energy from your ability to give yourself fully to your students," and this may impact the educational experience of all students.

Teachers of Color Indicated Varying Levels of Satisfaction, Frustration, and Belonging with Respect to Institutional and Leadership Support

The final theme primarily focuses on findings related to the second research question: *How do the experiences of Teachers of Color contribute to their sense of belonging and feelings of support or lack thereof?* While I spotlighted the importance of horizontal relationships in a previous theme, the discussion below focuses on how vertical relationships between Teachers of Color and their administrators can promote belonging. My study contributes to a clear theme in the literature: administrator support is the most significant factor impacting teacher turnover. Several studies indicate teachers are more likely to remain in their schools when their leaders show support by acknowledging and encouraging teachers, clearly communicating a vision and expectations, and running their school well (Achinstein, 2010; Darling-Hammond & Carver-Thomas, 2017; Ingersoll & May, 2011; Podolsky et al., 2016). Additionally, the discussion underscores how institutional and leadership support of the school's DEI mission, in word, action, and awareness, is directly related to the support felt by Teachers of Color.

In the interviews, there was a clear call for leaders to better understand the experiences of Teachers of Color, and a key part of this understanding involves raising one's racial awareness, especially for white school leaders who may not think about race and racism on a daily basis. This finding aligns with a significant study of Teachers of Color in PWIS by Coleman and

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Stevenson (2013) that correlated their school leaders' racial literacy and willingness to deal with racial conflict, as well as their schools' commitment to diversity mission and action, to positive school belonging. When I asked Teachers of Color about their level of satisfaction with "the awareness of your school leaders of the presence and impact of racial, ethnic and cultural differences on the practice, policies, and institutional culture," the responses showed a significant split. While nearly 40% of respondents said they were extremely to somewhat satisfied, close to 50% indicated being somewhat to extremely dissatisfied. The frustration with lack of awareness and concern for the racialized experiences of Teachers of Color and the impact that administrative decisions may have on Communities of Color was palpable in the interviews. One Black woman teacher underscored the potential impact of a leader's missing awareness. For example, teaching about certain historical events, such as the Trail of Tears or Japanese internment, can be seen as political for Educators of Color, and in this day and age of heightened partisan misunderstandings about the connection of history to the current social justice movement, this could impact the well-being and livelihood of a Teacher of Color. She ended this reflection by commenting that for people like her "in these PWI [predominantly white institutions]...it's an extra weight to carry into the profession." Being aware of and acknowledging this daily weight borne by Teachers of Color would be a step forward for many white school leaders.

Interviewees also openly shared about the important pockets of support they enjoy from white colleagues in leadership, with one of the surprising sources of support coming from their immediate supervisors, such as department chairs. The importance of social recognition and positive reinforcement and encouragement for a teacher's sense of self-worth was echoed in the literature (Darling-Hammond & Carver-Thomas, 2017; Kelchtermans, 2017; Podolsky et al.,

2016). The importance of this middle manager to some Teachers of Color makes sense on an organizational level, as department chairs play a vital role in onboarding, hiring, and day-to-day teaching and collaborating. A few teachers mentioned they could trust and collaborate with their department chair, especially on goals of creating a diverse faculty and a culturally responsive curriculum. This finding also confirms and contributes to the academic literature that notes the importance of collaboration with colleagues as a retention factor (Achinstein, 2010; Podolsky et al., 2016).

My data revealed that Teachers of Color experience less comfort and safety than white colleagues when talking about race and racism, and this should be something that school leaders consider - if Teachers of Color see their leaders openly addressing race and racism on campus, then they might feel better supported to speak up as well. Instead, Teachers of Color tended to be more frustrated than white peers with the lack of engagement and reckoning of a leader or institution to honestly engage with difficult or challenging conversations. More specifically, nearly half (45.5%) of Teachers of Color somewhat or strongly disagreed with this statement, "My school leaders are capable of resolving racial conflict on campus."

For a few teachers who were interviewed, the hesitancy of leaders (or the institutions) to engage in conversations or conflicts about race may have had less to do with capability and more to do with the desire to maintain the status quo, especially with the parent community. One strand of interview comments intimated that school leaders may be afraid to upset parents if a school pushes too hard in its DEI mission and programs (such as affinity groups and guest speakers) or with curricular changes. When a school leaned into accommodating the comfort of the white school community, it impacted the feelings of support for a few educators, leading them to question their skills and their standing in the school.

The above suggestions may be graduate level work, but Relationship Building 101 is what many Teachers of Color wanted to experience more with their school leaders. Put in another way, when I asked an Asian American woman educator the final question of the interview (*"What advice would you give your leadership in regard to supporting and retaining Teachers of Color?"*), she hypothetically posed this question to school leaders: "Am I being invested in or harvested?" She and several other Teachers of Color want their school leaders to not only better understand their experiences in PWIS, but they also want their administrators to invest the time and effort to get to know them as individuals with unique skills, interests, and expertise. This did not mean school leaders should take a color-blind approach, for race is a factor lived every day; rather, the implication from many teachers was that they are more than a statistic or photo opportunity to "harvest" for a school's admissions web page.

In PWIS that are trying to become as diverse as the society beyond their walls and benefit from the positive impact of diversity on student learning outcomes, the relationship between a school leader and Teachers of Color is vital if a school wants to move beyond appearances and be serious about inclusion and equity. This relationship begins with taking an active interest in the well-being of Teachers of Color at their school. When I asked if their "school leaders regularly ask [them] what [they] need to feel supported in [their] school community," fewer than half of the Educators of Color strongly or somewhat agreed with this statement, 20 percentage points less than their white peers (45.4% vs. 65.4%). In regard to leaders' understanding of their "experience as a Person of Color at a PWIS," more than half (54.5%) of Teachers of Color somewhat or strongly disagreed. One teacher stressed that understanding the different experiences of Teachers of Color can be an important retention tool, and she encouraged

"administrators to change their mindset from numbers, percentages, or ratios into the human fabric."

While individual vertical relationships were shown to be of importance, several Teachers of Color also asserted that their school should continue to focus on hiring and empowering Teachers of Color in order to develop a critical mass of People of Color on campus and bolster the horizontal relationships that may promote one's sense of safety, connection, and belonging. Nearly half (47.2%) of the surveyed Teachers of Color were extremely or somewhat satisfied with their school leaders' work to diversify the teacher population, though it must also be pointed out that over one-third (34.5%) were somewhat or extremely dissatisfied. In the interviews, several teachers advocated not only for the hiring of more Teachers of Color but also for empowering them through promotion into leadership roles. Leaders in PWIS should dedicate themselves to growing in this area as it may result in an increased voice for Teachers of Color, further opportunities for formal and informal mentorship, promoting a sense of connection and belonging, and, as the literature shows, result in a positive impact on the whole school community, especially learning outcomes for all students.

Lastly, committing to authentic inclusion at a PWIS not only relies upon relationship building, awareness raising and intentional institutional wide planning, but according to several interviewees it also requires school leaders to be transparent and consistent when enforcing school policies related to incidents of racism on campus. The survey results and interview data showed that it is important for school leaders to communicate this consistency through actions that show zero tolerance for racism to the school community. A plurality (44.1%) of Educators of Color somewhat or strongly disagreed that their "school leaders act in a way that shows zero tolerance for racism," while over a third (37.3%) indicated they strongly or somewhat agreed.

The split responses should be noted by school leaders for a few reasons. Several schools may be consistent in their communication and enforcement of their policies, yet the striking number of teachers that disagreed with this statement in the survey, as well several incidents shared in the interviews, should indicate to leaders a need to internally examine how their school addresses racist incidents with an eye towards impact, not intent, of the institution's actions. Since several Teachers of Color find their belonging in PWIS through a sense of purpose to guide and care for Students of Color, this purpose can be undermined if a school shows favoritism or indifference through their responses to racist incidents. A few teachers indicated that their schools responded to racist incidents by sweeping them under the rug or meting out minimal consequences, ostensibly to appease white students and parents who either have long standing at the school or deep pockets. At minimum, the interviewees called on their schools to be clear and consistent with their policies, but they also wanted school leaders to understand that cursory disciplinary action (e.g., switching a student from one class to another) for a racist incident undermines the sense of safety and belonging of Students *and* Teachers of Color. To put a finer point on the potential impact of "sweep[ing] it under the rug," one teacher explained "that it makes it so Teachers of Color don't want to stay cause they don't know when the next moment that they're going to see a student who does that (says or does something racist) and then it gets ignored."

Implications for Practice for Independent Schools and Leaders

The findings of this study make important contributions to the body of knowledge on the experiences of Teachers of Color in predominantly white schools. They fill a gap in better understanding how the experiences of Teachers of Color contribute to their sense of belonging and feelings of support, as well as point to several implications for practice, policy, and programming that should be considered by independent schools and leaders. First, I lay out a few

recommendations that should be considered by school leaders, and then I follow up with several recommendations to be considered on an institutional level.

School Leaders Should Focus on Personal Development and Relationship Building

Development of Racial Awareness and Leadership Skills

The broader literature on teacher retention points to administrator support as the most important supportive factor, and more specific research highlights the experiences of discrimination faced by Teachers of Color and the importance for them to develop a racial sense of belonging (Brosnan, 2015; Carver-Thomas, 2018; Coleman & Stevenson, 2013; Smith, 2004; Stanley, 2006). The data in my study confirmed these points and further revealed the need for Administrators to develop their own racial identity and positionality awareness, more culturally competent and responsive leadership skills, and a fluent literacy in DEI work that enhances their ability to communicate with white families and students. While several Teachers of Color acknowledged their leaders may be culturally aware and sensitive, they called for more understanding and cultural competence. This should begin with examination of one's own racial identity and privilege, and it continues with understanding the cultural and institutional barriers to belonging that exist for Teachers of Color at a PWIS (e.g., stereotype threat, microaggressions, pressures to assimilate). To develop the tools to work with a culturally diverse clientele and achieve the personal awareness to understand the impact of privilege and power in their school, leaders should engage in culturally responsive school leadership training. To impact school culture, school leaders must be actively involved in the school's DEI work and not place the burden on Teachers of Color to carry this work. In conjunction with such training, school leaders should also focus on interpersonal connections with Teachers of Color.

Relationship Building

Since administrator support is a key factor for teacher retention, my study findings also suggest that it is an important promotive factor for sense of belonging. The desire for Teachers of Color to be known and understood by their respective leaders was repeatedly mentioned during the interviews; not only did they want school leaders to understand that race matters, but individualized attention and investment also counts. When leaders invest time into getting to know that "Teacher A" is skilled at student programming, "Teacher B" loves to interface with parents, and "Teacher C" illustrates children's books *and* their racial and cultural heritage informs their curricular and pedagogical approach, they signal authentic interest on an individual level. Yes, school leaders are incredibly busy, yet if they want to increase the sense of belonging of Teachers of Color, they need to intentionally build those relationships. With the foundation of a relationship, trust will be developed. Several interviewees mentioned they would like their ideas as seasoned educators to be heard, validated, and translated into classroom autonomy, another key factor in teacher retention. Perhaps parents may minimize their questioning and doubt when they see school leaders firmly supporting the curricular and pedagogical approaches of Teachers of Color.

Schools Should Examine Approach Hiring, Empowering and Compensating Teachers of Color

Intentionally Invest in Hiring and Empowering Teachers of Color

In the interviews, several teachers advocated not only for the hiring of more Teachers of Color but also for the empowerment of People of Color in leadership roles. Leaders in PWIS should dedicate themselves to growing in this area as it may result in an increased voice for Teachers of Color, further opportunities for formal and informal mentorship, fostering of a sense of connection and belonging, and, as the literature shows, result in a positive impact on the

whole school community, especially learning outcomes for all students. This is important so that Los Angeles area PWIS equitably and accurately reflect the city in which they reside, and it is a tangible way to create a micro-community of support within the larger community.

In addition to bolstering the hiring of People of Color, PWIS also need to empower Educators of Color so that they can influence and enhance school cultures, curricula, and pedagogical practices. A few of the interviewed teachers asked for their voices to be heard and their ideas to be solicited when it comes to all aspects of school operation, from hiring to admissions to community engagement to curricula. One teacher who is also her school's DEI director was not included on hiring committees until her fourth year in the DEI position. One Latinx teacher articulated the benefit and imperative of empowerment, asserting that a voice of color just "creates a different perspective and sees things in a different way." He added that just hiring Teachers of Color without "thinking about administrators of color...creates an institutionalized system that perpetuates the same hierarchy that has existed." Thus, schools should approach diversification efforts with an eye towards systemic change.

Provide Equitable Pay to Those Doing DEIJ Work

Several teachers reported instances of being tokenized for diversity efforts or expected to do "diversity work" without fair compensation. A few teachers mentioned they are more willing to advance the school's diversity mission, whether it be in admissions, programming (e.g., staging assemblies) or publicity, yet they want their schools to be mindful of the fine line between tokenizing Teachers (and Students) of Color and genuine efforts towards authentic inclusion on campus. Further, as indicated by both sets of data from my study, an expectation exists for Teachers of Color to do extra "diversity work" on campus, yet this often comes without compensation or clarity in one's contract. Thus, schools need to equitably compensate

Teachers of Color for this work, whether it be translation of documents, assisting Families of Color to navigate PWIS, or counseling Students of Color, as the work can be time, labor and emotionally intensive.

Create Spaces and Programs for Connection and Support

Develop Affinity Spaces to Promote Belonging

According to Teachers of Color interviewed in this study, the horizontal relationships developed and sustained with persons of similar racial or ethnic background and life experiences are just as important as the vertical relationships with administrators. Several interviewees spoke about affinity groups as if they were a lifeline of support for marginalized educators in a predominantly white setting where the challenges of fitting in, code-switching, adapting to culture, and dealing with doubts about expertise are a daily reality. Affinity spaces need to be created and promoted as a source of support for Teachers, Students, and Families of Color in order to promote a sense of belonging and safety as well as validate multiple perspectives and voices. Some schools have also created affinity spaces for white educators to better understand anti-bias and anti-racist practices. Further, several teachers highlighted the value of attending the annual NAIS People of Color Conference, and schools should consider sending a delegation of teachers each year, for this conference often serves as a much-needed affinity and connection space for Teachers of Color from all parts of the country.

Mentorship to Support Acclimation to PWIS.

Finally, at least three teachers said having a Mentor of Color who helps them navigate a PWIS was vitally important to their success; therefore, as far as human resources allow, schools should consider developing such mentoring relationships. Once hired, teachers may receive a mentor to help them navigate the general operations of the school and understand curricular and

pedagogical policies, yet Teachers of Color specifically need assistance as they navigate and adapt to PWIS. This should begin with the interview and on-boarding, continue throughout a Teacher of Color's time at a school, and be prioritized as part of a mental health strategy to support Teachers of Color in white spaces where they are subjected to judgement related to race and expertise from all members of the community.

Set Boundaries for Behavior and Expectations for Communication

Transparent and Consistent Enforcement of Zero-Tolerance Policies

In the survey results and interview responses, Teachers of Color reported observing inconsistent articulation and application of "zero-tolerance" policies related to racist incidents on their campuses. A few teachers reported their own experiences of being treated with racism and the ensuing impact on their sense of safety and belonging. In addition, a few teachers expressed their frustration when administrators did not firmly and swiftly address racist incidents involving students. Thus, there is a clear call for transparency and accountability when dealing with issues related to racism (or other acts of intolerance) as opposed to the perceived deference to white students and parents.

Set Clear Boundaries with Parents for Communication and Treatment of Teachers

In my estimation, the most striking finding of my study was the burden of questioning and scrutiny from parents disproportionately borne by Teachers of Color. Independent school leaders are often beholden to the influence of parents and their tuition dollars, yet this study affirms the imperative for school leaders to clearly and firmly articulate norms for parental interactions with all teachers and staff. In particular, leaders need to set an example for parents by treating Teachers of Color with trust, professionalism, and autonomy. This support needs to be made public as much as possible to cut off skepticism and interference from parents and

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promote the belonging of marginalized groups in PWIS. Since some parents indirectly complained about the qualifications of Teachers of Color to school leaders, this is an area where Department Chairs as middle managers should clearly and publicly communicate grading practices, curricular goals, and their support for Teachers of Color and trust in their professionalism. A few interviewees appreciated the collaboration within their departments and the support of their Department Chairs, indicating that they should also be included in culturally responsive leadership training in order to continue their inclusive work.

Limitations of Research

Creswell (2014) states that limitations help identify strengths and weaknesses of a study that affect the interpretation of results, and in this section, I outline some of the limitations of this study. If we zoom out and look at how sense of belonging is defined in the literature, one could say that sense of belonging is like holding water in cupped hands: you know what it tastes and feels like, yet it is difficult to mold the contours into a discernible shape. Similar concerns could be raised regarding one's job satisfaction or their racial sense of belonging. Thus, the first limitation of my research may be how I operationalized my main constructs. While I engaged in a thorough content validity review of my survey instrument and interview protocol prior to data collection, these dynamic constructs are difficult to define because of the multiple personal and contextual factors that come into play. Furthermore, I did not any conduct factor analysis to validate items that comprised my constructs.

The second limitation of my study design is the lack of generalizability of my findings, primarily due to my sampling method used during survey recruitment. The intended plan was to gather up to 200 survey responses from independent schoolteachers in the Los Angeles area through distribution of the survey to 35 schools and one listserv of Teachers of Color working in

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Southern California independent schools. Of the 200 responses, I hoped my efforts would yield at least 50 responses from Teachers of Color. In a regular school year, teachers are not lining up to fill out a survey, especially if they are not familiar with the researcher, interested in the research topic, or being incentivized. Due to the pandemic, my outreach efforts were limited to email correspondence, text messaging, and follow up phone calls; the pressures and stresses of living and working during the pandemic exacerbated the challenges of survey recruitment. As described in Chapter Three, I expanded my outreach to build up the number of respondents. While these efforts ultimately brought my response total to 133, it also muddled calculations of the response rate and the coverage of independent schools in Los Angeles. Complicating the matter of determining an accurate response rate, some potential respondents may have received the survey multiple times - once from their school leader, once from a listserv, and once from a peer teacher. If a respondent received multiple requests, it is difficult to determine from which request they responded. While all outreach was to independent schools in the greater Los Angeles area, developing a measure to better track the response rate would have provided a better understanding of how representative the sample was of Los Angeles independent schoolteachers. Furthermore, the results may not be generalizable to other parts of the country because my sample focused on schools in Los Angeles.

Despite the limitations on the formation of my constructs and the generalizability of my findings, the study yielded results that provide a small yet significant contribution to the literature on the experiences of belonging and support for Teachers of Color in PWIS. Below are a few recommendations for future research on this topic.

Suggestions for Future Research

While reviewing the literature on this topic, I was drawn to the topic of belonging and support of Teachers of Color - if empirical research shows they are turning over faster, how can schools interrupt the turnover cycle and promote retention. As I entered the data collection phase of my study and considered the constraints (namely limited time, access and resources compounded by the pandemic), I noticed the data I was gathering could fill an important gap in the literature by describing the experiences of Teachers of Color, both in comparison to white teachers and as individual experiences in PWIS. The findings speculate that aspects of their experiences may correlate to turnover or retention, yet retention is a highly contextual and personal process. While valuable data can be gleaned about likely or probable factors related to personal fulfillment, sense of belonging, feelings of support and job satisfaction, direct links to retention are tenuous at best. Thus, in studies aimed at identifying and explaining the factors that impact retention is the goal, the sample population should include teachers who have actually chosen to leave a school as well as those who have remained in order to compare the experiences of "leavers" and "stayers."

Another suggested avenue for future research is an assessment of school leaders' understanding of the experiences of support, belonging, and job satisfaction of Teachers of Color in their schools. This would enable a confirmation or disconfirmation of my hypothesis that there is a disconnect between school leaders' understanding of experiences and challenges of Teachers of Color in PWIS and what actually are the lived experiences of Teachers of Color. On a related note, Teachers of Color in this study reported varying levels of satisfaction with institutional progress related to diversity work, especially in the areas of racial awareness of leaders, engagement in conversations about race and racism, and intervention with parents. This finding

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calls for a need to critically assess how the presence or absence of Culturally Responsive School Leadership practices in PWIS contribute to the belonging, feelings of support, and job satisfaction of Educators of Color. Finally, a few of the interviewees in my study noted the important role of the Department Chairs in many PWIS as mentors and collaborators. Any study of the impact of school leadership on the belonging of Educators of Color should take a close look at the role of these middle managers.

Future studies could also benefit from altering my study design and protocols. First, the sampling method could have been extended to include teachers in NAIS schools nationwide to gather a larger total response to the survey and to expand generalizability. In regard to survey and interview protocols and data analysis, a sharper focus on the intersection of race and gender would allow researchers and practitioners to better differentiate experiences of Educators of Color, especially the experiences of Women of Color. For example, when asked if their school leaders understand their experience at a PWIS, 27.3% of Women of Color somewhat disagreed, while 25% strongly disagreed. While the total number of respondents was too low to test for statistical significance between Men (n=10) and Women of Color (n=44), the descriptive statistic above, as well as several interview passages from Women of Color, should be expanded upon in future research.

Lastly, I believe my finding related to the Educators of Color being questioned by and needing to prove themselves to the parent community at their respective schools exposes not only an area of research that needs to be bolstered in the existing literature on this topic, but it also identifies an area of immediate attention that school leaders can focus on to support Educators of Color at their schools.

Conclusion and Reflection

This journey ostensibly began with a focus group I conducted over two years ago with Black staff and faculty at a Los Angeles area independent school. The goal of the focus group was to learn about participants' experiences working in a predominantly white institution, and a few common threads emerged: regular experiences of discrimination and racism, concerns about acceptance, challenges with adapting and code-switching, and frustrations with varying levels of support from school leaders and institutions. The voices of the participants not only echoed what I found in the extant literature, but the emotion that animated their stories sparked the formation of my study.

As I listened to their voices, the idea of sense of belonging resided at the forefront of my thoughts. When collecting data, I emphasized to participants that belonging is the enhancement of one's involvement in a system through feeling valued, needed, and accepted, as well as fitting into their organization through cultural adaptation and development of a few significant interpersonal relationships (Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Hagerty et al., 1992). As I synthesized my data, a reconsideration of the concept of belonging in PWIS emerged. Belonging does not simply happen, even if institutional conditions are primed for authentic inclusion. Rather, schools must be intentional about how they promote belonging for Educators of Color, and if they are not deliberate, belonging - as well as job satisfaction and retention - will remain aspirational. For many of the interviewed teachers, belonging seemed like a luxury, as they were more concerned with personal safety and fit, feelings of comfort and a sense of purpose, and making connections.

The next step for many PWIS in regard to honorable and equitable inclusion is a move from, as one teacher put it, "representatives to representation." Another teacher posed this

question, "am I being invested in or harvested?" In my mind, this question succinctly and pointedly captures what is next for leaders of PWIS: benchmarks for hiring more Teachers of Color and administrators; investments in relationships and professional development; creation of spaces that promote safety and connection; and firmer responses to racism that actually show "zero tolerance." Institutional and systemic change is possible, but it must run in tandem with ongoing personal reflection and affective growth, especially for school leaders, board members, teachers, parents, and students who experience more privilege than marginalization based on their social identity markers.

On a personal level, my study regularly prompted me to come to terms with my own identity, privilege, and positionality. I am a light-skinned white, Puerto Rican educator leader who cashes in on the privilege of unquestioned belonging based on my complexion, among other privileged identities. As I completed my study, I wondered if the topic of belonging itself was even a privilege for me to consider. Even so, it is a reminder that I still have much work to do to become a co-conspirator, as Dr. Bettina Love often remarks, as opposed to falling back into the comfortable space of white allyship promoted by the anti-racist cottage industry. I call myself and other white educators in positions of influence and power - and all teachers who have influence and power, whether in the classroom, the hallway, or the faculty room - to reject the comfort and ignorance of the status quo, to find ways to redistribute power, to disrupt inequitable systems, and to create spaces that are authentically inclusive and just.

Appendix A

Email Recruitment for Survey

Hello Fellow Educator,

I am also a doctoral student in the Educational Leadership Program at UCLA conducting research on retention factors for teachers in independent schools. Current research points to a few key factors, including administrator support, sense of belonging, and opportunities for collaboration, autonomy, and advancement. One gap in the research is comparative data on the retention factors for Teachers of Color and white teachers in independent schools, and my dissertation aims to fill a part of this gap.

I would appreciate your partnership in my efforts. First, I would like any interested independent school teacher to fill out this survey (**link here**) by **December 21, 2020**. Feel free to forward this request to other independent school teachers who may be interested. It should take you 15-20 minutes to complete.

Second, I would also like to conduct several follow-up interviews with survey respondents who identify as Teachers of Color. If you are interested in participating in an interview, you can indicate so at the end of the survey. If selected for an interview, you will receive a $30 gift card.

Preservation of anonymity is of utmost importance to me, so your responses are anonymous and strictly confidential. Information that might connect to an individual or a school will not be shared. I will analyze the data with an eye towards identifying general trends and significant themes.

I hope my research can inform how school leaders promote a greater sense of belonging for their teachers, especially Teachers of Color in predominantly white institutions. I understand this is a trying season for educators balancing work and personal demands during a pandemic, and even more so for Educators of Color faced with continued institutional and societal inequities, so I deeply appreciate your consideration and input. If you have any questions, please contact me.

Sincerely,

Jason Kim-Seda
Educational Leadership Program at UCLA
jkimseda@g.ucla.edu

Appendix B

Survey: Retention of Teachers in Independent Schools

Q1: How many years have you worked at your current school?

- ❏ 0-2
- ❏ 3-5
- ❏ 6-10
- ❏ 10 or more

Q2: Why did you decide to teach at your current school? (check all that apply)

- ❏ Smaller class sizes
- ❏ More autonomy in the classroom
- ❏ Personal alignment with school vision/values
- ❏ Compensation and benefits
- ❏ The school's climate and culture
- ❏ The school's commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion
- ❏ Availability of the job
- ❏ Location
- ❏ Credential not required
- ❏ Other _____

Q3: Sense of belonging is "the experience of personal involvement in a system or environment so that persons feel themselves to be an integral part of that system or environment." One's belonging is enhanced by the experience of feeling valued, needed, accepted, as well as their fit in the organization, the perception that the individual's characteristics articulate with the system of environment (Hagerty et al, 1992).

Considering the above conceptualization of sense of belonging, how much do you agree or disagree with this statement: I feel like I belong at my school.

- ❏ Strongly agree
- ❏ Somewhat agree
- ❏ Neither agree nor disagree
- ❏ Somewhat disagree
- ❏ Strongly disagree

Q4: How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements about your experiences at your school?

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
I feel accepted at my school	○	○	○	○	○

I feel valued at my school	○	○	○	○	○
I feel included at my school	○	○	○	○	○
I fit in with other teachers at my school.	○	○	○	○	○
I am comfortable at my school because my background/experiences are similar to other teachers.	○	○	○	○	○

Q5: In many of the following questions, I will refer to "school leaders," which I define as Head of School, Division Head (Principal) and Assistant Division Head (Assistant Principal). *Considering classroom autonomy as the level of independence and creativity a teacher is granted to make decisions about what they teach and how they teach it, how much do you agree or disagree with the following statements about your experiences at your school?*

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
I am given a sufficient amount of classroom autonomy at my school	○	○	○	○	○
The level of classroom autonomy I'm granted is important to my job satisfaction.	○	○	○	○	○
The level of classroom autonomy I'm granted affects my trust in my school leaders.	○	○	○	○	○

Q6: How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements about your experiences at your school?

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
My expertise as an educator is valued.	○	○	○	○	○
I am scrutinized/observed more by my school leaders than my colleagues.	○	○	○	○	○

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
I am more closely monitored and questioned by parents than my colleagues.	○	○	○	○	○
I have had my teaching expertise questioned by other teachers, leaders or parents in the school community.	○	○	○	○	○
I feel my school leaders value my colleagues more than they value me.	○	○	○	○	○

Q7: How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements about your experiences at your school?

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
I am satisfied with my job.	○	○	○	○	○
My values align with those of the institution.	○	○	○	○	○
I feel like my school leaders support me.	○	○	○	○	○

Q8: How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements about your experiences at your school?

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
The school regularly engages in conversations about race or racism on campus.	○	○	○	○	○
I am comfortable talking about race/racism w/my school leaders.	○	○	○	○	○
I am comfortable talking about race/racism with my colleagues.	○	○	○	○	○

Q9: How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements about your experiences at your school?

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
I am regularly given the opportunity to offer input on decisions that impact teaching and learning.	○	○	○	○	○
My input is influential when it comes to decisions that impact teaching and learning.	○	○	○	○	○
My input/concerns are regularly heard at faculty meetings.	○	○	○	○	○

Q10: How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements about your experiences at your school?

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
I am treated with courtesy by the adults at my school.	○	○	○	○	○
I am treated with respect by the adults at my school.	○	○	○	○	○
I have regular access to my school leaders.	○	○	○	○	○

Q11: How much do you agree and disagree with the following statements about your experiences at your school?

	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	I don't know / not applicable
I have been called names or insulted by someone because of my race or ethnicity.	○	○	○	○	○

I have been threatened or harassed by someone because of my race or ethnicity.	○	○	○	○	○
I am expected to be a spokesperson for my identified racial/ethnic group.	○	○	○	○	○
I am expected to adapt to the dominant cultural norms of the school.	○	○	○	○	○
I feel pressure to perform at the highest level in order to negate stereotypes about my racial or ethnic group.	○	○	○	○	○

Q12: At your current school, have you experienced the following:

	Yes	No	I don't know / not applicable
I was discouraged by a school leader from seeking a promotion or leadership opportunity.	○	○	○
I was denied a promotion or leadership opportunity at my school.	○	○	○
I was discouraged by a school leader from pursuing a professional development opportunity.	○	○	○
I was denied funds to pursue a professional development opportunity.	○	○	○
My teaching expertise was questioned by other teachers.	○	○	○
My teaching expertise was questioned by school leaders.	○	○	○
My teaching expertise was questioned by parents.	○	○	○

Q13: If you answered yes to any of the experiences listed in the previous question, what do you believe were the main reasons for these experiences? (Check all that apply)

- ❏ Your age
- ❏ Your level of experience
- ❏ Your gender
- ❏ Your race or ethnicity
- ❏ Other _____

Q14: Do you identify as a Teacher of Color?

- ❏ Yes
- ❏ No

Questions 15-22 for Teachers of Color

Q15: Stevenson and Coleman (2013) show that a sense of racial belonging for teachers of color in predominantly white independent schools can be impacted by:

- · *The school's commitment to diversity mission and action;*
- · *The affirmation or lack thereof of their racial identity;*
- · *Their experiences of racial microaggressions or overt forms of racism;*
- · *The response of the school and its leaders to such forms of racism;*
- · *The level of racial awareness and literacy of their white colleagues and leaders; and*
- · *The willingness of the school to engage in racial questioning and openly face racial conflict.*

Considering the above conceptualization of racial sense of belonging, how much do you agree or disagree with the following statements:

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
My school is committed to becoming an inclusive and equitable community.	○	○	○	○	○
I feel like my racial identity is affirmed at my school.	○	○	○	○	○
I regularly experience racial microaggressions at my school.	○	○	○	○	○
My school leaders are willing to engage in conversations about race and racism.	○	○	○	○	○
My school leaders directly and openly deal with racial conflict.	○	○	○	○	○

My school leaders act in a way that shows zero tolerance for racism.	○	○	○	○	○

Q16 How satisfied are you with the following experiences at your current school?

	Extremely satisfied	Somewhat satisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Somewhat dissatisfied	Extremely dissatisfied
Your acceptance as a Teacher of Color in your current school	○	○	○	○	○
The value attributed to your teaching expertise as a Teacher of Color in your school	○	○	○	○	○
The awareness of your white colleagues of the presence and impact of racial, ethnic and cultural differences on practice, policies and institutional culture	○	○	○	○	○
The awareness of your school leaders of the presence and impact of racial, ethnic and cultural differences on practice, policies and institutional culture	○	○	○	○	○

Q17: How much do you agree and disagree with the following statements about your experiences at your school?

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
I feel supported as a Teacher of Color at my school.	○	○	○	○	○
I feel supported by other Teachers or Staff of Color.	○	○	○	○	○
I feel supported by Administrators of Color.	○	○	○	○	○

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I feel supported by white teachers or staff.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
I feel supported by white administrators.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

Q18: In what ways do you find support as a Teacher of Color outside of your school? Check all that apply.

- ❏ Colleagues from other schools
- ❏ Professional networks or Teachers of Color from other schools
- ❏ Attendance at conferences of workshops
- ❏ Other _____

Q19: Have you been asked to do extra work to attract or support Students and Families of Color?

- ❏ Frequently
- ❏ Sometimes
- ❏ Rarely
- ❏ Never

Q20: Have you been asked to do extra work to attract or support Teachers of Color?

- ❏ Frequently
- ❏ Sometimes
- ❏ Rarely
- ❏ Never

Q21: If your school has a faculty committee dedicated to issues of diversity, equity and inclusion, were you expected to serve on the committee?

- ❏ Yes
- ❏ No

Q22: If you answered yes to any of the previous questions about extra work:

	Yes	No
Were you compensated for the extra work?	◯	◯
Were these extra duties clearly delineated in your job description?	◯	◯
Were you acknowledged/thanked for the extra work?	◯	◯

Questions 23-27 for All Teachers

Q23: How important is your sense of belonging to your overall job satisfaction?

- ❏ Extremely important
- ❏ Very important
- ❏ Moderately important
- ❏ Slightly important
- ❏ Not at all important

Q24: How important is your sense of belonging to your decision to remain at or leave your current school?

- ❏ Extremely important
- ❏ Very important
- ❏ Moderately important
- ❏ Slightly important
- ❏ Not at all important

Q25: Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each statement about your interactions with your school leaders [Head of School, Division Head (Principal), Assistant Division Head (Assistant Principal)].

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
I feel supported by my school leaders.	○	○	○	○	○
My school leaders regularly ask me what I need to feel supported in my school community.	○	○	○	○	○
My school leaders go out of their way to help me feel included.	○	○	○	○	○
My school leaders go out of their way to help me feel valued.	○	○	○	○	○

Q26: Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each statement about your school leaders.

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
My school leaders respect my professional competence.	○	○	○	○	○
My school leaders provide an equitable amount of feedback to me about my performance.	○	○	○	○	○

My school leaders encourage me to pursue job advancement or promotion opportunities.	○	○	○	○	○

Q27: In the past two school years (2018-19, 2019-2020) and in the current school year, how frequently or infrequently did a school leader do the following:

	More than 5 times	3-5 times	1-2 times	Never
Observe your classroom?	○	○	○	○
Provide written feedback?	○	○	○	○
Provides verbal feedback?	○	○	○	○
Provide social recognition for your work?	○	○	○	○
Offer emotional support?	○	○	○	○
Offer instructional support?	○	○	○	○

Questions 28-31 for Teachers of Color

Q28: Has a school leader ever committed a racial microaggression towards you?
- ❏ Yes
- ❏ No
- ❏ I prefer not to answer

Q29: To what extent do you agree with the following statements regarding your comfort level with your school leaders:

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree

I am comfortable approaching my school leaders after I experience an overt racist act or racial microaggression at my school.	○	○	○	○	○
If I witness an overt racist act or racial microaggression at my school, I feel comfortable talking about it with my school leaders.	○	○	○	○	○

Q30: To what extent do you agree with the following statements regarding your school leaders' engagement in the role of race on campus:

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
My school leaders are willing to engage in discussions about race with adults on campus	○	○	○	○	○
My school leaders are willing to engage in discussions about race with students on campus	○	○	○	○	○
My school leaders are capable of resolving racial conflict on campus	○	○	○	○	○
My school leaders understand my experience as a Teacher of Color on a predominantly white campus	○	○	○	○	○

Q31: To what extent are you satisfied or unsatisfied with your school leaders' actions or work in the following areas:

	Extremely satisfied	Somewhat satisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Somewhat dissatisfied	Extremely dissatisfied
Diversifying the teacher population	○	○	○	○	○

Promoting the sense of belonging of Teachers of Color	○	○	○	○	○
Supporting Families of Color in the school community	○	○	○	○	○
Increasing the ability of teachers to work in a diverse setting	○	○	○	○	○
Increasing the ability of administrators to support Teachers of Color	○	○	○	○	○

Questions 32-38 for All Teachers

Q32: How important is the support that you receive from your school leaders to your overall job satisfaction?
- ❏ Extremely important
- ❏ Very important
- ❏ Moderately important
- ❏ Slightly important

Q33: How important is the support that you receive from your school leaders to your decision to stay or leave your school?
- ❏ Extremely important
- ❏ Very important
- ❏ Moderately important
- ❏ Slightly important

Q34: With which gender do you identify?
- ❏ Male
- ❏ Female
- ❏ Non-binary
- ❏ Decline to state
- ❏ Self-identify_____

Q35: With what race/ethnicity do you identify? (you may choose more than one option)
- ❏ American Indian/Alaska Native
- ❏ Asian/Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander
- ❏ Bi-/Multi-racial
- ❏ Black or African American
- ❏ Latino/Latinx
- ❏ White/European descent
- ❏ Decline to State
- ❏ Other _____

Q36: What is your age?
- ❏ 21-30
- ❏ 31-40

- ❑ 41-50
- ❑ 51-60
- ❑ 61 or older

Q37: How did you hear about this survey?
- ❑ Through a leader at my school
- ❑ Through a colleague at my school
- ❑ Through a colleague at another school
- ❑ Direct contact from researcher
- ❑ Through a listserv (please indicate listserv group or name) _____
- ❑ Other _____

Q38: Where is your school located?
- ❑ Los Angeles - West Side/Santa Monica
- ❑ Los Angeles - West Hollywood/Mid-Wilshire/Central City
- ❑ San Fernando Valley
- ❑ Pasadena Area/San Gabriel Valley
- ❑ Los Angeles - South Bay
- ❑ Other _____

Q39: If you identify as a Teacher of Color, please consider the following request: **Would you be willing to participate in a 45-minute interview with me to follow up on your responses? If you agree, can you fill out the information below. We would meet via Zoom, your anonymity will be preserved, and you will receive a $30 e-gift card to a store of your choice upon completion of the interview.**
- ❑ Your Name _____
- ❑ Your preferred email address _____
- ❑ Your school _____

Appendix C

Email Recruitment for Interview with Teachers of Color

Hello all,

Thank you again for helping me with my dissertation research on retention of Educators of Color in independent schools, especially during this challenging school year. I closed my survey today, and I am beginning to plan for stage two of my data collection: individual interviews.

Of the 142 survey responses, over 60 were from Educators of Color, and two-thirds of Educators of Color volunteered to be interviewed, including yourself. I greatly appreciate your interest and willingness to help.

If you are still willing to participate in an interview, can you use this **Calendly link** to sign up for a 50 minute time slot. Interviews will be conducted between January 13, 2021 - February 7, 2021. To be as flexible as possible, I am offering weeknight and weekend time slots as well as weekday slots. You will receive $30 compensation for participation.

If you prefer to respond to this later, I will send a follow up email after the new year. Thank you again for your interest and consideration. I hope your winter break is restorative and safe. Feel free to contact me via email if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Jason Kim-Seda

Appendix D

Interview Protocol for Teachers of Color

Statement of Confidentiality and Purpose of Research
Thank you for meeting with me today. This interview will last approximately 50 minutes. My goal is to better understand the retention factors for Teachers of Color at independent schools, especially through the lens of institutional and leadership support and the level of your sense of belonging in predominantly white independent schools. All of the information you share with me today is confidential. The video, audio and text files will be password protected. In the data analysis and findings sections of my dissertation, no identifying information will be used. I have several questions, and I'd like to encourage you to be honest today, but please share only what you feel comfortable sharing. You can choose not to answer a question or stop the interview at any time. I WILL RECORD THE SESSION AND USE CLOSED CAPTIONS TO GENERATE A TEXT TRANSCRIPT. Do you have any questions before I get started?

WARM-UP:
- How did you hear about the survey?
- Can you tell me about your role at your school?

SCRIPT: On the survey, I defined a sense of belonging as "the experience of personal involvement in a system or environment so that persons feel themselves to be an integral part of that system or environment." One's belonging is enhanced by the experience of feeling valued, needed, accepted, and their perceived or real "fit" in the organization.

1. Can you tell me about a time when you felt like you belonged at your school? If you cannot think of a specific moment, can you tell me about the factors that contribute to your sense of belonging?

2. Can you tell me about a time when you felt like you did NOT belong at your school? If you cannot think of a specific moment, can you tell me about the factors that hinder your sense of belonging?
   a. Do you feel like your school leaders (or a leader) promotes/hinders your belonging? If so, can you share about an instance of support or lack thereof?

3. How do you think your belonging might be impacted by your race or ethnicity?
   a. ...by your gender?
   b. …by another significant identifier? *(age, sexual orientation, religion, etc.)*
   c. ...by how your school treats/cares for Students of Color/families?

4. Tell me about how you are treated as a professional at your school.
   a. Do you feel like you are treated differently by parents, students and/or white colleagues? *(e.g., expertise questioned, more closely monitored or observed)*
   b. What factors contribute to the differential treatment?
   c. How do your school leaders support you if you are treated unprofessionally?

5. What would you like your school leaders to understand about your experience as a Teacher of Color on a predominantly white campus?
    a. How comfortable do you feel talking to your school leader about your experience as a Teacher of Color?
    b. Do you have a specific example of how they have shown support for you?
    c. Does your school leaders' level of racial identity awareness and/or literacy impact your sense of belonging or comfort level?
    d. Do they utilize a color-blind approach when working with educators?

6. If you feel comfortable, can you tell me about a time in which you experienced a microaggression or more overt discrimination or mistreatment because of your race or ethnicity?
    a. Do you think the experience was compounded by gender, orientation, age, religion, or another significant personal identifier?
    b. Did you feel comfortable talking to a school leader about this/these experiences, and how did they support you, if at all?

7. Can you tell me about your satisfaction with your school's actions/work in creating a more inclusive and equitable community? *(time permitting)*
    a. Has your level of satisfaction or connection to your school been impacted by its response to the pandemic? To the current movement for social justice?

8. What advice would you give to your school leader(s) related to support and retention of teachers of color? *(time permitting)*

9. Lastly, is there anything else you would like to share about any of the topics we have discussed today?

SCRIPT: That was the last question. I am going to STOP RECORDING. After I transcribe and review the interview, would it be OK if I follow up with you if I have any further questions? Thank you for your time. I hope we have a chance to meet in person one day. Can you let me know of a giftcard of choice or your Venmo/Paypal/Zelle handle?

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