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Doctor of Education in Organizational Leadership

Nannette W. Glenn, Ph.D.

Dr. Nannette Glenn, Dean of
the College of Graduate and
Professional Studies

Date: October 1, 2021

Dissertation Committee:

Libi Shen

Dr. Libi Shen, Chair

Joseph Rumenapp

Dr. Joseph Rumenapp

Jason R. Mixon

Dr. Jason R. Mixon

Abilene Christian University
School of Educational Leadership

African American Teachers' Experiences of Becoming Teachers in Ohio:
A Case Study

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Education in Organizational Leadership

by

Feon M. Battiste

October 2021

Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to my partner in everything, Chris. Thank you for holding me together when I was falling a part trying to get this book behind me. My son Christopher, no more silent hours from playing your game so that I could work. Thank you, baby boy. Thank you to my mom and dad, ya'll the real MVP's. My best friend and peace maker Dee Dee, "we all we got". To my granny Mona Lockett, I told you I was gone go get it, and I got it. Auntie Boo Boo, I love you forever. Finally, to Mi Amigos, thank ya'll for keeping the child in me alive. The laughter that we've been having since we were 14 will forever continue until we are old cows. I love you both. WE did it guys!!!

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Abstract

There has been a hiring discrepancy in the recruiting and hiring process of African American teachers in Ohio (Stein, 2019). The purpose of this descriptive case study was to explore African American teachers' experiences of becoming teachers in Ohio and their suggestions for improving the hiring process. Five research questions guided the study: (a) What were African American teachers' lived experiences of becoming a teacher in Ohio? (b) How do African American teachers perceive the obstacles and catalysts of becoming and remaining teachers in Ohio? (c) How do African American teachers view diversity in the teaching force? (d) What policies do African American teachers recommend to improving the recruitment or hiring procedures? (e) What recommendations do African American teachers have for retaining African American teachers at schools? Interviews and focus group discussion were used to collect data. The participants were 15 African American teachers for the interviews and five African American teachers for the focus group discussion in Ohio. Several significant emergent themes emerged, including they are hard to get the license or certification in Ohio, hired as disciplinarians instead of teachers, lack of diversity in education, satisfactory pay to retain teachers, hard to pass the state licensure test, African American teachers as positive role model in education, and student loan forgiveness for public-school teachers. Recommendations for educational leaders and future researchers were provided.

Keywords: academic achievement, acknowledgement, attrition, culturally relevant pedagogy, discrimination, disproportionate, inequity, marginalized, minority, prejudice, racism, recruitment, underrepresentation

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Background

In Richardson's (2015) survey of 51 participants, African American teachers who worked in predominantly Caucasian schools were not satisfied with their jobs, and perceived their work experiences unfavorable. In Walker's (2012) study, most male African American teachers remained in the classroom for children to serve as role models because there was a shortage of African American male elementary school teachers. Although some participants remained for benefits, enjoyment of teaching, and responses from the student, other participants expressed intrinsic and extrinsic factors played a role in the retention and attrition of African American male teachers (Walker, 2012). In Ursery's (2016) survey of 252 African American teachers and 21 focused group participants, African American teachers viewed salary, inadequate teacher support (i.e., minority teacher support), unfair human resource recruiting and hiring practices, and poor perceptions of teaching to be the primary hindrance to becoming and remaining a teacher. The vast majority of African American teachers were intrinsically motivated to become teachers, and they believed the importance of a diverse faculty, multicultural curriculum, and culturally relevant instructional practices in the teacher workforce (Ursery, 2016).

In fact, the underrepresentation of African American educators within the public-school system has been a continuous concern within the United States since at least the 1930s (Foster et al., 2003). Up until about the 1960s, African American educators were most likely to be teaching African American students (Foster et al., 2003). The limited presence of African American teachers is a current challenge in the United States and there is little promise that this marginalization will cease. Historically, many African American teachers have expected that every child could succeed (Alexander & Milner, 2015). African American educators, despite

poverty, racial discrimination, and the many social inequalities facing them, take special interest in serving African American students by providing them with moral and political foundations that is necessary in order for them to be successful.

In the 1960s, *Brown vs. The Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas*, the Supreme Court declared that “separate, but equal” facilities were unconstitutional in the American educational system (Bryan & Williams, 2017). According to Bryan and Williams (2017), “The legacy of *Brown* is that effective teachers and school leaders who interact with students of color, particularly in African American community schools, are more than simply purveyors of teaching and learning. They are expected to engage and support all students” (p. 231). According to Tillman (2017) of the *African American Principals and the Legacy of Brown* report, *Brown* was significant to African American educators for two reasons:

1. The work of African American principals in the post-*Brown* era has contributed to the theory and practice of educational leadership.
2. One of the goals of the decision was to remedy educational inequities and allow African American principals to continue their work under improved social and educational conditions. (p. 322)

The historical foundations that underserved communities experienced in regard to educational inequities has long-term effects on African American scholars. These inequities begin with the African American teachers being employed in districts where they are seen as disciplinarians instead of allies, as well as not being able to have a voice on any topic of diversity and inclusion that could bridge the gap that further lead to the progressive achievement gaps for African American students (Milner, 2017).

The increased change in the representation of African American teachers in the public-school arena fluctuated over time in the United States (Heller, 1992). Kohli (2012) explained that during the 1960s when *Brown Versus the Board of Education* first implemented the court ruling, the number of African American teachers, principals, and counselors took a large decrease as a direct reflection of racism within the school-systems. Kohli (2012) also explained that over the past few decades, the number of African American teachers within the school systems would increase, then decrease as the efforts were made to improve diversity in public-schools that were historically segregated across the south.

From the years of 2010-2020, the number of African American teachers in the public-school systems continued to reflect much lower numbers than their Caucasian counterparts (Milner, 2017). Milner (2017) stated that “the disparity of having African American teachers in the public-school systems continues to have long-lasting impacts within the African American community” (p. 62). According to Milner (2017), “Black teachers can have a meaningful impact on Black students’ academic and social success because they often deeply understand Black students’ situations and their needs” (p. 92). The awareness that African American teachers show to African American students is the connection that is needed for organizational leadership to review school policies that could potentially lessen the disciplinarian disparities that has continued to happen in the Central Ohio school district (Fairclough, 2017).

In 2013, the state of Ohio along with fourteen other states joined the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC; OHNESINC, 2018). This new partnership allowed for the individuals to receive tutoring support for the Ohio Assessment for Educators. The state of Ohio requires that all individuals who wish to become a teacher complete an approved teacher preparation program, must have a bachelor’s degree from an accredited

university, and requires that the individual must pass a content area exam. The Ohio Assessment for Educators Skills Test (2018) showed that while 60% of Caucasian Americans passed the state licensure test, only 45% of African American passed the test. The deficit that occurs when African American teachers fall short in Ohio school systems add to the number of less representation in districts where African American students are dominantly represented. The Ohio Assessment for Educators (2018) also pointed out that African American teachers are at the lowest number achieving a successful score where Caucasians are at approximately 60%, Hispanics are at approximately 55%, Asians at 57%, and African Americans are at approximately 45%. The number of minority test takers scored relatively closer to Caucasian teachers than African Americans.

Statement of the Problem

Although African American students are being more represented in the public-school systems, the decline and underrepresentation of African American teachers throughout the public-school systems remains constant in the United States (Fairclough, 2017). In 2010, there were approximately 100,000 teachers in Ohio, where 7.39% of those teachers were African American; however, in 2020, there were approximately 120,000 teachers, and a mere 4.1% identified as African American teachers (Phelps, 2018). There have been similar trends of disproportionate representation in Ohio's African American teacher to African American student ratio.

The general problem was that as the student population was becoming more diverse, the diversity of teachers was not (Fairclough, 2017). Bryan and Williams (2017) found that "One of the biggest disparities in the nation's education system is the disproportionate number of African American teachers compared to the number of African American students" (p. 336). The specific

problem within this central Ohio school district is that the pool of African American teachers is much less than their counterparts which should be addressed in building the numbers of quality teachers in this public-school system. Stein (2019) explained that there was a hiring discrepancy in the recruiting and hiring process of African American teachers in Ohio.

Another issue is that the hiring discrepancy is related to the employment mismatch. The employment mismatch theory started in 1960s (Bian, 2020). The definitions of mismatch were not consistent over the past six decades. Bian (2020) illustrated that employment mismatch is the “housing segregation affects the distribution and level of Negro employment” (Kain, 1968, as cited in Bian, 2020, p. 831). It is the “growing imbalance between demand and supply that can produce widespread situations of status inconsistency” (Francesco, 1978, as cited in Bian, 2020, p. 831). In a global context, employment mismatch is “a mismatch between the employment they (job seekers) prefer and the employment they are offered” (Spain Cremer et al., 1995, as cited in Bian, 2020, p. 831). The new concept of employment mismatch was categorized into numerical imbalance and expectation imbalance (Bian, 2020). The numerical imbalance involves the number of job opening is significantly larger or smaller than the job seekers. The expectation imbalance includes “adequate number of jobs but people do not apply due to payment, location, workload, or value concerns,” and “adequate number of job seekers but organizations do not hire them due to lack of required skills, motivation, and other characteristics” (Bian, 2020, p. 832).

Research on the relationship between African American teachers and the impact that they have on African American students’ success has been conducted at the elementary level (Kohli, 2012). In the United States, the population of African American teachers that make up the workforce equates to eight percent, and in central Ohio, that number is 4.6%. Research data indicated that “Black students are suspended and expelled at rates three times higher than their

Caucasian peers” (D’Amico et al., 2017, p. 84). This data showed that “while 4.6% of Caucasian students are receiving suspensions, 16.4% of African American students are being suspended” (D’Amico et al., 2017, p. 174). Strickland et al. (2019) asserted, “research suggests an implicit bias — an unconscious attitude or stereotype that affects understanding, actions, and decisions — that contributes to the disparity in school discipline” (p. 67).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative descriptive case study is to explore African American teachers’ lived experiences of becoming teachers in Ohio and their suggestions to improve the hiring procedures. The lived experiences of African American educators in Ohio might help elucidate the recruitment, hiring, and retention practices for African American teachers in Ohio. The goal is to find out how African American teachers perceived challenges, obstacles, catalysts, and diversity, if any, in the hiring procedure as well as what suggestions they have in the hiring procedure for recruiting and retaining African American teachers through their lived experiences. This study might assist seven predominately African American school districts and lead the way to sustaining African Americans in the education profession.

Nature of the Study

A qualitative approach with a case study design was adopted. A case study design was used to answer the research questions. This descriptive case study explored parents’ experience of becoming teachers in Ohio and their perceptions of victories, challenges, and obstacles, if any, during the procedures. This case study also explores African American teachers’ viewpoints and suggestions on how to improve the hiring process and how to avoid racism in order to help more African American students. Data were collected using interviews and a focus group discussion. Thematic analysis was used to analyze the data.

A quantitative or mixed method approach to this topic is not appropriate with the following reasons. A quantitative research method is not appropriate for this study because quantitative method is not focus on a phenomenon but statistics. In addition, data are collected using surveys, polls, and questionnaires which is not the purpose of this study. The mixed method approaches employ a combination of both numbers and interview strategies, which is not working for the topic being explored because African American teachers might be stressful responding to questionnaires, interviews, and focused group discussion at the same time. The data collection process may be lengthy for the participants to handle. The current topic focused on African American teachers' experiences of becoming a teacher and their suggestions to improve the hiring process. The qualitative data should be collected based on the study purpose. Therefore, mixed method approach would not be used to gather the necessary insights and it cannot replace a simple single descriptive case study.

Yin (2004) illustrated five components of effective case study research design: (a) research questions, (b) propositions or purpose of study, (c) unit analysis, (d) logic that links data to propositions, and (e) criteria for interpreting findings. The most appropriate questions for this type of qualitative case study research were "how" and "why" forms of questions. Specifically, the experiences from African American teachers and their perceptions of the hiring and retaining of African American teachers fits into this research design. Creswell (2013) addressed how "researchers need to think through the philosophical worldview assumptions that they bring to the study, the research design that is related to this worldview, and the specific methods or approached of research that translate the approach into practice" (p. 5). Therefore, the experiences of fifteen African American teachers who uphold different roles within the school system would provide valuable insights and suggestions for me.

Additionally, a descriptive case study is appropriate for the topic because case studies allow me to report materials from individuals or groups, to corroborate the interview findings, and to use small samples. For this study, a small sample of African American teachers who have experience in hiring process for K-12 school system were gathered to answer the interview questions. Their stories, opinions, beliefs, feelings, and opinions were all collected. Convenience sampling were implemented because they are onsite in the same school district. Therefore, using a descriptive case study for this topic was more appropriate than other approach and is more aligned with the study purpose, problem statement, and research questions.

Research Questions

The central question of this study was: What were African American teachers' experiences of becoming teachers in Ohio and what suggestions do they have for improving the hiring process? The following research questions guided his study.

1. What were African American teachers' lived experiences of becoming a teacher in Ohio?
2. How do African American teachers perceive the obstacles and catalysts of becoming and remaining teachers in Ohio?
3. How do African American teachers view diversity in the teaching force?
4. What policies do African American teachers recommend to improve the recruit or hiring procedures?
5. What recommendations do African American teachers have for retaining African American teachers at schools?

Through African American teachers' lived experiences of becoming a teacher in Ohio, teachers' stories, viewpoints, opinions, and recommendations were examined. Suggestions for improving

hiring process were revealed. Their recommendations for recruiting, hiring, and retaining African American teachers were understood.

Rationale, Relevance, and Significance of the Study

Exploring the beliefs and perceptions of African American teachers through their lived experiences in order to understand if they have challenges or obstacles during the hiring procedure in Ohio is significant. Racism should not exist in any part of the U.S. education system. It is of importance to know if African American educators in the public-school systems faced challenges or obstacles in the hiring procedures in Ohio. It is also beneficial to gain from teachers' experiences and perspectives on what factors, if any, contribute to the discouragement of joining the educational work force. Obtaining the professional viewpoints of the teachers were an insight of what it takes to recruit and retain the number of African American teachers in Ohio. The intent for conducting this study was to gain an understanding of African American teachers' experiences and viewpoints on how the recruitment, retention, and sustainability of African American teachers lead to an underrepresentation within one of the largest school districts in the state of Ohio. In addition, this case study might reveal how African American teachers perceived the state of the hiring disparities within a school district that services minorities, and suggestions related to improving hiring procedures in teaching careers.

The study findings might be significant to teachers, students, and researchers in the field. The study might benefit African American teachers to take a stand in K-12 education, to help more African American students learn, and to avoid racism in the education field. This study might benefit students because they were motivated to learn with African American teachers in the teaching force. African American teachers should serve as their role model in and outside of the classroom. The study results were helpful to teachers wanting to increase their effectiveness

and efficiency in facilitating teaching and guiding students' learning activities. This study might benefit researchers, since research studies on this topic is limited, especially a qualitative study. Researchers can develop research based on the study findings. The study might contribute to the educational field by improving recruit procedures for African American teachers, advancing theories for research studies, and facilitating rich conversations between leaders, African American teachers, scholars, and practitioners.

Definition of Key Terms

Academic achievement. The successful progress made by a student through the curriculum provided by the online platform of the K-12 virtual school (Ravitch & Mathis, 2010).

Acknowledgement. A gesture to reinforce a desired behavior in another person, may be take many forms (Kohli, 2012).

Attrition. This keyword refers to the numbers of teachers who depart from the teaching profession (Kohli, 2012).

Culturally relevant pedagogy. The approach to teaching that is responsive to the voices and identities of Black and Brown students (Henry, 2018).

Discrimination. The treatment or consideration of, or making a distinction in favor of or against, a person or thing based on the group, class, or category to which that person or thing belongs rather than on individual merit: racial and religious intolerance and discrimination (Kohli, 2012).

Disproportionate. According to Oxford Dictionary, the word disproportionate means “the state of two things not being at an equal high or low level” (Bryan & Williams, 2017).

Inequity. The lack of fairness or justice (Cagle, 2017).

Marginalized. Marginalization is both a condition and a process that prevents individuals and groups from full participation in social, economic, and political life enjoyed by the wider society (Henry, 2018).

Minority. The identification of students who identify as anything other than Caucasian (D'Amico et al., 2017).

Prejudice. preconceived opinion that is not based on reason or actual experience (Ford, 1999).

Racism. Prejudices set in place that are used to keep one race superior than the other (Cagle, 2017).

Recruitment. The seeking out of teachers to join the educational arena (Henry, 2018).

Underrepresentation. Insufficient or disproportionately low (D'Amico et al., 2017).

Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations

Simon (2011) explained that the assumptions in the study are issues that are beyond the researcher's control; however, if the assumptions did not exist, the study would not be relevant. It was an assumption that the African American teachers experienced obstacles and hindrances when applying to become teachers. It was also an assumption that the schools that were predominately African American felt as if there was not enough diversity within the school buildings. This research has the potential to help identify the shortcomings, if any, that are needed to make changes in the hiring and retention practices for future employees.

A considerable limitation of this study is that due to small sample size, this study is not generable to a large population. Additionally, it is not applicable to the entire population of teachers because qualitative research answers are based on opinions (Creswell & Clark, 2018).

This study was also limited by the specific focus on African American teachers which will purport those other cultures may not understand the implications of the study.

This study was necessarily delimited due to the unique sample characteristics of selecting educators who have been in the educational arena for 5 or more years. The study participants were African American educators who have been in the profession for 5 or more years. The scope of this study was delimited to educators who have been in the teaching profession for 5 or more years. The faculty at the study site received an email request and an invitation to participate in the interviews to provide an in-depth viewpoint from their experiences regarding hiring procedures and challenges in the public-school systems.

Summary

The field of education has and continues to be a challenging, but honorable, profession. Increasing legislation and social changes have inflicted great change within the teaching profession and with the ability of schools to provide adequate hiring and retention practice training for each new mandate. The ensuing instability and underrepresentation of African American educators in comparison to their counterparts has left African American educators feeling hesitant to enter into the academic profession. The purpose of this descriptive case study is to examine African American teachers' experiences of becoming teachers in Ohio and their suggestions for improving the hiring process.

Chapter 1 is an overview of the entire study. Chapter 1 consisted of background, the problem statement, the purpose of the proposed study, the research questions, the rationale, relevance, and significance of the proposed study, the definition of key terms, and assumptions, delimitations, and limitations. A descriptive case study was used in this study. Fifteen (15) African American teachers were recruited for conducting this study. Chapter 2 provides a

detailed review of the previous research studies and current literature pertaining to African American educators in the public-school systems as well as the contributing conceptual and theoretical frameworks.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Since the desegregation of public-schools in May of 1962, the underrepresentation of African American educators in the school systems has continued to increase as the number of African American student occupants has continued to increase. Byrd and Edwards (2009) claimed that African American educators, whether they are male, female, teachers, administrators, or school counselors account for a marginalized 8%. In fact, according to the National Center for Education Statistics (2017), “the number of teachers who identified specifically as African American declined from eight percent to seven percent for 2015-2016 academic school year.” The less than competitive number of educators who identified as Black or African American in the educational workforce is impacting the academic growth of African American students. To combat the disproportionately representation of African American educators in the workforce, Abrahams (2018) theorized that “An awareness of the culture and social structure of the lower class African American community is crucial for understanding ‘Black English’ and therefore is vital for those engaged in educating African Americans” (p. xi). The educational system will continue to flounder if there is not an acknowledgement of the key components that contributes to the expansion and underrepresentation of African American educators.

Although African American students are being more represented in the public-school systems, the decline and underrepresentation of African American teachers throughout the public-school systems remains constant in the United States (Fairclough, 2017). There have been similar trends of disproportionate representation in African American teacher to African American student ratio in Ohio. The general problem was that as the student population was becoming more diverse, the diversity of teachers was not (Fairclough, 2017). Bryan and

Williams (2017) found that, “One of the biggest disparities in the nation’s education system is the disproportionate number of African American teachers compared to the number of African American students” (p. 336). The specific problem is that the pool of African American teachers is much less than their counterparts which should be addressed in building the numbers of quality teachers in this public-school system (Fairclough, 2017). Stein (2019) explained that there was a hiring discrepancy in the recruiting and hiring process of African American teachers in Ohio.

Documentation

The research that has been gathered and reported on this study has been found in scholarly journals and educational data bases such as ERIC, ProQuest and Google Scholar. There is a large number of primary sources; however, the secondary is equal in numbers and are the basis of conducting a more accurate depiction of the research thesis as their findings continued to build upon research that has been done before them. The review of this literature is organized into the following categories: (a) literature that defines the marginalized population of educators, (b) literature that describes the impacts of the underrepresentation of the educators, (c) literature that describes the injustices during the hiring process, and (d) literature that emphasizes the importance of having cultural relevancy within the classroom.

In this chapter, an overview of the scholarly literature on the underrepresentation of African American educators in the school systems and the impact that the absence of cultural relevance has on the academic achievement of African American students were presented. Major factors affecting the hiring and retention of African American educators as well as how the absence of cultural relevance within the classroom impacts African American students were reviewed. The overall stress levels that African American educators endure to stay competitive

amongst their counterparts leads to higher attrition numbers in the workforce (Fitchett et al., 2019). Table 2 presents the sources and major topics being reviewed. The topics searched included *African American teachers, underrepresentation of African American teachers, impact of African American teachers on students, diversity of workforce, factors influencing African American teachers' retention and attrition, recruitment of African American teachers*, and so on. In total, 82 sources were references, which included 65 peer-reviewed articles, 14 dissertations, and 13 online sources.

Table 1

Documentation of Literature Review Search

Categories	Peer-reviewed articles	Dissertations/ theses	Books	Online sources
African American Teachers	11	3		4
Underrepresentation of African American teachers	20	1		2
Impact	9			1
Diversity	11			4
Factors				
Recruitment of African American Teachers	14			2
Total	65	4	0	13

To further understand the literature that stands at the basis of this research and the trends, how African American students are impacted at the absence of African American educators and the reasons why African Americans are less likely to be recruited in education were examined. In

preparation for this literature review, previous research dating back three decades, such as peer-reviewed articles, dissertations, and so on from three education academic platforms, and books closely related to the topic were reviewed.

Historical Context

A major concern facing public education is the low academic performance of minority students, specifically African American students (Byrd & Edwards, 2009). Central to each of the rationales for diversifying the teacher workforce is that all students, particularly African American students, were benefit from having more African American teachers (Byrd & Edwards, 2009). African American teachers are essential to socially and culturally balancing the teaching profession and dominant perspectives. Research illuminates that African American have high academic and personal expectations for African American students, and when they are present in the classroom, African American student achievement increases (Byrd & Edwards, 2009). Some studies showed that negative Caucasian teachers' perceptions may manifest in African American students receiving less attention, encouragement, and positive feedback (Gordon et al., 1999; Irvine, 1990; King, 2018), which adversely affect students' self-concept. Thus, a critical concern of the African American teacher shortage is that African American students will have fewer opportunities to interact with African American teachers who have been shown to positively impact their academic achievement (Wilder, 1999, 2000).

There were many themes that surfaced in the literature that connected the information across many platforms. First, the hiring and retention of African American educators in public-school systems impacts the learning and social growth of African American students (D'Amico et al., 2017). Madkins (2011) explained that nontraditional routes must be taken in order to recruit and retain Black teachers. The hiring practices and retention of African American

educators in public education has continued to persist throughout the decades and little to nothing has been done to combat these inequalities in education. Research has been conducted to show that a small percentage of African American educators enter into the workforce practice because of the discriminatory hiring practices that are put in place to keep them from advancing in the workplace, as well as when they are accepted into the educational workforce, they are subjected to working with the more “difficult” students (D’Amico et al., 2017).

Second, the underrepresentation of African American educators in the United States has continuously declined as the number of African American students has entered into the public-school system (D’Amico et al., 2017). In the National Center for Education (NCEI), Feistritzer (2005) found that only 8% of the public-school workforce are African American, where 27% of African American Students make-up the public-school system. This means that the hiring and retention of African American educators has continued to be marginalized as the population of African American students increased. The representation of African American educators in the public-school systems can be attributed to the poor support of their school systems, educational support in the classrooms, and nondiscriminatory hiring practices when hiring people of color. However, the need to be culturally relevant and culturally present within the classroom continues to be an issue nationwide.

Milner (2017) asserted that “there is a need for having African American educators present in education continues to be an issue within the public-school system” (p. 24). To support the hiring and retaining of African American educators and other minority educators for that matter, school systems should have in place nondiscriminatory laws that is inclusive and reputable for hiring educators of color (Milner, 2017). In building a community that reflects the entire population instead of a select few, law makers must create, develop, and implement laws

that directly promote hiring a culturally and racially diverse staff, as well as giving the educators more open options to choose where they teach (Milner, 2017). Byrd and Edwards (2009) explained that when conversations are had to expand the way of thinking and processing information about oppression in education, educators build a foundation of trust when the representation of all cultures are present, and influential in making decisions on the future of African American students.

In the long-awaited results of the Supreme Court's ruling in *Brown v. Board of Education in Topeka, Kansas* in 1954, there was an intense anticipation from African American educators, fueled by the belief that the long awaited equal and better opportunities for both African American educators and African American students had finally come to pass. Numerous factors contributed to the delay and implementation of the Court's order, and the federal government contributed significantly to the delay in those opportunities. One of the negative impacts that stemmed from the desegregation of public-school systems in the United States was the dismissal and demotion of Black teachers and principals (Byrd & Edwards, 2009). At the time of arrival of the anticipated court ruling in 1954, there was approximately 80,000 Black teachers in the United States (Byrd & Edwards, 2009), and by the year 1964, nearly 40,000 African American administrators and educators were no longer in the educational workforce. Vilson (2015) described that "non-African American educators have more callous attitudes toward African American students" (p. 48). Vilson (2015) asserted that African Americans, when hired, are usually paired with problematic schools within their district to act as a disciplinarian instead of an ally for students of color. School districts post *Brown vs. The Board of Education in Topeka, Kansas* court ruling in 1954 has continued to be dominant in systemic oppression for students of color based upon laws that have been created by the dominate culture to keep a set of learners

marginalized (Fairclough, 2018). After *Brown v. The Board of Education* in 1954, blatant discriminatory court legislation such as the Southern Manifesto was put forth in front of a judge to overturn the law to segregate schools (Vilson, 2015). The discriminatory practices that were created and implemented are based upon the ideologies of the dominant culture in education which causes a divide amongst African American students because their culture and language is not being represented in their classrooms (Kohli, 2012). According to Douglass (2018),

Black students are being educated by people who are not of their racial or cultural background. Research reports showed that almost 87% of the United States elementary and secondary teachers are Caucasian, while only eight percent (8%) of those teachers are Black.

The underrepresentation of African American educators in the public-school systems continue to widen the learning opportunity gap for students of color due to the lack of representation within the school.

Those namely components are the cultural relevance of African American educators and the representation within the classroom. D’Amico et al. (2017) asserted that “The lack of racial diversity among the nation’s teachers is a public issue that exists and is tangible” (p. 28), and the issue of not having enough representation across the board is within reach. Representation and cultural relevance are an important component for students of color when trying to bridge the opportunity gap in the educational system. Historically, the underrepresentation of African American educators in the workforce has been an ongoing issue in the public-school sector since the desegregation of schools and little to no laws have been re-written since that time that addresses discriminatory practices in recruiting, hiring, and retaining African American educators in the public-school systems.

D'Amico et al. (2017) stated,

There are asymmetric number of African American educators in the workforce in comparison to Caucasian educators; the percentage of African American educators in the workforce has continued to decline since the dismantling of segregated public-school systems across the United States. (p. 426)

There are substantial amounts of research that has identified the contributing factors that potentially explain this downward trend in the workforce of education. However, over time, the most important and dominant factor was the integration of schools from people of color.

Additionally, there is a struggle within the United States to recruit and retain African American male and female educators (Bryan & Williams, 2017). Many African American students go through their public- school academic careers without the cultural relevance and representation of educators who represent them in and out of the school. In order for African American educators to be represented in the educational system, there must be a restructuring of how policy makers and school leaders eliminate racial prejudices within their school systems (D'Amico et al., 2017). Taking into account the data that reflects a marginal-size number of African American educators in the workforce, it becomes apparent that the school systems should have an approach to cultural relevance and the retention of African American educators so they become the forefront and center of attention to create an awareness.

The scarcity of African American educators in the public-school systems in the United States continues to remain an issue with the increasing numbers of African American students joining the public-school systems (Cockburn, 2000). While there has been previous research to define, explain, and resolve the declining numbers of African American educators in the workforce, the marginalized number continues to decline nationwide (Cockburn, 2000). African

American educators are disproportionately represented in the public-school systems, and when they are hired, they are usually paired with the students who have been labelled to have discipline problems. Cockburn (2000) explained, “Becoming aware of African American Culture and how it influences students in the classroom is the starting point for school systems” (p. 51). The racial disparity that is showcased in the educational workforce impacts the learning of all students, but more specifically students of color when their culture or race is not represented within the school systems. Ball and Ladson-Billings (2020) argued that teachers are more effective when they get to know their students’ backgrounds, including cultural rules for engagement and different ways of expressing knowledge. For example, instead of pushing children to stop using African American vernacular, they might encourage students to translate their favorite hip-hop lyrics into formal English—treating them as bilingual rather than as poor speakers.

The topic on African American educators in education and how this group of educators are significantly marginalized in the workforce has a plethora of information that dates many years ago; however, there were only a few scholarly articles that were found in current times (Kohli, 2012). The foundation of literature has been presented over the years; however, the literature is limited on what happens next in order to bridge the academic opportunity gap within the public-school systems. Ahmad and Boser (2014) asserted that “as a nation, we need to undertake strategic efforts to retain and increase the number of effective teachers of color in our educator workforce” (p. 19). The most recent literature that reflected the underrepresentation of African American educators and the impacts that it has on African American students was not thoroughly developed as the research aimed to focus on all minorities instead of the significant

group that has the lowest number of educators working to bring cultural relevance to the arena (Ahmad & Boser, 2014).

The most recent findings focused on the “inequality of having Black or African American teachers in the classroom as well as focused on the low percentages of minority educators and how their absence impacts the academic growth of African American students” (Henry, 2018, p. 4). Additionally, Henry (2018) found there is a need for more Black and Brown teachers in urban school districts to combat the cultural gaps that are lacking within the school systems. The retention of African American educators has continued to increase since the desegregation of public-schools in 1962 (Henry, 2018). The racial injustices that people of color endure in the educational workforce impacts the long-term tenure of African American educators as well as contributes to the reasons why many African American educators are only in this occupation for a short period of time (Henry, 2018). The underrepresentation of African American educators within the public-school systems impedes the growth of Black and Brown students yet, there has not been laws to correct this inequitable dynamic of students and representation within the classroom.

Nationwide, according to the U.S. Department of Education (2020), African Americans made up 6.8% of the teaching workforce in the 2011-12 school year, down from 8.3% in 1990. Nearly 83% of the teaching workforce in 2011 was Caucasian, down slightly from 1990. In all, 26,000 African American teachers have disappeared from the nation’s public-schools—even as the overall teaching workforce has increased by 134,000. Countless African American principals, coaches, cafeteria workers, nurses, and counselors have also been displaced—all in the name of raising achievement among African American students.

Theoretical Framework

Critical Race Theory

The first theory that frames the basis of the study is the critical race theory (CRT).

Critical race theory was coined and developed by an African American scholar named Derrick Bell, and a Caucasian man Alan Freeman in the 1970s to better understand the inequities and injustices in the school system (Milner, 2006). Curry (2017) defined that

Critical Race Theory is the view that the law and legal institutions are inherently racist and that race itself, instead of being biologically grounded and natural, is a socially constructed concept that is used by Caucasian people to further their economic and political interest at the expense of people of color. (p. 18)

Created during the 1970s, CRT stands to explain how racism is socially constructed and promotes the value of Caucasian ideologies (Curry, 2017). CRT stands to enhance and expand the conversations that showcases how racism stands at the foundation of educational practices that impact Black and Brown people. CRT relates to the study topic of the underrepresentation of African American teachers in a public-school system because it directly relates to the oppressions and racist policies that spew injustices and inequality for both African American teachers and African American students in the educational workspace (Curry, 2017).

CRT is a scientific approach to the study of race, racism, and society. CRT was created during the civil rights movement by political activist and scholars who sought out to examine the current laws and challenge the mainstream approaches to racial justice (Curry, 2017). CRT examines how racism is stitched into the legal systems and how racism is inherently apart of the racial inequities that exist today. A challenge to the foundations of social hierarchy, systems and laws that perpetuate social order and racism, CRT asserts that equality does not exist for all

racial groups (Milner, 2006). In practice, critical race theory demands the recognition of racism throughout history, how it is perpetuated currently, and examine how the relationship between power, race, and racism work toward the liberation of people of color (Milner, 2006).

Constructivist Theory

Constructivist theory is defined as a process where “the learners ultimately construct their own knowledge that then resides within them, so that each person’s knowledge is as unique as they are” (Curry, 2017). Others are merely tools for inquiry and encouragement when an individual takes on the world on their own. Individuals evaluate and synthesize various scenarios using their experiences and information. Others are merely tools for inquiry and encouragement when an individual takes on the world on their own. Individuals evaluate and synthesize various scenarios using their experiences and information. The core principle of constructivism is that human learning is built, and that learners create new knowledge on top of previous knowledge. This prior knowledge influences what new or modified knowledge an individual will construct from new learning experiences (Phillips, 1995).

Social Cognitive Theory

Albert Bandura popularized the social cognitive theory, which holds that behavior and awareness are affected by factors such as environment, emotion, and cognitive capacity (Cagle, 2017). Human behavior, according to Bandura, is influenced by environmental influences, emotional capacities, and cognitive processing; in order to reach their full potential. Cagle (2017) believed that all three components must work together. In education, constructivism recognizes the importance of personal and subjective experience. The theory argues that each person's mind contains truth, and that each person interprets events based on "his or her own perceptions, values, and understanding” (Cagle, 2017).

Tokenism

Kanter (1977) formalized the term “tokenism” by explaining that it is the practice of making only a token or symbolic attempt to do something, such as hiring a small number of people from underrepresented groups to give the impression of sexual or racial equality within a workforce. Tokenism is an effort to explain what it means to be the only or one of a few members of a community in a specific social environment. Tokens are not seen as persons, but as symbols of their respective race, gender, or other oppressed category, according to a central concept of tokenism (Williams, 2018). As a result, people who play the role of "token" can face assumptions and performance pressure from dominant group members. Tokenism theory helps explain the perspectives described by the participants in this study since they are scarcely numbered in public-school systems (Williams, 2018). Tokenism, as well as the misplaced integration efforts that it derives from, creates the illusion of inclusion without actually achieving it. Tokenism is a futile movement that only creates uncertainty and anger as well as gives businesses a false sense of accomplishment (Kanter, 1977).

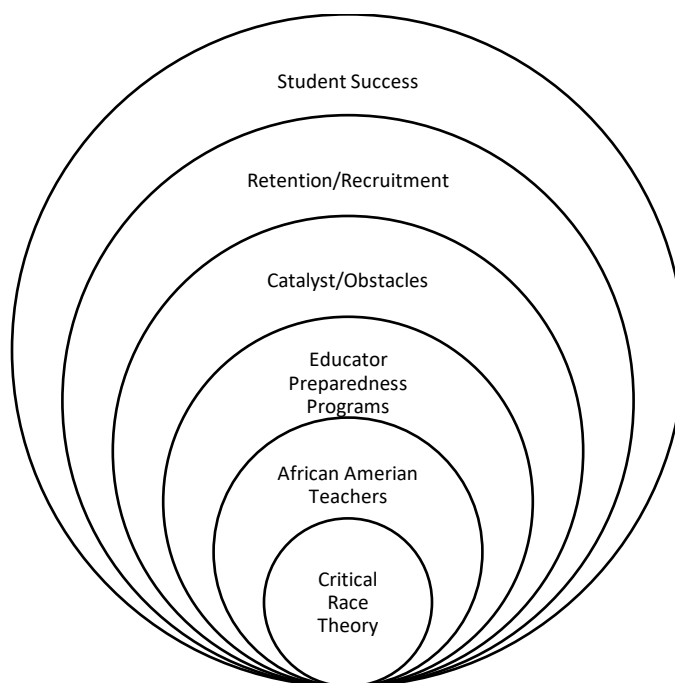
Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework entails five levels where African American students dwell at the top of this cycle. The cycle demonstrates the factors that inherently impact the success rate of African American students in the public-school systems. At the center of this model, critical race theory was used to explore African American teachers’ lived experiences of becoming teachers in Ohio and their concerns on the marginalization in number those African American teachers represent in the teaching work force. CRT will stand to be the unheard voices of the African American teachers who have been silenced, not represented in school reform, educational policy; thus, giving the African American teachers a voice that displays their feelings, experiences, and

holistic understanding of what measures are necessary to recruit and retain African American teachers.

Figure 1

The Conceptual Framework of Equitable Hiring Practices for all Teachers



Note. The conceptual framework of equitable hiring practices for all teachers, created by F. M. Battiste, 2021.

The first step represents the African American teacher. The second step to this circle represents the educator preparedness programs that impact the intellectual growth and readiness of African American teachers. African American teachers represent cultural and racial sensitivity toward not only African American students, but to all students. When programs are not in place to demonstrate that representation of African American teachers matter, the continuous cycle of achievement gaps for students of color continue to worsen. The third step to this circle represents the catalysts and obstacles that African Americans endure when becoming and remaining teachers. Barriers to becoming a teacher play a significant role in prospective teachers' decision

makings when considering to enter into the teaching profession as well as their decisions to stay within a specific school, school district, or stay in the educational field at all.

The preparedness of teachers, perception of teaching, salary payouts, student academic success rates, and work conditions are all factors that influence the decision to stay within the profession. The first measurement at increasing the number of African American teachers in the profession is to understand these barriers. The fourth step of this cycle represents the recruitment and retention practices. Curry (2017) explained that in order to significantly increase the number of African American teachers in the profession, there needs to be proactive efforts to attain quality candidates and retain the current teachers. Recruitment and retention are collectively equals in this strategy to strengthen the numbers of African American teachers. The fifth step represents the height of the circle and the systematic ways that can strengthen the number of African American teachers in the profession, which in-turn, equates to academic stability and growth for all students.

African American teachers are important to the academic growth of African American students. According to the U.S. Department of Education (2020), African American students will comprise of approximately half of the students in the nation's public-school systems. As the number of African American students across the nation increases, the number of African American teachers continues to account for less than ten percent (Curry, 2017).

The History of African American Teachers in the Public-School Systems

Historically, African American teachers have usually taught African American students (Carter Andrews et al., 2018). In the southern United States, it was the slaves who began to secretly teach other slaves to read and write as a means of escaping the mental inferiority of slavery as well as teaching their children the skills that were necessary for them to have the same

educational opportunities as their Caucasian counterparts (King, 2018). In the northern states, Caucasians and African Americans worked alongside one another and many upper-class African Americans were for the integration of schools to ensure that their children were receiving the same education as Caucasian students (King, 2018). Many of the middle-class African Americans of the north opposed the integration of schools because they understood the importance of building up their own neighborhood schools and facilitating learning that was reflective of their own culture (King, 2018).

From 1870-1965, Jim Crow Laws mandated racial segregation in all facilities that were owned and operated by the public (Caucasian Americans). These laws made it difficult for African Americans to obtain jobs in Caucasian schools, which caused African Americans to start their own schools (Carter Andrews et al., 2018). During the 1950s African American teachers accounted for nearly half of the African American working professionals (Fairclough, 2018). The Great Depression of the 1930s deteriorated the already underfunded schools of African Americans and as a result, African Americans pushed for the integration of schools so that African American students could receive an equitable education (Fairclough, 2018).

African American Teachers are Needed in Public-School System

The limited number of African American teachers in the public-school systems continues to be a problem in predominately urban school districts (Kohli, 2012). Although there have been efforts to increase the African American teacher population, the United States continues to display a disproportionately low number of African American teachers in the public-school system. The American school systems need more African American teachers to be represented as more African American students are entering into the public-school systems (King, 2018). African American teachers not only act as advocates for African American students, they also

advocate the entire population of students so that all students are academically excelling. African American teachers also understand the importance of being culturally relevant as well as offer school systems the in-house need for positive role-models for African American students.

King (2018) explained that when African American students had an African American teacher, the number of absences and dropout rates decreased while the number of African American students enrolling in colleges and universities increased. This finding is important and critical to the understanding of why representation matters and how being paired with the same race of teachers can prove to promote engagement in learning from African American students.

For African American students, cultural relevance is important to the academic and behavioral growth of students. As African American students navigate their way through the public-school systems, the more important it becomes to have positive images of African American educators that helps to establish positive relationships within the classroom. According to the Shanker Institute (West, 2012), which is funded in part by the American Federation of Teachers, the number of African American educators has declined sharply in some of the largest urban school districts in the nation. The creation and implementation of educator roles that are reflective of African American student's culture supports the academic and social growth that is necessary in learning foundational skills. There is an overwhelming number of Caucasian educators in the public-school system (82%), and while the diversity amongst educators has shifted to hiring more minority educators, there is only about 10% of educators who are African American. Amongst those educators who are reflected in the dominating majority, school leaders and principals are predominately Caucasian.

Cultural and racial matching is important for not only African American students, but for students overall. Studies have shown that African American students, especially African

American males, are impacted by the cultural relevancy and presence of African American educators (Bryan & Williams, 2017). African American students are rising in number in educational institutions across the nation and that is not reflected in the educators who are educating them. Studies have shown that when African American educators are present in grade school, grades significantly increase and the idea of going to college as well as completing college becomes a new level of achievement that seems attainable.

African American students who have at least one African American educator in grade school are more likely to attend college with those numbers increasing if they have more than one educator who is representative of their culture (Hilliard, 1980). According to the National Center for Education Statistics (2018), “black students who are exposed to one black teacher by third grade were 13% more likely to enroll in college and those who had two black teachers were 32% more likely to enroll in college” (p. 23). The representation of educators who can be positive and impactful role models on students of color is important to the overall growth and wellness of the school. When the representation of African American educators is not present, the likelihood of students of color (which is already insufficient in comparison to non-Black students) attending college lessens is weakened.

Recruitment of African American Teachers

According to a study conducted by the U.S. Department of Education (2015), “one out of four new teachers leave the profession within 3 to 5 years,” and this further illustrated the point that effective teachers are a scarcity, and the number of African American teachers continue to dissipate. Hilliard (1980) asserted, “Racism remains a distinct factor in problems faced by black teachers and teacher educators. The number of black teachers in the public-schools is diminishing, especially in the southern states, where the black student population is the highest”

(p. 89). Past literature has shown that the hiring and retention of African American educators impact the academic growth of African American students and there is a significant amount of research that has been done to show there needs to be an overhaul of laws in the educational system.

The public-school educational continues to diversify while the diversity within workforce of educators continue to decline. Hilliard (1980) explained, “The law calls for the representation of African American educators, yet there still remains a high deficit of African American educators” (p. 34). The recruitment of African American educators alone will not combat the marginalization of African Americans in the educational workforce, however, creating and implementing strategies that recruit and retain African American educators faster than the turnover rate is key in turning that number around. Bryan and Williams (2017) highlighted the importance of having progressive recruitment strategies and providing support for educators to be successful in difficult classroom settings.

Ingersoll et al. (2019) conducted a research study on the recruitment, employment, and retention of African American teachers from 1990-2015 and found that African American teachers were overwhelmingly overrepresented in urban, low-income school districts: when Caucasian teachers were given priority to suburban schools. As a means of discipline, African American teachers were more likely to exit the teaching profession due to less than desirable work conditions.

According to Nathaniel et al. (2001), “There needs to be an aggressive recruiting of African Americans to ensure that the achievement gaps of African American students are being fully developed” (p. 48). The research studies indicate that there is an issue with hiring and retaining minority educators, especially African American educators, and the absence of African

American educators impact the academic growth of Black and Brown students throughout the United States. More must be done in order to increase the educational pipeline for African American educators. In order to make the changes that are necessary in closing the diversity gap, policy and law makers should understand the impact that representation has on students of color by developing meaningful hiring and retention practices for African American educators, paying particular attention to where they are being placed within the public-school systems, and increasing the undergraduate coursework to be meaningful once they enter into the public-school system workforce.

Bryan and Williams (2017) studied the benefits of having a diverse population of educators and found that the lack of diversity of teachers specifically among males played a particular role in the academic growth of African American students. This study also examined the recruiting process of African Americans educators and also what is being done to retain teachers who provide cultural relevancy to students in K-12 public education. Bryan and Williams (2017) studied the hiring process of minority educators over a span of a few years and found that amongst the minority educators, African American educators are the least represented. The academic growth of Black and Brown students can be attributed to the cultural relevancy that is apparent within the classroom. Bryan and Williams (2017) used an ethnography research method for a nine-month period of time to examine the relationship between African American educators and African American students.

Bryan and Williams (2017) presented the results of the ethnographic study that identified specific behaviors of African American students when being educated by African American teachers. The researchers found that the African American students who were amongst African American educators were more likely to be given culturally relevant classroom behavior

management practices that resulted in keeping the students in the learning environment instead of being sent out (Bryan & Williams, 2017). This shift in behavior practices showed that the cultural support from African American educators gave the students a sense of belonging within the classroom. This insight from this study shows that the students who are socially supported by those who understand their cultural environments tend to do better in school because behaviors tend to decline, and academic learning and growth becomes the central focus of the classrooms' culture. They also observed the relationship of African American educators and their relationship with African American students to gain a clearer understanding of the relationships that were being cultivated within the classroom amongst the student and teacher. One limitation to this research is that ethnography research is time consuming. Bryan and Williams (2017) conducted this study for three years before gathering all of the data needed to make a comprehensive analysis.

In 2019-2020, the national teacher turnover rate was 15.1%, where 9.6% of that number reflected African American teachers (Ingersoll et al., 2019). A greater concern in regard to this turnover trend adversely impacts low-income and already disadvantaged schools (Kohli, 2012). A study conducted by Spencer (1988) displayed that African American teacher who were placed in higher minority schools left for other districts with less behavioral problems. African American students are hesitant to enter into the teaching workforce due to low salary, increased stress levels, career opportunities, perception, and status (Guarino et al., 2016). African American teachers no longer view the teaching profession as a high esteemed career as it once was during the era of segregation. Byrd and Edwards (2009) found that salary, inadequate minority teacher support, unfair human resource recruiting and hiring practice, and poor

perceptions of teaching were the primary obstacles for African American teachers to become and remain a teacher.

The greatest challenge that is presented in this research is that there are not many current research studies that address the underrepresentation of African American educators in the public-school systems and the impact that it has on the academic growth of African American students. Many articles or scholarly journals are dated as far back as the 1970s, which constitutes an issue for academia due to the vast expansion of African American students joining the public-school systems. The information although dated, does clearly define and describe the issue, however, many of the research articles stop at identifying the problem without offering next steps or solutions to combat this growing issue. For example, Carter Andrews et al. (2018) asserted that “The demands for African American teachers are increasing. There needs to be an aggressive recruiting of African Americans to ensure that the achievement gaps of African American students are being fully developed” (p. 31). However, there is not any solution being offered to make the changes in the educational workspace. The idea is that every child has an equitable opportunity to experience rigorous and competitive education, and that cannot happen when the educators that reflects and respect their culture is not present.

Across public-school systems in the United States, there is an extreme shortage of minority educators in the education workforce, namely African American teachers; however, Latinx, Asian, and LGBTQ are in the minority as well (Carter Andrews et al., 2018). African American teachers are an essential need to educate the masses of African American students who are being represented in the public-school systems due to the influence that they have on African American students at a young age (Fairclough, 2018). Kohli (2012) argued that research based on the perceptions and experiences of African American educators could add value to the

teaching profession by focusing on recruitment policies and specific pathways to recruiting a more diversified workforce. This research focuses on the shortage or absence of African American teachers in the public-school systems and the catalyst that prohibits African American teachers from entering into the educational workforce.

In reviewing the literature, there has not been many practical or action-based studies on the underrepresentation of African American teachers in the classroom and how it impacts the students that are being serviced. Inequities in the educational arena continues to add to the depletion in numbers of African American teachers (Kohli, 2012). African American teachers account for a marginalized number of educational professionals and the strengthening of this selection is not increasing in number. The recruitment and retaining of African American teachers start as the foundation to bridging this racial disparity in education. The marginalized voices of African American teachers in the public system perpetuates the ideas that the standardized one-track way of approaching education is benefiting all kids when it actually is adding to the increase of the academic achievement gap (King, 2018).

There is a problem in the public American educational school systems. That problem, specifically, is there is an underrepresentation of African American educators nationwide (Foster et al., 2003). Currently, the collective number of African American educators make up roughly eight percent of the educational workforce, where African American males make up merely one percent of that whole (Foster et al., 2003). To combat these systemic laws of oppression in education, Kohli (2012) stated that “it is important for teachers of color to engage in cross-racial dialogues about manifestations of racial injustice in K-12 schools and to develop strategies for change” (p. 13). However, the critical conversations are just those of the sort, conversations. African American teachers continue to be marginalized in number in the educational system

(Byrd & Edwards, 2009). Of the few that choose to become educators, the longevity of their careers is often cut short due to the heavy taxation of little to no support within their system of schools (Byrd & Edwards, 2009).

Minority student populations are growing exponentially, especially in urban districts. In 1972, 22% of students were classified as a racial or ethnic minority (Milner 2077). By the 2003-2004 school year, that percentage had almost doubled to 41% of students being identified as minority students (Hoffman & Sable, 2006). In the larger urban districts, African American and Latino students account for at least 65% of the student population (Stein, 2019). In contrast to the diverse groups of students, the teaching workforce has remained largely Caucasian and female. There are nearly 3.5 million public-school teachers in the United States (U.S. Department of Education, 2020). However, only about 17% of the teaching workforce is comprised of underrepresented minorities (U.S. Department of Education, 2020).

The diversification of the teaching workforce has been the disparity between the number of African American students and African American educators. African American students comprised of about 16% of the public-school systems, but African American educators only represent roughly 8% of the teaching workforce (U.S. Department of Education, 2020). Therefore, it is problematic that the teaching workforce does not match the student population, especially in larger, urban school districts. The disparity does not allow African American students to see themselves reflected in the professional realm.

Impact of African American Teachers on African American Students

The underrepresentation of African American educators in the United States has continuously declined as the number of African American students has entered into the public-school system (D'Amico et al., 2017). Recent reports found that only 8% of the public-school

workforce are African American, where 27% of African American Students make-up the public-school system. This means that the hiring and retention of African American educators has continued to be marginalized as the population of African American students increased. The representation of African American educators in the public-school systems can be attributed to the poor support of their school systems, educational support in the classrooms, and nondiscriminatory hiring practices when hiring people of color.

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However, the need to be culturally relevant and culturally present within the classroom continues to be an issue nationwide. Byrd and Edwards (2009) explained through research that there is a need for having African American educators present in education continues to be an issue within the public-school system. To support the hiring and retaining of African American educators and other minority educators for that matter, school systems should have in place nondiscriminatory laws that is inclusive and reputable for hiring educators of color. In building a community that reflects the entire population instead of a select few, law makers must create, develop, and implement laws that directly promote hiring a culturally and racially diverse staff,

as well as giving the educators more open options to choose where they teach. According to Byrd and Edwards (2009), when there are conversations to expand the way of thinking and processing information about oppression in education, educators build a foundation of trust when the representation of all cultures are present and influential in making decisions on the future of African American students.

The literature has addressed the fundamental impacts that cultural relevance has within the school system. African American students are continuing to expand in the educational system and the number of African American teachers have been stagnant, especially those numbers for African American males. Bryan and Williams (2017) have gone on to explain that representation matters in education and “The lack of diversity of teachers and among males in K-12 to provide recommendations to the field of early childhood education, with specific attention to recruiting and retaining culturally relevant Black male teachers in early childhood education” (p. 3). The importance of hiring and retaining African American educators remain an issue within the public-school systems, especially for African American males.

Previous Research Studies on African American Teachers

Creswell (2009) described that qualitative research “is a means for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem;” whereas, “quantitative research “is a means for testing objective theories by examining the relationship among variables” (p. 4). The quantitative instrumentation of gathering research is designed to ask quantifying questions to participants, where qualitative instrumentation is used to gain more personal and intimate data that adds to the overall wealth of knowledge on the subject. This section of the literature review is to analyze previous research through methodologies which has been used to understand how the underrepresentation of African American educators in the

school systems, especially those school systems where African American students are heavily represented, and how it impacted the longitudinal growth of students academically.

I gathered studies between 1970 and 2017 to explore research related to African American Teachers (see Appendix A). Previous researchers have used different methods (i.e., qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods) to conduct research to discover and uncover data relating to the factors influencing African American teachers' attrition and retention, underrepresentation of African American educators in the United States public-school systems, and perceptions of obstacles in their teaching career. This literature review attempts to identify previous research to understand the hiring procedures for African American teachers and to examine if the African American educators are under representative, and if the shortage of teachers impact the academic growth of African American students (see Appendix A).

The U.S. Department of Education (2020) showed that there have been studies in the past that magnify the disparities in learning when assessing test scores and discipline rates. The U.S. Department of Education (2020) also showed that having just one African American educator not only lowers the dropout rates of African American students, but increases their desire to want to go to college. African American students who have at least one African American teacher in elementary school are 13% more likely to enroll in college than their peers who did not have any African American teachers. Students who have two African American teachers are 32% more likely to go to college (Aina, 2019). The reason that African American students are impacted by this long-term effect is that African American teachers serve as role models for African American students (Aina, 2019).

This problem impacts African American students by the masses due to the lack of cultural relevance within the classroom. Byrd and Edwards (2009) explained that there should be

“a review of hiring patterns in the districts around the city show that no progress is being made in improving minority representation on faculties” (p. 54). This lack of cultural relevance causes a disconnect in learning, especially in comparison to their non-Caucasian counterparts. There are many possible factors contributing to this problem, among which are the hiring and retention of African American educators, what are the longitudinal impacts in learning on African American students, and what are the necessary next steps in changing the laws that are restrictive in hiring African American educators. This study might contribute to the body of knowledge needed to address this problem by assessing and analyzing the discriminatory laws that are in place that are restrictive in hiring African American educators, as well as the impact that it has on African American students.

In a qualitative study conducted by Byrd and Edwards (2009), the researcher utilized interviews that focused on the dialogues from women of color in an urban setting. I chose this style of research so that the social construct of the systemic racial prejudices within the school system could be painted clearly from the narratives of the women who on a daily basis put in work to add to the longevity of the careers from fellow African Americans. Byrd and Edwards (2009) explained, “The women were prompted to reflect on the role of race and racism in their educational experiences with the goal of heightening their consciousness about racial injustice” (p. 3), and that their honest experiences as minority educators are a key component to shaping the future of a more inclusive educational workforce. The findings of this research are solely based upon the interpretation of my understanding of the information as a means to understand the underlying behaviors and perceptions that the minority women experienced first-hand. The strength of this type of research depicts the clearer picture that many minority educators face in a system of schools that have laws working against them. Analyzing each interview was a long

process. However, in order to capture the true sense of each educator, it was necessary to use their personal narratives in order to paint a clear picture. This qualitative approach will help explicate the relationship between the absence of African American teachers in the school systems and the impact that it has on African American students' academic growth.

In a quantitative study conducted by Cagle (2017), the researcher collected survey data utilizing the Likert Scale to analyze data from African American teachers to gain a first-hand understanding of the racial inequalities in the workforce that impedes the growth and development of African American teachers. The teachers were given a survey to describe their personal feelings about their work environment as a means to understanding if the teachers were willing to stay in the workforce or move on to other ventures. Cagle's (2017) quantitative research was designed to validate or negate the experiences of African American teachers by exploring questions based upon their treatment in the work environment, and if they were given the same internal support from administrators as their counterparts. The findings of this research found that many African American educators (or those who identify as African American) are unhappy in a workspace dominated by Caucasian teachers. These results are based upon questions that required teachers to be honest, as well as answer in its entirety so that a clear picture would be developed in the sense of understanding the teacher's true feelings about their work environment.

Since the time of desegregation within the public-school systems in the United States, the marginalized number of African American educators has continued to decrease as the numbers of African American students continue to grow. D'Amico et al. (2017) explained, "Researchers and policy makers have long noted the lack of racial diversity among the nation's public-school teachers and identified supply as the root cause" (p. 13), and the hiring and retention of African

American educators impact the learning stability of Black and Brown students academically whereas their counterparts do not experience this racial inequality because of the representation of Caucasian teachers in the public-school system.

D'Amico et al. (2017) explained,

The educational system will continue to fail these children until the school recognizes and understands the differences as they actually exist, finds the appropriate means for utilizing the linguistic abilities of Black children, and recognizes the nature of Black Culture as a whole. (p. 38)

In many cases, the students do not recognize the importance of having cultural relevant educators within the classroom until they experience having an educator who reflects their culture and belief systems. Byrd and Edwards (2009) asserted that

recruitment alone will not solve the minority teacher shortage, but highly effective strategies may increase the number of entering teachers to a rate that outpaces turnover. Finely tuned recruitment efforts that seek teachers who are likely to succeed and provide support while in the classroom, even in challenging schools, can help in increasing retention. (p. 73)

The importance of hiring and retaining African American educators is detrimental to the growth of African American students both academically and socially.

Although the literature on the underrepresentation of African American educators and the impact that it has on African American students is in abundance, not much of the literature clearly defines the next steps in combating this issue. Walker (2012) explained that the issue has been noted and the recommendation to change the laws and policies that keep African American educators from entering into the workforce is the first step in addressing an issue that impacts so

many students of color. The discriminatory laws that are in place will continue to restrict the abundance of African American educators in the public-school systems if there is not a complete rewriting of the laws.

The goal of this study is to gain insights through participants' experiences, perspectives, and viewpoint to find out if there are obstacles and challenges in hiring procedure for African American teachers; therefore, a qualitative approach with a descriptive case study design was used. Although there were more qualitative studies than quantitative ones in previous research studies, a qualitative research was used in this study to gather data involving personal experiences and opinions in regards to hiring and retaining African American educators because none of the studies have been conducted in Ohio. I plans to use open-ended interview questions and focus group discussion to dig into the thinking of the selected educators to gain a clear understanding of their experiences with becoming an educator, and their experiences after joining the workforce.

Having African American educators present in the public-school system is important to the development of African American students. Those students who have had a positive African American role model in grade school develop ambitious goals in terms of going to college and those students with more than one African American educators' goals double. The likelihood of African American students who develop strong relationships in grades as low as kindergarten double their chances at academic growth which closes the opportunity gap of achievement for students of color. This is important because as a nation, it is important to work toward a more diverse and more inclusive culture of educators and learners.

Summary

Chapter 2 covered the context, the background, theoretical framework, conceptual framework, the problem statement, as well as previous research studies on African American teachers in K-12 schools. Chapter 2 also included a review of the history of African American teachers in public-school systems, the reasons why African American teachers are needed in public-schools, the impact of African American teachers on African American students, and recruitment of African American teachers. The research literature has determined that African American educators has one of the smallest number of educators in the teacher's workforce, and they are one of the smallest numbers to stay within the workforce after being hired.

As stated in the theoretical framework, critical race theory, the scientific study of race, racism, and society that was originated in 1970s, serves as the major foundation of the study. The underrepresentation of African American teachers in a public-school system is related to the oppressions and racist policies that present inequality for both African American teachers in the educational workspace. CRT examined how racism is stitched into the legal systems and how racism is inherently apart of the racial inequities that exist in educational workspace today. Walker (2012) asserted, "While the dynamics of school becomes culturally diverse, the underrepresentation of African American teachers continue to be an underlying factor that deprives students of color from having role models who reflect their ethnicity" (p. 45). The retention of African American educators is important to the culture and growth of African American students academically. Cultural relevance and cultural representation are important in education, and the marginalized number of African American educators in the workforce is impacting the growth of African American students. A review of the literature has identified the importance of hiring and retaining African American educators in the public-school systems, as

well as the significance of including culturally relevant curricula that is representative of the diverse population within the school settings.

The literature also has expressed the importance of hiring and retaining African American educators in the workforce as the numbers of African American students continue to grow. D'Amico et al. (2017) explained, "While the dynamics of school becomes culturally diverse, the underrepresentation of African American teachers continue to be an underlying factor that deprives students of color from having role models who reflect their ethnicity" (p. 16). The literature showed the small representation of African American educators is within reach if policy-makers overhaul and rewrite prejudice laws that discriminate against people of color in the public-school system. Establishing laws that are inclusive for not only African Americans and other minority educators are important to the impacts of the public-schools nationwide. Although there were many qualitative research studies on the topic based on literature review, none of the studies focus on the experiences of African American teachers in the hiring process in Ohio. It is of my interest to explore the phenomenon in Ohio public-school system.

In Chapter 3, the research methodology, research design, and data collection and data analysis procedures were described. Chapter 3 includes the descriptions of the purpose of the study, research questions, appropriateness of the research design, criteria for choosing the participants, descriptions of the instrumentation (i.e., interviews and focus group discussion), and ethical issues of the study. Chapter 3 also covers my role as the researcher, expected findings, and an illustration of credibility, dependability, and trustworthiness.

Chapter 3: Research Method

The goal of this study was to understand African American teachers' experiences of becoming teachers in the public-school systems. Specifically, the focus was on whether African American teachers faced challenges, obstacles or catalysts when becoming a teacher in Ohio. This study included the exploration components of hiring and retaining African American educators to diversify the educational workforce and its impact on students of color. The three data sources that informed the study were (a) the review of documents outlining the components racial disparities in the educational workforce; (b) interviews of current African American administrators, school counselors, and teachers; and (c) observations of the educators in their daily work environments. Chapter 3 includes research methodology and procedures for this qualitative case study. Chapter 3 will detail the research design, instrumentation, sample selection, data collection, data analysis procedures, and ethical issues for the study.

Purpose of the Study

High-quality education programs include internships that employ support people capable of modeling and facilitating authentic leadership activities that will develop and strengthen employees; however, African American educators in this profession continue to decline (Milner, 2017). The purpose of this qualitative descriptive case study was to explore African American teachers' lived experiences of becoming teachers in Ohio and their suggestions to improve the hiring procedure. The personal narratives of African American teachers were used to shed light on the efforts that can be made to recruit and retain in the teaching profession in Ohio. The lived experiences of African American teachers might help the authority to improve the recruitment procedures and reduce the turnover rate of African American teachers in Ohio public-schools.

The results from this study might help African American teachers in hiring process and increase African American students' academic performance at schools.

Research Questions

As addressed in Chapter 1, the central research question was: What were African American teachers' lived experiences of becoming a teacher in Ohio and what suggestions do they have for improving the hiring process? Five sub-questions guided this study.

1. What were African American teachers' lived experiences of becoming a teacher in Ohio?
2. How do African American teachers perceive the obstacles and catalysts of becoming and remaining teachers in Ohio?
3. How do African American teachers view diversity in the teaching force?
4. What policies do African American teachers recommend to improve the recruit or hiring procedures?
5. What recommendations do African American teachers have for retaining African American teachers at schools?

Research Design

A qualitative single descriptive case study design was adopted for this study. Qualitative inquiry begins with assumptions and questions that enables a researcher to develop an in-depth analysis of an event or activity (Creswell & Clark, 2018). Creswell (2013) also explained that qualitative research falls into three categories that explicitly focus on the participants: culture, language and communication, and lived experiences. Creswell and Creswell (2018) stated that "qualitative research would be a more effective source of data when examining the participants' attitudes and real-life experiences" (p. 34). Qualitative research strives to understand the participants and their points of view. The qualitative approach meets the purpose of this study.

Understanding the teachers' experiences and points of view will help school districts develop strategies to recruit and retain African American educators within the public-school systems. A qualitative case is orchestrated through open-ended questions that will exhibit the personal experiences from the participants.

According to Creswell and Creswell (2018), a case study is an empirical investigation of a specific phenomenon that will develop over a time period. A qualitative case is evolved from asking open-ended questions that will bring meaningful value to the study (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). According to Yin (2004), "A case study is when the relevant behaviors of the participants cannot be manipulated" (p. 43). There were numerous types of case studies: explanatory, exploratory, descriptive, multiple-case studies, intrinsic, instrumental, and collective case studies (Baxter & Jack, 2008). Hancock and Algozzine (2011) illustrated that the designs for case studies can be categorized as: intrinsic (with emphasis on the investigation of a specific individual or group to gain a better understanding of that person or group); instrumental (where the study concentrates on the theory behind the issues being examined); collective (which examines other case studies and adds to the data collected by other researchers to strengthen the data regarding the target entity); exploratory (which concentrates on developing questions and plans to support future research); explanatory (which is useful for searching for cause and effect relationships in a study); and descriptive (as researchers attempt to understand an item by describing it). Further, Baxter and Jack (2008) illustrated that a descriptive case study is used to describe an intervention or phenomenon and the real-life context in which it occurred.

Thus, this study was a descriptive case study with focus on exploring the lived experiences of African American educators in hiring procedures in the public-school system. Their experiences might present their victories, catalyst, barriers, and difficulties of becoming a

teacher. Their suggestions for improving the recruit process in Ohio were investigated. In this qualitative descriptive case study, interviews and focus group discussion were used as the primary method for data collection.

Appropriateness of the Design

There are several major approaches in a qualitative research, for example, historical analysis, ethnography, grounded theory, case study, phenomenology, and narrative research. Historical analysis focuses on historical events, past history, documents, and processes (Creswell, 2009). It is not the intent of this study. Ethnography emphasizes the study of cultures, specifically an intact cultural group in a natural setting over a prolonged period of time by interview data and observation (Creswell, 2009). This study does not focus on cultural group. Grounded theory seeks to create a new theory based on participants' viewpoints. In other words, I have to derive "a general, abstract theory of a process, action, or interaction grounded in the views of participants" in grounded theory (Creswell, 2009, p. 13). This study did not involve the abstract theory because it sought to find out participants' lived experience in the hiring procedure.

For a case study, the researcher can explore in depth a process or one or more individuals (Creswell, 2009). Phenomenological research involves "a strategy of inquiry in which the researcher identifies the essence of human experiences about a phenomenon as described by participants" (Creswell, 2009, p. 13). Creswell (2013) described that a phenomenology study focused on a phenomenon to be explored with a group of individuals who have all experienced the phenomenon, and ends with a descriptive passage of the essence of the experience. Since this study goes beyond the experience to inquire participants' viewpoints and suggestion, it is not a phenomenology. Narrative research focuses on the lives of the participants, asks the participants

to share their stories, and retell the participants' stories in the process (Creswell, 2009). As a result, none of these approaches, except the case study, is suitable in this research project due to their purposes and definitions. A qualitative case study research design is an appropriate choice because (a) it involves social, contextual, and personal aspects of human behavior; (b) it explores the participants experience and viewpoints; and (c) it consists of how or what inquiries.

Participants

The population that was selected was African American teachers in the state of Ohio who are certified with state credentials in order to gain a better understanding of their experiences when entering and sustaining a career in education. The criteria for the participants are as follows:

- Must be African American
- Must be a certified teacher in the past 5 years
- Must be located in Ohio
- Must have experienced teaching in a public-school system

The participants consist of 15 certified African American educators who have spent five or more years within the profession, who live in Ohio, and who have teaching experience in public-schools. Since the sample size is rather small, this case study cannot be generalized to a larger population or generalized to all African American teachers. Purposive sampling and convenience sampling were used in the study. McMillan (2012) explained that purposive sampling involves the selection of participants because they have certain information that is relative to the study. Purposive sampling is a technique widely used in qualitative research that involves identifying and selecting individuals or groups of individuals that are especially knowledgeable about or experienced with a phenomenon of interest (Creswell & Clark, 2018).

Therefore, the participants were purposefully chosen in nearby school districts to carry out this research.

Instrumentation

The primary instruments that were used in this study were individual, semistructured interviews and focus group discussion. My role as the researcher were to conduct individual interviews and host the focus group discussion with African American teachers through Zoom. The interviews consisted of open-ended questions that were tailored to the faculty and staff.

Interviews

After the participants signed the informed consent, I then scheduled the interviews one by one through Zoom. Then I started the interview by asking the interviewee to tell as much as they can about their experience becoming a teacher in Ohio. This allowed for the interviewer to begin to construct how past experiences led them to their present-day mentality and begin the conversation on what they perceive to be the obstacles of becoming a teacher in Ohio. All interview questions were asked one by one and the audio recording was used with participants' permission. The interviews lasted for 60 minutes.

The semistructured, open-ended interview questions were used to ask the participants. Those interview questions were as follows:

1. Could you tell me your experience of becoming a teacher in Ohio?
2. Were there victories, challenges, or obstacles in hiring process?
3. How do you perceive the obstacles and catalysts of becoming and remaining a teacher in Ohio?
4. How do you view diversity in the teaching force?
5. What policies do you recommend to improve the recruit or hiring procedures?

6. What recommendations do you have for retaining African American teachers at schools?

Utilizing the interview method as a tool for collecting data helps gather detailed information on the participants' individual experiences and helps to understand their experiences as an educator in the public sector. Kvale (2013) described the interview as if it were simply a conversation between two people around a subject where an interchange of views takes place. Interviews provide in-depth and rich details that allows the participant to narrate the personal aspects of their hiring procedures.

Focus Group Discussion

The second method of data collection that was utilized was focus group discussions. Focus group discussion participants were selected from the 15 participants who participated in the individual interviews. Five participants were selected to discuss the focused group discussion questions in more detail. The focus group discussions were a way to gather teachers from similar backgrounds and experiences to express their experiences on what it was like to become a teacher in Ohio and what suggestions they have for the hiring process. Focus group discussion served as triangulation for the study. The focus group discussion questions were as follows:

1. What victories, challenges, or obstacles did you have applying for a teaching job and becoming a teacher in Ohio?
2. How do you perceive the hiring process in Ohio? (Any positive or negative thoughts)
3. Do you believe that African American teachers are needed for African American students? Why or why not?
4. What policies do you recommend for hiring African American teachers in public-school system?
5. What suggestions do you have for retaining African American teachers at schools?

Data Collection

After obtaining IRB approval and permission from Abilene Christian University, the introductory email was sent to 25-30 participants. The introductory letter includes an explanation of the purpose of the study and an estimated time that they would contribute to this research process (see Appendix B). Fifteen (15) African American teachers were selected to participate in this case study. An informed consent (see Appendix C) was sent to the participants after receiving the responded emails. Each participant also understood that their participation was strictly voluntary and at any given time, they could withdraw their participation and their information would be kept confidential and with the utmost care.

In order to protect the identity of the 15 participants, codes instead of real names were used in the entire procedure. The interview took 30-45 minutes. During the interview, detailed notes were taken as well as audio recordings to ensure that the voices of these teachers are accurately depicted. Creswell and Clark (2018) explained that open-ended interview questions promoted the perceptions and views from each participant. The interview questions are a direct reflection of the research questions, and it was extremely important to ask the exact same questions to each participant in order to gain true insight into the personal opinions of each participant. Five participants were recruited for focus group discussion after the interviews. The focus group discussion took approximately 60 minutes. I serve as the host to ask the key questions, and the participants take turn to discuss the questions. I recorded all responses for data analysis.

Data Analysis Procedures

After receiving the signed informed consent from the participants, interviews were scheduled. Data were collected in face-to-face interviews as well as focus group discussions. The

data analysis process includes placing information into different categories to mimic different themes and sub themes (Yin, 2004). Merriam and Tisdell (2015) recommended the novice researcher to code data using categories that could also be subdivided. Thematic analysis was used to find patterns in participants' interview responses. According to Braun and Clarke (2006), thematic analysis consists of six stages to gather themes (i.e., transcribing the data, gathering codes, searching for themes, reviewing the themes, defining or naming the themes, and generating a report). Bernard (2018) described the process of analysis as the act of discovering patterns and ideas in the data that explain why those patterns exist. The process of coding facilitates the organization and grouping of data that are coded similarly into groups or categories based on the shared characteristics (Bernard, 2018). A combination of classification reasoning, tacit knowledge, and intuitive senses will help determine which data pieces fit together (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In other words, the researcher established codes for the data, then place reoccurring words, phrases, patterns into that category resulting in theme (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

In this study, the data analysis procedure began after the data were collected and compared. In each interview category, the responses were cross compared for common themes. General themes were obtained and significant emergent themes were retrieved from the general themes. The data analysis procedure consisted of the following steps:

1. Interview responses from recording were transcribed manually.
2. Fifteen participants' words were documented in Chapter 4.
3. Interview categories were created based on interview questions. Participants were assigned codes, such as P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P6, P7, P8, P9, P10, P11, P12, P13, P14, and

P15. Transcription of interview responses with participants' codes helps maintain the privacy of the participants.

4. Data were sorted in a Microsoft Excel® document using interview categories, participants' codes, and responses.
5. General themes emerged based on the similar responses.
6. Data analysis based on general themes was presented.
7. Significant emergent themes were retrieved from the highest frequency of general themes, and further analysis was conducted. Words and phrases with high frequency phrases become themes and was used to answer the research questions.
8. Report on findings were written based on significant emergent themes.

For the focused group discussion, participants' thoughts and feelings were collected and analyzed in similar procedure. The discussion group allowed me to do the thematic analysis as well. The general descriptive categories were created and the meaning were drawn from significant themes based on participants' discussion responses. Additionally, the focus group discussion offered information or findings to confirm the validity and reliability of interview responses for the research questions.

Credibility, Dependability, and Trustworthiness

According to Locke et al. (2000), there are three threats to validity that must be addressed in qualitative research: (a) accurate descriptions, (b) threat of personal biases, and (c) reaction of interviewees to the researcher that may impede acquisition of data (p. 103). As it has been previously mentioned, it is the researcher's intent to ensure accurate descriptions by providing each of the 15 participants with a copy of the draft summary of their comments so that any inaccuracies or misrepresentations can be eliminated, which Creswell (2009) terms "member-

checking” (p. 196). The researcher also utilizes “peer debriefing” (Creswell, 2009) to review and question the study “so that the account resonates with people other than the researcher” (p. 196).

Trochim (2007) developed criteria for internal validity of a qualitative study in which credibility was established by ensuring that the results of the study were credible or believable from the perspectives of the participants in the research. He proposed that: “The purpose of qualitative research is to describe or understand the phenomena of interest from the participant’s eyes, the participants are the only ones who can legitimately judge the credibility of the results” (Trochim, 2007). Accordingly, after the interviews are conducted and the conversations have been transcribed, to ensure accuracy, I conducted a member check and inform the participants that they could read the transcripts, providing an opportunity to clarify any statements.

The dependability that was found in this study originates from truthful data collection and analysis procedures. The study will have the ability to be iterated by following the steps outlined in this chapter, thus supporting transparency. Dependability can be approached through the careful attention to a study’s conceptualization and the way in which the data are collected, analyzed, and interpreted (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). After all interview responses were collected, I then transcribed the recording data and member checking were used to make sure the interview responses are correct.

To ensure that the trustworthiness of this case study is intact, using a naturalistic approach to this research helps to develop the personal feeling, beliefs, and assertions of each participant. Using a naturalist approach in qualitative interviewing is conducted in a natural setting with rich description of personal action, complex environment and context, and the integrity of thinking (Stake, 2010). In order to establish a solid relationship with the participants, it was important for me to ask meaningful questions that caused them to honestly reflect on their

experiences as African American educators in the public-school sector. Seidman's (2019) recommended that the interviews should involve listening to the participants on three levels: (a) listening to what participants say, (b) listening for the inner voice, and (c) listening while remaining aware of surroundings and the time. I took notes and observed the participants' inner voice during the interviews.

Expected Findings

Throughout this study, I expected to understand if there were hindrances and catalysts that African American teachers perceived when becoming a teacher in the state of Ohio. A case study can provide an in depth understanding of what motivates teachers to enter, sustain, and/or withdraw for the educational workforce. The challenges faced by teachers are anticipated to be discovered throughout the study. The findings of the case study are also predicted to reveal ideas for improvement. Based on previous studies regarding the underrepresentation of African American educators in the public-school systems, the perception that were expected to be found African American educators taking on the brunt of their work (doing their work on top of supporting their cohorts).

Ethical Issues of the Study

With regard to the nature of this research, it was extremely important to make sure that the confidentiality of this research is enamored by the highest standards of care. Ethically, it was also very important to name and express the importance of each teacher's participation and how their perceptions adds to purposeful research.

Researchers must protect their participants, build trust with them, promote integrity of research, and guard against misconduct. Therefore, the research data collected for this study are kept confidential. Prior to conducting the study, I gained permission from the principal of the

school through the use of an invitation letter that explained the purpose of the study, explaining how all participants' data and identities were protected. Participation in the study was voluntary and without pressure or judgment from the school or researcher. Potential ethical issues were considered prior to the study; therefore, it was important to indicate potential concerns and address them prior to conducting the study. For example, safeguarding confidentiality for the participants, ensuring interview times and locations are safe and convenient for the participants, and being cognizant of not reporting unique characteristics that could identify participants' responses or stories that might be harmful to them (Austin & Sutton, 2019). It is also important that the superintendent, school leaders, counselors, teachers, and educational institution anonymity were concealed.

In this study, I made sure to protect participants' confidentiality. The participants and respective organizations (i.e., schools or school district) remained unspecified and unidentifiable in all research documents and collected interview data. The confidentiality means during the process I maintained confidentiality and anonymity throughout and after the data collection process. All participants' names were confidential and I did not use their names in data collection. Participants were assigned a specific code (e.g., P1 stands for Participant 1, P2 for Participant 2, P3 for Participant 3, P4 for Participant 4, P5 for Participant 5, P6 for Participant 6, P7 for Participant 7, and so on) during the data collection process. The participants felt safe during and after the research. They may contribute to more detailed and valuable information if their names are confidential.

Yin (2004) stated that it was important that researchers are aware of ethical practices, exercise those ethics, and take extreme care of the sensitive issues within a study. The implementation of the informed consent in early stage ensured that each participant's responses

and his/her names are confidential. I did not ask those African American teachers any questions that required the identification of the location or personal information. If the participants mistakenly named his or her institution in the recording, I erased that specific section of the recording. There were no transcription of personal data or organizational data from the audio recordings. I followed and complied the Federal Policy for the Protection of Human Participants (45 CFR 690) as part of ethical practices.

To ensure data protection, I secured all audio responses, transcribed interview responses, informed consent, and notes in a locked cabinet within my personal study area. Only I had access to the materials. If a participant chose to withdraw in the middle of the process, I removed or destroyed all documents related to the participants. All digital files were stored in my laptop and protected with a password. I will retain the audio and transcribed materials for a 5-year period, and then all materials or files will be deleted or destroyed by me.

The Researcher's Role

As an African American female, education practitioner, and researcher, I align with the assumptions that African American teachers in the public-school systems are underrepresented due to education preparedness programs and implicit biases on educator state testing. It is imperative to research and identify the catalyst that hinder many African Americans from entering into the educational workforce. I bracketed out my own viewpoints and listened to the participants' stories and viewpoints. Bracketing out my personal viewpoints and opinions was a critical part of the role as the researcher, as I am a teacher in the school district. I was candid and tried not to be biased during the interview procedures. Delineating personal thoughts and beliefs in relation to becoming a teacher in Ohio was essential when actively listening and gaining

information from the participants. In the interviews, I utilized note-taking differentiated facts about the study on one side of the paper and opinionated thoughts on the other.

Summary

Chapter 3 include the purpose of the prosed study, the research design, research questions, instrumentation, data collection, and data analysis procedures. A qualitative single case study design was conducted for the study. Fifteen (15) participants' experiences of becoming teachers in Ohio public-school system were explored. Their victories, challenges, obstacles, if any, were examined through their experiences becoming teachers in Ohio. The instruments included interviews and focus group discussion. This case study was guided by the research questions and bounded by the uniqueness of the educators' roles, responsibilities, and school leadership support challenged they encountered when seeking to be the best educators for not only African American students, but for all students who are marginalized in the public-school systems. In Chapter 4, the results were presented. The participants' interview responses and focus group discussion responses were collected for data analysis.

Chapter 4: Results and Analysis

The purpose of this descriptive case study was to explore African American teachers' lived experiences of becoming teachers in Ohio and their suggestions to improve the hiring procedures in the public-school systems in the United States. In this study, I used participant interviews and focused group discussion to gather the lived experiences, perspectives, and opinions of the participants as they related to the study topic. This study focused on the lived experiences of African American teachers who have recently become teachers within the last five years. Fifteen (15) participants expressed their consent to participate in this study using Zoom, and of the 15 participants, five consented to participate in the focus group discussion. Chapter 4 includes the research questions, data collection, data analysis and major findings.

Research Questions

The central question of this study was: What were African American teachers' experiences of becoming teachers in Ohio and what suggestions do they have for improving the hiring. The sub-research questions that guided this study included:

1. What were African American teachers' lived experiences of becoming a teacher in Ohio?
2. How do African American teachers perceive the obstacles and catalysts of becoming and remaining teachers in Ohio?
3. How do African American teachers view diversity in the teaching force?
4. What policies do African American teachers recommend to improve the recruit or hiring procedures?
5. What recommendations do African American teachers have for retaining African American teachers at schools?

Data Collection

After receiving IRB approval on July 12, 2021, I used the a central Ohio School Human Resource website to initially recruit the participants. I sent an introductory letter to the participants, and those participants who expressed interest in the study were sent an informed consent form through emails to sign. Once the informed consent was signed and returned to me, and I collected data until saturation was met. Interviews were then individually scheduled for each participant. There were 15 participants who were interviewed for this research study. The interview questions consisted of the followings:

1. Could you tell me your experience of becoming a teacher in Ohio?
2. Were there victories, challenges, or obstacles in hiring process?
3. How do you perceive the obstacles and catalysts of becoming and remaining a teacher in Ohio?
4. How do you view diversity in the teaching force?
5. What policies do you recommend to improving the recruitment or hiring procedures? and
6. What recommendations do you have for retaining African American teachers at schools?

The interviews were conducted virtually via Zoom. The interviews allowed me and participants to interact virtually during a face-to-face session. The Zoom meetings were audio recorded with the consent of each participant and the files were saved in a password protected folder on my computer, which is also password protected. Participants were asked six questions and were given full opportunity to answer each question through their own lenses without interruption. After the completion of the individual interviews, I manually transcribed their responses. The interviews lasted for an average of 30 minutes. The participants received their interview transcripts by emails for member checking purpose.

After the completion of the interviews, five teachers who had recently entered into the profession within the past five years were invited to participate in a focused group discussion. Like the individual interview participation, the participants who expressed their interest in the focus group discussion were sent an informed consent form, which they had to sign manually and return by email. Each of the participants also consented to being audio recorded during the focus group discussion (with their camera's turned off, and their names changed to their participant codes). The focused group discussion was scheduled with a date and time that each of the five participants agreed to. The topics of the focused group discussion was centered on the major questions of the research. The focus group discussion questions were as follows:

1. What victories, challenges, or obstacles did you have applying for a teaching job and becoming a teacher in Ohio?
2. How do you perceive the hiring process in Ohio? (Any positive or negative thoughts)
3. Do you believe that African American teachers are needed for African American students? Why or why not?
4. What policies do you recommend for hiring African American teachers in public-school system?
5. What suggestions do you have for retaining African American teachers at schools?

The focused group discussion lasted for approximately an hour. After the completion of the focused group discussion, the participants' responses were recorded and manually transcribed into the focus group discussion chart. Each participant was given the opportunity to check their responses after the transcription from me during the process of member checking. A table of the interview categories as well as focus group discussion categories, general themes, and participant codes were created.

Data Analysis

The data analysis phase of the study started directly after the completion of the main study data collection process. The research data from the individual interviews and the focus group discussion were manually transcribed for further analysis. A code was assigned by me to each participant to ensure that all participants remained anonymous, and the participant responses were only referred to by their assigned participants' codes. The interview audio recording was replayed three times to ensure that each participant's response was accurately transcribed into a Microsoft Word chart that was created by me. After a careful review of the participants' responses, a thematic analysis was conducted. The general themes were found and then sorted and categorized according to frequency of usage. The themes that displayed the highest frequency were selected as significant emergent themes. The focus group discussion was also carefully analyzed just like the individual interview protocols and were also subjected to thematic analysis. Re-occurring words such as "salary," "partnership," and "respect" were the most prevalent in this discussion. The significant themes emerged from the general themes.

Results

Fifteen African American teachers were interviewed and five African American teachers were invited to focus group discussion for this study in the United States. Each of the participants was required to be African American, entered into the profession within the past five years, located in Ohio, and have experience teaching in the public-school systems. In the following, participants' demographics, profiles, general themes, significant emergent themes, and so on are presented.

Demographics

The study included 15 African American teachers who have recently entered into the certified teaching profession within the last five years. All 15 participants took alternative routes to teaching before becoming certified and becoming licensed professionals to teach in the public sector of education in Ohio. All participants became licensed teachers within the past five years. The individual interviews included one male and 14 female teachers with their ages ranging from 23 to 36 years old.

Each participant held college degrees from universities around the United States. One hundred percent of the participants taught in public charter schools before transitioning into public city schools. Table 2 presents the demographics of each participant. There were 15 participants; one was male and the other 14 were female. All of them are African Americans, with 46.6% having more than three years of teaching experience and 13% had one year experience. The participants' profiles for interviews and focus group discussion followed.

Table 2*Participants' Demographics*

Participant	Gender	Ethnicity	Roles	Years of experience
P1	Male	African American	Teacher	4
P2	Female	African American	Teacher	4
P3	Female	African American	Teacher	3
P4	Female	African American	Teacher	3
P5	Female	African American	Teacher	5
P6	Female	African American	Teacher	2
P7	Female	African American	Teacher	2
P8	Female	African American	Teacher	1
P9	Female	African American	Teacher	4
P10	Female	African American	Teacher	5
P11	Female	African American	Teacher	4
P12	Female	African American	Teacher	2
P13	Female	African American	Teacher	1
P14	Female	African American	Teacher	4
P15	Female	African American	Teacher	2

Participant Profiles – Interviews

P1 (Participant 1)

P1 was an African American male teacher with 4 years of experience. P1 believed that the catalyst and obstacles of becoming a teachers started with the “Standardized tests which are a barrier for many Black and Latinx youth looking to attend a higher education institution, and process to becoming a certified teacher is intimidating for too many kids today.” Through P1’s experience, P1 believed that “Even though I did not have certifications in those subject areas, the amount of growth shown in my classroom in each subject area allowed me to transfer to a public middle school in inner-city Ohio.”

P1 expressed, “Even though I did not get teaching certifications, my first four years teaching at the independent school really developed my teaching skills within the classroom.” P1 said, “Despite the growth my students showed in class, and the relationships that were built among staff, students, and their families, I felt that my reach within that school was limited, and I wanted to impact more students' lives.” P1 believed that “there are larger structural issues that lead teachers to burn out at faster rates, this is something I personally can relate to, which is why I am no longer a teacher.” The limitation from his predominantly Caucasian school forced his decision to move onward into another position outside of education.

P1 said,

No school district in the nation has a teaching force that is representative of an ethnic teaching base to represent all kids across the nation and the lack of racial and ethnic representation within classrooms has created a chilling effect for students of color, with Black and Latinx students often being punished the most, while also having the lowest graduation rates.

P1 recommended that school districts who want to promote diversity and inclusion should “Start the recruitment pipeline at earlier ages and invest more into these career center programs will help combat the stigma associated with the teaching profession, and help the youth see the power and impact of teaching.” P1 believed that “Black teachers are capable of more than being the designated disciplinarian, coach, or support staff member and schools should stop trying to recruit Black teachers to fill specific roles” because they are more than disciplinarians.

P2 (Participant 2)

P2 was an African American teacher with 4 years of experience. P2 believed that the catalyst and barriers to becoming a teacher in Ohio derived “because of the challenges of passing the state licensure test, I had to work in a public charter school if I wanted to teach.” Through P2’s experience, P2 believed that “the expectations of charter schools demand placed on the teachers was more than public-schools and was unrealistic followed by minimal pay which causes teachers to be overworked for lesser pay.” P2 expressed that “although teaching in charter schools was very difficult, it allowed for the educational experience of learning to teach and manage classroom behaviors, as well as be a staple in learning the foundation to learning content across the math content.” P2 expressed,

after graduating with a degree in middle childhood education, teaching was impossible because of the licensure program requirements, and since the charter school did not require the state licensure, I signed on so that I would be able to teach in any capacity.

P2 said,

wanting to give back to my community kept me pushing forward as a teacher therefore I went back to school to get a master’s and took the licensure test several times until I passed because my students and community are worth it.

P2 said, “I believe diversity should be present in any school environment and schools should be aware of what that looks like and where they may be lacking, on any level, student body, staff, admin, board.” P2 believed that because

school is a very formative time for children and it’s the only place they spend the same amount of time as their households and if they are able to be in environments that teach them tolerance and how to interact and build relationships with people who are different from themselves, that would lay the foundation of their ability to do that as adults.

P2 recommended that

salaries should be more reflective of the work expectations of the teaching that role you are hired for because kids are impressionable and many times, the worldviews of teachers can play out in how they instruct and engage with students.

P2 also recommended “more resources for student loan forgiveness programs, helping pay for degrees/ certification necessary to teach in respective states, college recruitment/ partnerships with local universities to recruit students to teach in local districts” would help to retain African American teachers in the public-schools.

P3 (Participant 3)

P3 was an African American female teacher with 4 years of experience. P3 believed the catalyst of becoming a teacher in Ohio was the lack of reciprocity from other states. P2 stated, “I had to take additional classes at Columbus State Community College after I received my master’s in Michigan and take three tests to teach in Ohio because of state reciprocity.” P2 believed that “Although the state of Ohio does not have reciprocity with Tennessee, I happened to have a license in the state of Michigan, which I was able to transfer in order to receive my five-year teaching license in Ohio” which was a process in itself, but I got it done.” P3 said,

When I started most teachers at my school (including me) were on “emergency licensure” which is basically another way to say they were un-licensed and Teach for America placed me at my school in Detroit, and so there was a fairly easy phone interviews and I was hired on the spot.

P2 believed that

having to start a career in another state helped me land a job in Ohio and while this is true for me, I know that some teachers cannot move around trying to find the easiest route to become a teacher in a public-school and not a charter school and that discourages us (African American teachers) from trying to enter into education.

P3 said, “There is certainly a struggle to diversify the teaching force in our country as a whole.” P3 went on to express that

The majority of teachers in front of students should reflect their identity, and this is not true for most students of color; Not only that, but the leadership team should also be reflective of the students, and this is rarely true as most are white in the nation.

P3 recommended that policies should start with “recruiting from HBCUs with special hiring bonuses, and student loans should be taken care of by the state or school in order to support the development of teachers.” P3 also recommended that

the pay for teachers and forgiveness of student loans would also help recruit and retain African American teachers, as well as African American teachers should be given a hiring bonus for teaching in schools that are seeking to diversify their teaching staff.

P4 (Participant 4)

Participant was an African American female with 3 years of experience. P4 believed the catalyst of becoming a teacher in Ohio was The RESA program was its' almost nonexistent. P4 said,

they didn't have a curriculum or pacing guide to assist teachers and I was put in this math position and expected to teach 6-8th grade math as a first-year teacher with no math support/support as a new teacher in general.

P4 expressed, "I asked for help from the principal regarding curriculum, DOK (Depth of Knowledge), and classroom management and was met with, you know how to handle behaviors, you're doing better than a lot of our teachers," so I was essentially a glorified babysitter, and the leadership was content because I didn't have "behavior problems" that other teachers had."

Through P4's experience, P4 stated,

I almost did not pursue teaching after the first attempt at passing the state licensure test and because charter schools did not require the state license certification, I took a high school math classroom position which I enjoyed, but my goals weren't to work in a charter school and I already had a master's degree.

P4 said, "In the beginning I ran into challenges in my pursuit of entering the Public-school System and it seemed that if you didn't know someone who knew someone it was difficult to get into a public-school."

P4 said, "Diversity in the teaching force is needed but almost nonexistent. My teaching career has been in schools that are predominantly African American but the staffing has often not reflected the student dynamic." P4 believed "Most schools are not offering implicit bias training

for teachers who are often coming from different backgrounds and bring in these views that are not beneficial to the students.” P4 recommended,

The explicit recruitment of African American teachers, especially males are more than needed to improve hiring procedures. A competitive salary is also beneficial in the hiring process but that would not be the biggest focus but if a teacher is being paid a teacher’s salary the expectation should not be that they are a teacher and a disciplinarian.

P4 also recommended that “regarding retention, it should be clearly developed plans in place to help African American teachers grow that is not solely focused on discipline, and this growth should focus on what the teacher needs to be a more rounded educator.”

P5 (Participant 5)

P5 was an African American female with 5 years of experience. P5 perceived the obstacles of becoming a teacher in Ohio not worthwhile. However, “since the time and money has been invested specifically for an education degree, you have to try at passing.” P5 said “There isn’t many payouts for being a teacher in Ohio. Most African American teachers are put in support roles to support non-black teachers and that makes it harder for us to stay in this line of work.” Through P5’s experience, P5 stated that

While getting my master’s degree I started the mentor program RESA so that by the time I was done with school, my mentor program would be done and I would only need to take the licensure program test for my area of content.

P5 believed that “RESA is not an accurate assessment to depict the day to day lives of teachers and that program needs an overhaul to reflect the updated needs of students.” P5 said, “The victory finally came when I passed the licensure test because that test is really a burden and it stands in the pathway of you being a teacher even though you have a master’s degree.”

P5 said, “There isn’t much diversity in the teaching force and the teaching force is predominately white females, white males, black females and then a mixture of the other ethnic backgrounds.” P5 believed

this lack of diversity in Columbus City schools is what causes race tensions and the students to not buy into education and that there aren’t hardly any African American teachers outside of the hired help and resource officers, and the African American teachers that are present have the job of both maintaining their responsibilities alongside their white coworkers.

The policy that P5 recommends is that “the state of Ohio recognize the education and grade point average of the teachers who went to school for education. And believes that additional testing is not necessary to becoming a teacher.” P5 said, “the recommendation that I have is to pay the teachers their worth. It is extremely difficult to know and understand that we have obtained multiple degrees and get paid the lowest of any profession.”

P6 (Participant 6)

Participant was an African American female with 2 years of experience. Participant 6 stated, “The disparities are endless and many days I leave work feeling it’s more for the profit of the school than the families we serve.” P6 said, “The lack of resources, and immense emphasis on numbers and data with no support to achieve these on paper ideals is hard on African American teachers because we care about the growth of our students.” P5 said,

because I just graduating from college and wanted to teach, I had to tuck in my pride and teach for a charter school until I could pass my state license certification test to become a certified teacher in the state of Ohio.

P5 stated, “I really wanted to teach and after being deny I took the next opportunity I was offered.” Through P6’s experiences, P6 believed “the victories of doing this work included working with a diverse group of people and families who made it worthwhile and watching my student growth and them having many AHA moments.” P6 believed, “Leadership could have been a lot more diverse especially considering the demographic of the students we served.”

P6 said, “the diversity in the public-school systems is virtually non-existent and with the demographics of the elementary school, there is not a representation of teachers or administrators who look like the population that they work in.” P5 said that schools should “Definitely hire with the students and families in mind because representation matters.” P5 recommended to “pay staff more and put procedures and policies in place that are more inclusive on every level of the decision-making aspects.” P5 recommended that “better pay, more leadership opportunities, a seat at the decision-making table, resources to be better teachers” are steps that can be taken to hire and retain African American teachers.

P7 (Participant 7)

Participant 7 was an African female with 2 years of experience. P7 believed that the obstacles and catalyst of becoming and remaining a teacher in Ohio starts with “equitable training programs in their undergraduate years, as well as that the certification test that are in place do not represent the understanding and execution of curriculum that teachers use in daily practice.” P7 noted, “the catalyst I believe limits the longevity of careers for African American are that African American teachers feel undervalued, we have lower pay with larger expectations, and we have to learn how to navigate in unfavorable working conditions.” Through P7’s experiences, P7 believed that in order to teach in any capacity “charter schools were the only option because of their flexibility in licensing that did not require the teachers to pass the

Ohio Assessment for educators.” P7 said, “I took the Ohio Assessment for Educators 20, a reading license test while in my master’s program and failed twice, and when I graduated, I took it two more times and finally passed.” P7 expressed,

The victories of the hiring process were that after several attempts at trying to pass the certification test, I finally succeeded. I succeeded at the cost of paying nearly \$600 to take and retake a test, but I did it.

P7 said, “the teaching workforce is most definitely skewed and this is and still remains a profession for Caucasian women with a little mix of everyone else.” P7 believed that “minorities (African Americans, Asians, Hispanics, and Pacific Islanders) are not the face of education when we know that there are many different kids from those ethnic groups who are active in the school building.” P7 said, “the policies that I would recommend would start with policies that encourage and increase diversity.” P7 said, “African Americans should not feel intimidated to teach and another policy that I would recommend is that the standard of certifications not be a factor of teaching for those people who went to school for education.” P7 also recommended that in order to keep African American teachers in the profession, “is to treat the African American teachers as partners who add perspective and balance to the school systems recommend that the school systems stop utilizing African American teachers as disciplinarians.” P7 further expressed that “I also recommend that African American teachers should not be placed in specific school districts to alleviate the stress of non-African American teachers”

P8 (Participant 8)

P8 was an African American female with just one year of experience. P8 believed that the obstacles and catalyst of becoming and remaining a teacher in Ohio was that

the process of becoming a teacher at a charter was not difficult, in fact it felt like the only way I could become one and the licensing program was difficult to be a credentialed teacher in Ohio, so I kept going until I got an alternative license.

P8 said that “the issue was much more remaining a teacher, particularly when it came to inconsistent treatment by administrators and moral issues surrounding treatment of students and perpetuating a curriculum that focused on testing rather than developing students as people.” Through P8’s experience, P8 started “as an office manager in school operations at a public charter school, and during my year in this role I worked with teachers, families, and administrators and it sparked my interest in becoming an educator.” P8 expressed that “I did not have the credentials to become a teacher and the school offered the teaching fellowship program to prepare me for a classroom, and therefore teaching in a public charter school gave me the opportunity to teach.”

P8 believed that “diversity in the teaching force is absolutely necessary for students from populations that have been historically excluded and discriminated against.” P8 went on to explain that “for students of color, teachers of color are uniquely equipped to prepare students for a world that will discriminate against them, sometimes explicitly, but most times, structurally.” P8 recommended that policies reflecting “hiring and salary are foundations, but further development is necessary. Ensuring access to affinity group in formal and informal settings, explicit mentorship, and recruitment into development track.” P8 also concluded with the recommendations to retaining African American teachers were “intentional inclusion in “admin track” and teacher leadership, a place to air and hear grievances, a concerted effort to think critically about what has traditionally constituted “school culture” and a willingness to shift practices rooted in white supremacy.

P9 (Participant 9)

P9 was an African American female with 4 years of experience. P9 believed that the obstacles and catalyst of becoming a teacher in Ohio started with “trying to maintain my aspirations of changing lives as a teacher because of the obstacle to maintain the mindset of being a disciplinarian instead of a teacher constantly taunts my mind.” P9 said, “Becoming a teacher was a lengthy process because I did not have a bachelor’s degree in education, therefore, I had to go through a certification program called, Teach for America.” P9 further explained that “through that program, I was able to relocate to Columbus, Ohio and teach in a low-income community and I was pushed into the classroom with little to no experience which made teaching difficult in the first 3 years.” P9 believed, “the challenge in the hiring process was identifying my strengths for administrators to recognize, alongside recognizing the decline in student achievement, it made it extremely difficult to navigate without any clear guidance on where to start.”

P9 said, “there isn’t much diversity in teaching in my district and the students do not see faces that they recognize in terms of economic backgrounds and that to me hurts the strength in relationship building in the schools.” The policies that P9 would recommend improving the recruitment and hiring procedures start with “increasing salaries or bonuses to recruit more teachers to join the educational field.” P9 also would recommend that “to retain African Americans in schools is to match their salary with white Americans and to create schools where education is equal to all students no matter what color they are.”

P10 (Participant 10)

P10 was an African American female with 5 years of experience. P10 believed that the obstacles and catalyst of becoming and remaining a teacher in Ohio “is tough on African

American teachers anywhere in the USA and it takes so much for us to even be present in the schools and once we are there we are not valued as teachers but behavior management specialist.” Through P10’s experiences, P10 believed “becoming a teacher in Ohio presented many obstacles because I went to school for psychology and upon graduating figured out that I wanted to teach.” P10 goes on to further explain,

since Ohio requires the teachers to get master’s degrees, I went to [redacted] University and got an MEd, and while I was in my master’s program, I started substitute teaching in one of the more unstable schools in Columbus, Ohio.

P10 also noted “There wasn’t any support from the families, and the leadership team was not involved with student or teacher growth therefore it was difficult to get a grasp on how a structured classroom should run.” P10 said, “A victory throughout all of this is that I am a certified teacher in Ohio and my license can transfer to many other states.” P10 also noted that “the biggest challenge was passing the certification test and landing a job in an area that I wanted to be in.”

P10 said, “diversity in the teaching force is essentially non-existent and this profession is predominately all white female with a sprinkle of other here and there (that includes minority, LGBTQ, and men).” The policies that P10 would recommend to improve the recruitment or hiring policies “fall along the lines of specifically targeting Historically Black Universities and Colleges and career fairs that are in predominantly African American areas.” P10 further explained that “these policies would increase the awareness for potential educators to understand the deficit in numbers that are prevalent in the school districts.” P10 said, “the biggest recommendation that I have for retaining African American teachers is to treat them as partners and allies during the decision-making process.” P10 concluded with “followed by increased

salaries and not being placed in difficult school settings to feel as if they are inferior to white teachers.”

P11 (Participant 11)

Participant 11 was an African American female with 4 years of experience. P11 believed that the obstacles and catalysts of becoming a teacher in Ohio “process and steps to become a licensed educator are outdated, however, they are always putting out ads and information about teacher shortage yet make it so hard for really good qualified educators or stay certified.”

Through P11’s experiences, P11 believed that “I could not get an Ohio license because I didn’t properly complete the student teaching Resident Education program and the Assessment for the state licensure due to lack of mentorship.” P11 goes on to further explain that “although I’ve been teaching going on 4 years in a public-school district, I cannot discredit the 3 years that I worked in the charter schools because of their flexibility in not needing to pass the state test.” P11 said, “I have taught in both public-schools and Charter schools, and in the public-schools there is more value because of the unions.” P11 goes on to further explain that “if it weren’t for the charter school experience, I would have not been able to pass the state test that makes to certified to become a teacher.”

P11 said that diversity in the public-school systems “depends on the area in which you teach.” P11 went on to explain that “I’m in a predominately Black school with Black scholars and staff is predominately White, however, I do know of the charter schools that have a higher population of Black teachers because they cannot pass the state test.” P11 would recommend that “Salary is key to improving the recruitment and hiring process as well as investing in all schools not just high performing or schools where the population has higher income.” P11 concluded

with the recommendation of schools to “to stop using men as disciplinarians and be placed in hard positions as the stereotype and actions scream racism and ignorance.”

P12 (Participant 12)

Participant 12 was an African American woman with 2 years’ experience. P12 believed that the obstacles and catalyst of becoming a teacher in Ohio is that it is “expensive and nearly impossible to get hired on unless you know someone” P12 went on to further explain that

there are pre-tests that you have to take if your GPA in the content you are trying to get certified in is not at a certain level and in the alternative certification programs, there are pre-tests that you have to take in order to register for the certification tests.

Through P12’s experiences, P12 said, “I started as a substitute in the public-school system and left to go to a charter school. I got my certification through the major school district’s alternative certification program, so in both instances I was fully certified.” P12 expressed that “The hiring process for the major school district was challenging because although I was an English major, I didn’t major or minor in education.” P12 explained that because of the academic grade point average, P12 “had to take extra classes at the community college to get my overall GPA up enough to get certified, even though my GPA in my major was high enough to be accepted.”

P12 said, “There isn’t diversity in the field as a whole, but the areas where diversity is present, the schools are segregated, if that makes sense” P12 noted, “White teachers are in clusters in the ‘better’ areas, and minority teachers are concentrated in the urban areas, and in my experience, if minority teachers are hired in white areas, it is for discipline, coaching or special education positions.” P12 recommended that “the stigma of HBCUs needs to be addressed because certain hiring bodies don’t recruit except at certain ones because they may feel that that education students received at certain colleges is below standard” P12 also recommended that

giving us the opportunities to grow into leadership positions, giving us the advanced training opportunities early in our careers that many white people get in their first three years, where we have to wait 5-10, partnering with PWI and HBCUs to offer professional development opportunities that others get and are aware of.

P13 (Participant 13)

Participant 13 was an African American female with just 1 year of experience. P12 believed that the catalyst and obstacles of becoming and remaining a teacher in Ohio “felt like a glorified babysitter and with all of the requirements sometimes I feel like there is no way that we get paid enough.” P13 further explained that “Ohio required educators to do so much with so little pay and the student loan debt alone can range between 30 and 45k after undergrad and my first contract was for 41k/ year.” P13 explained that “teaching in Ohio was a challenge for me since I did not take the traditional route into getting a teaching license.” P13 noted, “unlike many surrounding states Ohio requires a series of tests along with student teaching in order to teach in almost all local school districts.” Through P13’s experience, P13 believed “some of the obstacles with my hiring process began with not being hired at all. I found it extremely hard to get hired into Columbus City Schools even after substitute teaching for almost 2 years.” P13 explained that “I also had trouble getting hired in the charter schools because I was labeled as ‘too nice’ to deal with the behaviors.”

P13 said, “I believe diversity is extremely important when teaching.” P13 believed, “as an African-American woman teaching in an urban school district I am still the minority and students need to see themselves in their academic works, classroom and administration.” The policies that P13 would recommend to improving the recruitment and hiring process starts with districts having “competitive pay, realistic data with interview candidates and transparency about

the communities they serve.” P13 also recommended that districts “take control of the discipline at their schools and have clear goals for both students and teachers.” P13 went on to further explain that “no one wants to come into work feeling unsafe or like their students aren’t learning. We know teachers don’t make much money but that’s not why we teach.”

P14 (Participant 14)

P14 was an African American female with 4 years of experience. P14 believed that the obstacles of becoming and remaining a teacher in Ohio “is very difficult process to become a teacher in Ohio, especially if you decided to change the trajectory of your life later in life.” P14 said, “I believe that it is difficult to remain a teacher in Ohio. Teachers are undervalued and there are limited resources in the inner-city to help close the achievement gaps of African American students.” Through P14’s experiences, P14 said, “becoming a teacher was my alternate choice of profession so my pathway was a non-traditional route. P14 went on to further explain that “I completed a fellowship program as a point of entry into the education system.” P14 expressed, the teacher certification test was a deterrent, and I chose a charter school because of a recommendation from a friend. I knew the compensation rate was higher and the process was shorter, complete a fellowship program versus returning to school.

P14 said that “In order to obtain the license recommended post-fellowship, you must have a specific number of credit hours in one specific subject area.”

P14 said, “in the teaching world, diversity is not true diversity, and it shows up as gender first then ethnicity.” P14 explained that when you “sprinkle in a few male teachers and you’ve got the surface level of diversity in most school systems, and I believe it is not frowned upon enough to have a faculty of majority white teachers governing brown bodies.” P14 said, “Thorough social background checks should be conducted because it is 2021 and people’s social

affiliations matter, especially dealing with Black and Brown students.” P14 also would recommend “recruitment targeted to match the demographic of the students.” P14 concluded with “retaining African Americans is sourced in treatment and eliminating the freedom of micro aggressions in the workplace, implementing a system of consequences with mental/emotional compensation/relief.”

P15 (Participant 15)

P15 was an African American female with 2 years of experience. P15 believed that the obstacles and catalyst of becoming and remaining a teacher in Ohio “is the notion of being perceived as a glorified babysitter.” P15 went on to further explain that “some teachers have felt this way, especially recently, with having to come into the building to teach a class size of 5-10 students during a global pandemic doubling up the amount of work because we had to teach the rest of the students online.” Through P15’s experience, P15 believed, “becoming a teacher in Ohio has not been a positive experience for me so far.” P15 said,

I was not fortunate enough to graduate from college and land a teaching position in a public-school district like many of the classmates who were in the master’s program with me therefore I settled on a public charter until I could pass the licensure test.

P15 explained that “during the time period in which I graduated from graduate school, charter schools were being introduced and becoming more noticeable in Ohio, and therefore it was a time many schools were seeking to hire.” P15 said, “certification testing to obtain licensure was a challenge. Not passing the exam limited what schools I could apply to, such as public-schools.”

P15 said that “My view on diversity in the teaching force is that it has and always were needed within our education system.” P15 further explained, “this notion of diversity has taken a slight increase over the years, but there is more work that needs to take place, especially within

the hiring process of teachers, specifically hiring diverse groups of teachers in inner city schools.” P15 said,

Salary, I believe, is a start and there are times teachers are taking on more than what they signed up for, and are not properly compensated; therefore, this can lead to teacher stress which can later result in teacher burnout.

P15 concluded with “Proper coaching/mentoring and the opportunity for leadership /administration to work closely with their teachers, help guide them throughout the school year, and provide them with constructive feedback that can help them grow as a teacher.” The participants for the focus group discussion were described as follows.

Participants’ Profiles – Focus Group Discussion

Focus Group Participant 1 (FGP1)

FGP1 was African American male teacher who believed that the process of becoming a teacher in Ohio is almost out of grasp for African American candidates because of the state certification test. FGP1 believed that the hiring process in Ohio is intense and the requirements that are in place negate the advance degrees that they require teachers to have. FGP1 believes that African American teachers are needed for African American students because of the relationships that they build with one another that leads to closing the achievement gaps in education. FGP1 recommended that explicit recruitment, recruitment incentives, and tuition reimbursement are policies be put in place across the board in public-school district. FGP1 would suggest starting the pipeline earlier than when students get to college and ensure that African American teachers are recognized for opportunities for growth and align salary with work conditions.

Focus Group Participant 2 (FGP2)

FGP2 was an African American female who believe that the challenged that were encountered when applying to be a teacher was not passing the state licensure test to teach in public-schools. FGP2 perceived the hiring process in Ohio was nearly unattainable and the work that had to be done postgraduation made it extremely difficult to become a teacher. FGP2 believed that representation matters, and African American teachers are needed for African American students because African American teachers are more interested in educating all students, not just a select group of students. The policies that FGP2 would recommend for hiring African American teachers includes explicitly targeting HBCU's and have more than one alternative route to becoming licensed. FGP2 suggested that to retain African American teachers it must start with pay, followed by clear pathways for advancement (if they so choose).

Focus Group Participant 3 (FGP3)

FGP3 was an African American female who believed that the challenges of becoming a teacher in Ohio was difficult and tedious to those who did not give up trying to pass the license test. FGP3 said that it is very difficult to get hired unless you know someone in the district, and even then, your placement almost always is in the harder working conditions of schools. FGP3 believe that African American teachers are needed for African American students and it's unfortunate that most African American students will never have that opportunity. FGP3 would recommend better recruitment from HBCU's and more funding for HBCU's so that their resources match PWIs in quality and substance. FGP3 would suggest that there should be programs that allow African American teachers to move into positions of leadership in every area and discipline, more access to diverse training and opportunities for African American teachers to provide professional development for their counterpart teaches.

Focus Group Participant 4 (FGP4)

FGP4 was an African American female who believed that the difficulties of applying and becoming a teacher in Ohio stemmed from the state test that said you could teach in a specific content. FGP4 perceived the hiring process more rigorous than other states and on top of getting a master's degree, you have to pass a state test that is almost impossible to pass. FGP4 absolutely agrees that African American teachers are needed at all levels of education for African American students; to give them a fair chance at academics and fair discipline. FGP4 believed that the biggest recommendation for hiring African American teachers start with career fairs that target explicit inner-city demographics as well helping to obtain alternative state licenses. FGP4 suggested that to retain African American teachers, school districts must start with proper salaries to match the degree of the candidates.

Focus Group Participant 5 (FGP5)

FGP5 was an African American female teacher who believed that the difficulties of applying and becoming a teacher in Ohio because upon graduation with a master's there still had to be a test to take to be certified. FGP5 perceived the process for up-and-coming teachers to be heavily biased and geared toward the standards of white females. FGP5 believe that African American teachers are needed for African American students because representation matters and if African American students see positive African American teachers, they would be more prone to join the teaching profession upon graduation. The policies that FGP5 would recommend is to do more recruiting of African American teachers from HBCUs other than PWIs. FGP5 would suggest putting African American teachers in roles that foster learning and not discipline as a basis of retaining teachers in the profession.

General Themes for Interviews

In the initial analysis, an interview categories and participants' codes were created. The general themes were found corresponding to the interview categories. After writing the participant profiles, the coding categories were redefined. The narratives that were told by the participants added to my understanding of the distinct stories that were told; however, similarly joined them together. The codes generated were then clustered around the research questions with some overlapping. For example, Research Question 1 focused on the experiences of the African Americans becoming teachers in Ohio, common codes that clustered around this question included "underrepresentation of Black teachers," "biased state testing," and "lack of mentorship."

After completing a further analysis that was related to the overarching purpose of the study, the significant emergent themes that arose contributed to my understanding of why these participants entered the teaching profession. During the transcription process, I closely examined the influences that lead to entering the profession, and by doing so, strong patterns and recurring themes were evident. For example, all 15 participants shared multiple examples of how their sense of upbringing contributed to their successful completion of college and wanting to be a part of the educational community that helped to raise and nurture them; this theme I called respect in the profession. Each participant described how the respect that is associated with teaching played a significant factor in the push to overcome the state standard obstacles that could potentially keep them from entering the profession.

All 15 participants had K-12 experience in Ohio and nine out of the 15 participants attended college in the state. Of those experiences, all 15 participants reported the feeling of being excluded, marginalization, tokenism, and feelings of isolation during their secondary and

postsecondary experiences and wanted to be the change necessary to be inclusive in education for those outcast students (P7).

Twenty-six general themes were identified from six interview categories (see Appendix D).

1. The first category discussed the experiences of the teachers becoming licensed professionals in Ohio. The general themes were: Undergraduate degrees in education, non-education backgrounds, further education in order to teach, transfer from out of state, and charter school alternative teaching.
2. The second category involved the victories, challenges, or obstacles during the hiring process. The general themes were: Obtaining 5-year teaching license, challenge of passing licensure test, mentor program offered during certain time frame, and not being placed in desired school systems.
3. The third category involved the catalyst of becoming and remaining a teacher in Ohio. The general themes were: Respect in the profession, discouraged from leadership positions, heavy workload, disciplinarian role, inconsistent expectations, and inconsistency with staff recognition.
4. The fourth category involved the views and perspectives that the teachers had on diversity in the public-school systems. The themes were: singular race in the profession, tokenism, lack of men, LGBTQ not present.
5. The fifth category involved the policies to improve the recruitment process of teachers. The general themes were: Specific partnerships with HBCUs, salary, pipeline for African American educators to the classroom, and alternative license programs.

6. The sixth category involved the recommendations for retaining African American teachers in the public-school systems. The general themes were: Salary, more professional development and training, student loan forgiveness, and partnership relationships with African American teachers.

Interview Category 1: Experience of Becoming a Teacher in Ohio

Advance Degree Needed for Licensure. African American teachers in the state of Ohio are required to receive a master's degree as the minimum standard to becoming a licensed professional. Research into a program that satisfied the needs of recognition in Ohio was a priority when applying to graduate school. Some programs offered certification, while many others did not. Those programs that did offer certification require the Ohio Assessment for educators and there was not a guarantee of a successful pass rate (P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P6, P7, P8, P9 P10, P11, P12, P13, P14, and P15).

Charter School Alternative Teaching as Alternative Pathway. African American teachers of this study chose public charter schools to begin their careers in education. Charter schools do not require the state mandate licensure and mentorship program therefore this was the entryway into education. African American teachers used the public charter schools to gain experience while trying to obtain their professional licenses so that they could be qualified to work in a public-school district (P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P6, P7, P8, P9, P10, P11, P12, P13, P14, and P15).

Non-Education Background Pathways to Teaching. African American teachers who went to school and completed degrees in another concentration outside of education who made the choice to be a part of the education field had a 3-year post graduation program to complete in order to meet the requirements of becoming a licensed professional. Gaining three years of

experience through mentorship teaching, self-evaluation assessments, state licensure certification, and a fee were the steps for teachers who did not have a background in education (P1, P2, P4, P7, P8, P10, P11, P12, P13, P14, and P15).

Undergraduate Degrees in Education are not a Guarantee for State Licensure.

Teacher licensure is not automatically guaranteed when graduating with an undergraduate degree in education. Ohio requires teachers to further their education into a master's degree, take residency into a mentorship program (RESA), and pass a certification test before becoming a licensed professional in the state of Ohio (P3, P5, P6, and P9).

Transfer Licensure From Out of State. Teachers who identified as African American used reciprocity as a pathway of obtaining a teaching license in Ohio. Working in other states that did not require the certification and mentorship was the process that was taken before moving to Ohio. While it is understood that this is not the ideal alternative for most teacher candidates, the teachers took the measures that were necessary to obtain an out of state license (P1, P7, P9, and P14).

Interview Category 2: Victories, Challenges, or Obstacles in the Hiring Process

Licensed for 5 Years in Ohio. African American teachers who passed the Ohio Assessment for Educators, who successfully completed the Resident Educator Summative Assessment (RESA), and obtained a master's degree in education were able to apply and receive a state licensure that allowed them to teach in any public-school in Ohio (P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P6, P7, P8, P9, 10, P11, P12, P13, P14, and P15).

Challenge Passing Licensure Test. African American teachers in Ohio struggled to pass the licensure test to become a teacher. African American teachers had to take the perspective test in their area of content more than once in order to become licensed and able to work in a school

district. The challenge of passing the state licensure test deterred teachers away from the profession since they already had advanced degrees (P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P6, P7, P8, P9, 10, P11, P12, P13, P14, and P15).

Not Placed in Desired School System. African American teachers who completed their courses and programs to becoming teachers were placed in specific schools. African American teachers were placed in schools because of their ethnic and cultural background without the competitive pay that should be associated with becoming more of a disciplinarian rather than a teacher (P1, P2, P3, P7, P8, P11, P12, and P13).

Mentorship Program Offered During Certain Times. African American teachers who were in the process of becoming certified were discouraged in becoming a teacher because of the availability of having a space in the mentorship programs. African American teachers expressed that because the mentorship program was offered at certain times of the year, the time in between graduating and starting the program presented itself as a major obstacle in completing the process (P1, P3, P4, P5, P7, P8, P9, P11, P12, and P13).

Interview Category 3: Catalyst of Becoming and Remaining a Teacher in Ohio

Disciplinarian Role. African American teachers felt as if they were hired into the teaching role to act as a disciplinarian instead of a teacher. African American teachers felt as if they had to perform their set of duties and supplement non-African American teachers in order to have strong behavior management across the board (P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P6, P7, P8, P9, P10, P11, P12, P13, P14, and P15).

Respect in the Profession. African American teachers felt as if the teaching profession was not a respected profession and that the job could be done by anyone who applied. Teachers felt as if they were looked at as sub-par to other professionals because of the poor working

conditions in some of the public-school districts draw upon negative reviews that are reflective of the teachers and not the policies that are mandated (P1, P2, P3, P5, P7, P9, P10, P11, P12, P14, and P15).

Heavy Workload. African American teachers experienced a heavy workload because of the achievement gaps in education that Black and Brown students face. African American teachers work longer hours creating differentiated lessons that are for general education and special education students because of their investment in building up the academic community of Black and Brown students (P1, P2, P3, P8, P9, P10, P11, P13, and P14).

Discouraged From Leadership Positions. African American teachers were discouraged from applying for leadership positions because of their inexperience within the school district and the microaggressions that are inflicted upon them through internal reviews. African American teachers believed that the review processes were implicitly biased and stood as a barrier when applying to become an administrator (P3, P7, P8, P9, P10, P11, P12, and P15).

Inconsistent Expectations. African American teachers believed that the expectations that were imparted on them were not the same as non-African American teachers. African American teachers believed that the unrealistic expectations of being a model teacher or a perfect teacher to African American students and teachers opened a space for much more criticism (P3, P4, P5, P6, P7, P8, P9, P10, P13, and P14).

Inconsistency With Staff Recognition. African American teachers believed that their recognition (not that it was essentially needed) went unnoticed in comparison to non-African American teachers. It was almost as if their willingness to go above and beyond was expected and the standard or basis of learning. African American teachers believed that they went

unrecognized because when operating with specific students, it was their job to be successful (P1, P2, P3, P4, P6, P7, P8, and P11).

Interview Category 4: View of Diversity in Teaching

Singular Race in the Profession. African American teachers believed that the educational profession is highly dominated with a specific single race of professionals (White women). African American teachers believed that there is not a representation of students across the board and that absence or lack thereof leads to larger issues within the school systems (P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P6, P7, P8, P9, P10, P11, P12, P13, P14, and P15).

Lack of Men

African American teachers pointed out that as a whole, African Americans are not present in the educational workforce. Since African American women are not represented, African American men make up a much smaller percentage, and when they are present, they are in positions that encompass being a disciplinarian (e.g., dean of students, behavioral director, resource officer; P1, P2, P5, P6, P7, P8, P11, P12, P13, and P14).

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer/Questioning Community not Represented

African American teachers while not represented in the educational workforce, look beyond their small percentage to recognize where all parts of diversity are lacking. That is African Americans, men, LGBTQ community members, and any other Black and Brown educators that should be represented to reflect the students in which they service (P11).

Interview Category 5: Policies to Improve the Recruitment and Hiring Process

Salary. African American teachers believed that salary incentives should be in place to hire and recruit African American candidates. African American teachers believe that the role that they take on in education is critical to the growth and development of all students not just

African American students, and in many cases since they take on roles as disciplinarians, they should be compensated for it (P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P6, P7, P8, P9, P10, P11, P12, P13, P14, and P15).

Alternative Licensure Programs. African American teachers believed that the licensure program in Ohio discredits the advance degree that is necessary and the standard of teaching. African American teachers believed that the Resident Educator Summative Assessment is not a reflection of the daily practices of the teachers and the certification test has implicit biases (P1, P2, P3, P6, P7, P8, P9, P10, P11, P12, and P15).

Specific Partnerships with HBCUs. African American teachers believed that to bridge the disconnect between African American teachers and the educational workforce is that there should be a direct partnership with Historically Black Colleges and Universities. African American teachers believed that because the profession is frowned upon, human resource directors should make the connection at universities that have African American teachers in positions of leadership and professor roles (P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P6, P11, P13, P14, and P15).

Pipeline for African American Educators. African American teachers believed that early representation of African American teachers in the school system is key to the recruitment of African American student candidates. African American teachers believed that if schools can offer internships for other career paths, education should be included as a pathway as well (P1, P2, P4, P5, P6, P7, P8, P12, P13, and P14).

Interview Category 6: Recommendations for Retaining African American Teachers

Salary. African American teachers believe that teachers play a critical role in shaping and molding the minds of the future generations and in order to feel supported and do well, they should be compensated for their hard work and dedication. African American teachers believe

that teachers as a whole are undercompensated and it is an important factor if school districts want to retain their services long term (P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P6, P7, P8, P9, P10, P11, P12, P13, P14, and P15).

Student Loan Forgiveness. African American teachers believe that they are underpaid to do a job that many and most would not take on. African American teachers have pushed for higher wages for many years and their voices have gone unheard. African American teachers believe that if the wages are not increased, student loan forgiveness should be in place to offset the low wages that school districts are paying (P1, P2, P3, P5, P6, P8, P9, P10, P11, P12, and P13).

More Training for Teachers. African American teachers believed that Professional Development is key to growing in the educational field, and not as a disciplinarian. African American teachers believe that if they were provided training to be able to work their ways up (if they so choose), many African American teachers would be able to be in administrative roles (P1, P2, P3, P4, P7, P12, P13, and P15).

Significant Emergent Themes for Interviews

Four emergent themes were discovered from the general themes. While composing the participant profiles, I read through each transcription several times and reviewed the themes and similarities and differences of the participants to further understand the pipeline for African American teachers to enter the profession. The general themes were carefully analyzed, and the significant emergent themes were identified through the general themes. The significant themes were:

1. Hard to get the license or certification in Ohio
2. Hired as disciplinarians instead of teachers

3. Lack of diversity in education
4. Salary as a key to retain teachers

Theme 1: Licensure Certification is Difficult to Pass

Fifteen participants unanimously agreed that the Ohio Assessment for educators was difficult to pass. P1 said, “Because of the challenges in passing the state test, I was kind of forced to work in a charter school if I wanted to gain any experience in teaching.” P2 said, “It was by God’s grace that I passed the Ohio Assessment for Educators on my third try because it was at that point, I was ready to give up.” P3 stated, “I’m not sure why I had to pay a tutor to help me pass the test but it was necessary even though I have a master’s degree in education.” P4 said, “The test is really a burden because it stands in the pathway of you being a teacher even though you have a master’s degree.” P5 stated, “I took both the History and Science test and failed three times before I finally passed the History test.” P6 said,

I took the Ohio Assessment for Educators 20, a reading license test while in my master’s program and failed twice, and after I graduated, I took the test two more times and passed with the lowest score that was needed to move on.

P7 specified, “The licensing program was difficult to be a credentialed teacher in Ohio because of the state certification test that needed to be passed.” P8 explained, “I was in a master’s program that was supposed to prepare me for the OAE but I still failed in my content area that I wanted to teach.” P9 specifically pointed out, “The biggest challenge was passing the certification test and landing a job in an area that I wanted to be in.” P10 said, “I specifically stayed in my charter school years past my comfort because I could not pass the Ohio Assessment for Educators test in Math.” P11 said, “There are pre-tests that you have to take if your GPA in the content you are trying to get certified in is not at a certain level on top of trying to pass the

OAE, it's just hard." P12 explained, "Even though I did not get teaching certifications because I could not pass the OAE, my first four years teaching at the independent school really developed my teaching skills within the classroom." P13 said, "I took the alternative teaching licensure way which required me to take additional courses, pass my OAE and teach in a district for 3-5 years before receiving my state license." P14 noted, "I initially faced the challenge of not passing the Ohio Assessment for Educators, followed by not having enough credits in the content that I wanted to teach." P15 said, "Becoming a teacher in Ohio has not been a positive experience for me so far because of having an advanced degree and still having the uphill challenge of passing the state licensure test."

Theme 2: African American Teachers are Looked Upon as Disciplinarians

Fifteen (15) participants felt that African American teachers are hired for specific roles in education such as being a disciplinarian. P1 stated, "I think I was hired into my first school district to deal with the behaviors of Black kids because I was Black and the school was becoming a little bit more diverse." P2 said, "I often find myself stepping into classrooms to assist struggling teachers who have the same credentials and training that I have, it's frustrating." P3 explicitly said "my first position in education was an In School Suspension (ISS) teacher." P4 said, "I asked for help from the principal regarding curriculum, DOK, and classroom management and was met with, "you know how to handle behaviors, you're doing better than a lot of our teachers." P5 explained, "The teaching force is predominately white females, white males, black females and the very few Black men are not in content based classes." P6 said, "A part from myself and one other African American teacher who teach Reading and History, the two other African American faces in my school is a behavioral specialist and PEAK teacher." P7 said, "The diversity in the teaching force is most definitely skewed and the very few Black

teachers who are in place act as teaching assistants to alleviate the stress from the core teacher.” P8 explained, “Representation matters and if Black students only see Black males and females as disciplinarians in the school systems it continues to push a dialogue that keeps them from wanting to teach in the future too.” P9 said, “my first Black teacher that I ever had was a gym teacher and he was always being asked to step into other classes and help struggling kids because we loved him and listened to his instruction.” P10 explained, “I almost gave up teaching because I had my own set responsibilities, and I was told my principal to help certain classes because they struggled with behavior problems.” P11 said, “I have done both jobs of being a content teacher and in my period acted as a support liaison for teachers who could not get their classrooms under control, it was annoying to say the least.” P12 said, “The Dean of Student Culture (behavior manager) is African American, the in school suspension teacher is African American, and the school resource officer is African American and I don’t think that is by coincidence.” P13 explained, “I am a teacher, it doesn’t matter that I am Black, I shouldn’t have to support other teachers.” P14 said, “I worked hard to build positive relationships with my kids and I will not be pressured another year to support struggling staff members.” P15 said, “my planning period consisted of me sitting in the hallway to support teachers who sent students out, who does that?”

Theme 3: There is a Lack of Diversity in Education Across the Board

Fifteen participants agreed that there is little to no diversity in the teaching profession. P1 said, “I never had a Black teacher until I got in high school.” P2 said, “In my predominantly African American student-based school, there are only three African American personnel.” P4 said, “it’s sickening to continue to see White females dominate this profession who are only in it for the paid time off and holidays off to spend with families.” P5 explained, “there aren’t many

ethnic groups represented in education and that is definitely problematic.” P6 said, “I don’t know many African American teachers in this predominantly Black school district because we are spread thin and outnumbered.” P7 said, “there are not many men in this profession and I don’t think men want to be associated with the negative press that surrounds teachers.” P8 said, “I had my first male teacher in middle school, and didn’t have another one until my senior year of high school.” P9 said, “growing up in Virginia, I didn’t even know that minorities were teachers.” P10 said, “Times are changing, and the LGBTQ community is frowned upon in schools, not to mention current legislators are trying to discredit African Americans and other minorities who impacted history.” P11 said, “it’s not many of us in education, but inner-city schools have a lot of Black students.” P12 stated, “the small number of Black and Brown teachers in the profession cannot be good in terms of relationship building.” P13 said, “the current state of our schools across the board is not representative of ethnic minority groups.” P14 said, “I was in college when I first had an actual professor who was African American.” P15 explained, “I am not sure the entire scope of why minorities are not teaching, but it’s not just Black teachers, it’s Hispanic, Native American, and Asians too.”

Theme 4: Salary is a Key Component to Recruiting and Retaining African American Teachers

Fifteen (15) participants believed that salary is important when recruiting and retaining African American teachers. P1 said, “School districts need to make it worth our while especially if the school is behind.” P2 said, “Competitive pay is essential to keeping us long term.” P3 explained, “I don’t teach for money, but I have to make a living and be able to enjoy life.” P4 said, “it’s not all about money, but the stress that comes along with teaching needs to be made up through compensation.” P5 stated, “annual increases should not be up for debate and if you stay continuously employed you should be paid for it.” P6 said, “increase our pay annually or pay for

the student loan debt that we have.” P7 said, “if schools want to retain Black teachers, especially in hard schools, the pay must be different.” P8 explained, “salary should be competitive especially if we are working in less than welcoming conditions.” P9 stated, “we will stay long-term if we are paid right and treated fairly.” P10 stated, “I worked hard to get into education, therefore if I am to stay, I need to be paid according to my years’ worth of education.” P11 said, “I teach because I love kids, but Black teachers are leaving at an alarming rate because of poor wages.” P12 said, “We had to have a master’s degree and we need to be paid accordingly.” P13 stated, “school districts need to raise the teaching pay to more than the bare minimum.” P14 said, “We see other people with master’s degrees making almost two times our pay so if they want us to stay in education, they should pay us for it.” P15 said, “A scaled salary increases yearly, not a percentage increase will keep African American teachers in the profession.”

General Themes for Focus Group Discussion

The focused group discussion included five participants that were a part of the individual interviews. The purpose of this method was to achieve data triangulation. The participants were asked to participate in this group session and was sent a letter of intent via email to be a part of the discussion. The five participants who responded was sent a survey to give the top day and times to meet. The focused group discussion was conducted via Zoom and the camera was not utilized, however, audio recording was used and the participants were also told that they may withdraw at any time. Participants were asked a series of questions (See Table 3). P1 was an African male teacher and P3, P4, P7, and P12 were African American female teachers. There were five focus group discussion categories and twenty general themes (see Appendix E). The first category involved the victories, challenges, or obstacles for applying to be a teacher in Ohio.

Table 3*Focus Group Categories, General Themes, and Participants' Codes*

Focus group categories	Themes and codes
Victories, challenges, or obstacles applying for a teaching job in Ohio	Obtaining 5-year license (P1, P3, P4, P7, P12) Teaching in charter without license a pathway to teach (P1, P3, P4, P7) Passing license test (P1, P3, P4, P7, P12) Delayed placement in district (P3)
Perception of the hiring process in Ohio	Complex steps to hiring (P1, P3, P4, P7, P12) Inside connection for hiring (P3, P4, P12) RESA difficult to complete (P1, P3, P4, P12) Discriminatory biases for African Americans (P1, P3, P7, P12) Other: Job postings outdated and not reflective of current need (P4)
Are African American teachers needed for African American students?	Representation is important (P1, P3, P4, P7, P12) Positive Role Model (P1, P3, P4, P7, P12) Encourage African American students to work hard Other: Needed for all students regardless of how they identify (P3)
Recommended policies for hiring African American teachers	Recruitment from HBCU's (P1, P3, P4, P12) Targeted recruitment (P1, P3, P4, P7, P12) Internships in schools (P1)
Suggestions for retaining African American Teachers	Leadership not disciplinarian (P1, P3, P4, P12) Salary (P1, P3, P4, P7, P12) Professional Development (P1, P3, P12) Student loan forgiveness (P1, P3, P12)

The general themes were teaching in charter without a license and passing the license test. The second category was the perception of the hiring process in Ohio. The general themes were complex steps to hiring, inside connection for hiring, RESA difficult to complete, and discriminatory biases for African Americans. The third category involved why African American

teachers are needed or not needed. The general themes were that representation is important, positive role models, and encourage African American students to work hard. The fourth interview category involved recommendations for policies for hiring African American teachers. The general themes were recruitment from HBCUs, targeted recruitment of African Americans, and internship roles. The fifth interview category involved suggestions for retaining African American teachers. The general themes were leadership not disciplinarian, salary, professional development, and student loan forgiveness.

Category 1: Victories, Challenges, or Obstacles to Become a Teacher

Passing Licensure test is a major obstacle to becoming a teacher in Ohio. The participants said that the state licensure test almost deterred them away from pursuing a career in education. Participants felt that the state test was unnecessary because of the advanced degree that is the standard to teach (P1, P3, P4, and P5).

Teaching in charter schools is a challenge because of the difficulty in behavior management in the schools without clear direction for improvement. African American teachers without a state license could take the route of charter schools in order to have gainful employment while they worked to pass the state licensure test (P1, P3, P4, and P7).

Category 2: Perception of Hiring Process in Ohio

Complex steps to being hired discouraged African American teachers from joining the profession because of hearsay and first-hand knowledge of trying to become a teacher. African American teachers had advanced degrees in education and the state test was almost unattainable (P1, P3, P4, P7, and P12).

Discriminatory biases for African Americans were an obstacle that made it hard for African American teachers to be hired in districts across the board. African American teachers

believed that their only reason for hire was to maintain behaviors and or to meet a quota for diversity. The idea that this profession is grounded in White females shows that the hiring practices are not unbiased (P1, P3, P7, and P12).

Resident Educator Summative Assessment was difficult to pass. With RESA being offered at certain times, the African Americans had to wait for the window of courses to open in order to start the mentorship program (P1, P3, P4, and P12).

Inside connections for hiring was almost a necessity for hiring. African American teachers believed that in order to be hired, knowing someone at any level would increase their chances for employment (P3, P4, and P12).

Category 3: African American Teachers Needed or not Needed

Representation is important and African American teachers believed that African American teachers are needed in the education process to be more than a disciplinarian but more as a positive role model (P1, P3, P4, P7, and P12).

African American Teachers are Needed to be Positive Role Models. African American students who see positive African American role models change their perspective on the teaching profession and may potentially want to become a teacher as well (P1, P3, and P12).

Category 4: Recommended Policies for Recruitment and Hiring

Recruitment from HBCUs is believed to help lessen the ethnic diversity gap in education. Intentional hiring and recruitment from HBCUs are a policy that could be written in the mission statements of schools to recruit African American teacher candidates. Participants believe that if school districts have career fairs in heavily minority populated areas, the African American candidates saw the importance of being in the public-school system (P1, P3, P4, and P12).

Category 5: Suggestions for Retaining African American Teachers

Leadership roles for African Americans is a suggestion for retaining African American teachers. A reoccurring idea that surfaced was that once they were in the classroom that was the height of their potential. African American teachers believe that leadership roles should be more accessible especially in predominately African American schools because the African American teacher is seen more as an ally than a disciplinarian. (P1, P3, P4, and P12).

Salary Increases are Key. African American teachers believe that higher wages were retain teachers in the long run. They believe that higher wages are necessary because they give so much of their salaries back to the classroom. African American teachers believed that because the fight for wage increases have not been adhered to or heard, school districts can offer student loan forgiveness for teachers who stay within the profession for a certain number of years (P1, P3, and P12).

Significant Emergent Themes for Focus Group Discussion

Three emergent themes were selected based on the number of responses that the participants gave. These emergent themes were chosen from the responses that were generated in the focus group discussion. From the general themes came the emergent themes. The emergent themes are as follows:

1. Passing the state licensure test is unattainable
2. Positive role model in education
3. Student loan forgiveness for teachers

Passing the State Licensure Test is Unattainable

Five participants (P1, P3, P4, P7, and P12) believed that the state licensure test is unattainable. P1 said, "It doesn't make any sense that I had to take a test three times before I

could pass.” P3 explained, “I have a master’s, and the OAE made me feel as if my education wasn’t enough.” P4 stated, “If it were not for me failing two times and then hiring a tutor, I don’t think I would be teaching.” P7 said, “It’s hard, and I don’t know where they came up with these test questions.” P12 stated, “The results are immediate, you know right then and there that you have failed, over and over again.”

Positive Role Models

Five participants (P1, P3, P4, P7, and P12) believed that African American teachers are needed for African American students. P1 said “Representation matters in public-schools.” P3 stated, “It was because I had a Black teacher who loved all of us that I wanted to become a teacher.” P4 said, “African American students seek kindred spirits and faces and it is important that we show up for them.” P7 stated, “African American teachers are a safe space for African American students because we don’t come at them from a place of superiority.” P12 said, “Most kids do not have a positive role model and when they see us, they see beacons of hope.”

Student Loan Forgiveness

Three participants (P1, P3, and P12) believed that if school districts want to retain African American teachers, student loan forgiveness should be incorporated in contracts. P1 said, “Teachers work for pennies and it is hard to try and make a living on top of paying back student loans.” P3 stated, “If they can’t give us a yearly increase that makes sense, they could at least pay off student loans after five years of being with the company.” P12 said, “They required us to get an advanced degree and then turn around and have to try to pass a test that cost over \$100, so they should be paying back into our student loans as incentives to stay.”

Chapter Summary

The information that has been presented by the participants' responses identified general and emergent themes. Chapter 4 included the demographics of the participants which included ethnic background, gender, role, and years of experience. The individual interviews were done face-to-face through Zoom and 26 general themes were identified. From those general themes, four emergent themes derived. Those themes where the licensure certification in Ohio was difficult to pass, African American teachers are looked upon as disciplinarians, there is a lack of diversity in education across the board, and salary is a key component to recruiting and retaining African American teachers. The focus group discussions were conducted on Zoom, were recorded without video, transcribed and analyzed to identify general and emergent themes. At the completion of the interviews, I performed member checking by selecting an interviewee who participated in both the individual interviews and focus group discussion. I shared all of the findings of the individual interviews and focus group discussion and asked the interviewee to critically analyze the feelings, experiences, and perspectives of the participants.

The emergent themes were that African American teachers were seen as role models. Passing the state licensure test was very difficult and student loan forgiveness is a major component to keeping African American teachers in the profession long-term. The major significant themes for the interviews were that licensure certification in Ohio was difficult to pass, African American teachers are looked upon as disciplinarians, there is a lack of diversity in education across the board, and salary is a key component to recruiting and retaining African American teachers. The major significant themes for the focus group discussions were passing the state licensure test was unattainable, African American teachers are needed because they are looked upon as role models from African American students, and student loan forgiveness

should be a requirement since the school districts are not raising pay to meet the demands of the cost of living in the United States.

Chapter 5 focuses on interpretations of major findings, answers to the research questions, implications (where I compare literature review findings to my findings), recommendations for educational leadership, teachers, human resources, and future researchers.

Chapter 5: Conclusions and Recommendations

The purpose of this descriptive case study was to explore African American teachers' experiences of becoming teachers in Ohio and their suggestions for improving the hiring process. There was a hiring discrepancy in the recruiting and hiring process of African American teachers in Ohio (Stein, 2019). Byrd and Edwards (2009) claimed that African American educators, whether they are male, female, teachers, administrators, or school counselors, account for a marginalized 8%. According to the National Center for Educators (2017), "the number of teachers who identified specifically as African American declined from eight percent to seven percent for 2015- 2016 academic school year."

Fifteen current African American teachers from Ohio who recently obtained their state certification licensure within the past five years provided responses during individual interviews, where five of those 15 participants also participated in a focus group discussion. The data collected were used to reveal general themes. The general themes for the individual interviews and focus group discussion were categorized and classified into two tables. Participant information and data were coded to coincide with the findings as illustrated in the two tables. Chapter 5 consists of the findings for the research questions, implications, and recommendations. The central and sub-research questions that guided this study, discussion and findings, significant emergent themes, findings compared with previous research from the literature, limitations of the study, recommendations for educational leaders, teachers, human resources, future researchers, a researcher reflection, a conclusion, and a final summary.

Major Findings

The first set of data were collected through semistructured interviews of 15 African American teachers. The focus group discussion was composed of five participants from the

individual interview session and provided an additional source of data. The general themes illustrated common participant responses for the underrepresentation of African American teachers in public education. The emergent themes allowed for a better understanding of the ways that school districts and human resources can improve the hiring and recruitment procedures. In the following, major themes were presented based on interviews (themes 1-4) and focus group discussion (themes 5-7).

Theme 1: Hard to Obtain Certification

The experiences that the teachers had when becoming a teacher in Ohio is that the state licensure test was extremely difficult to pass. The state licensure test presents itself as a barrier as there is not a course or specific study guide to prepare for the test. The issue with the certification test is there is not a pattern to fall in sync with, therefore, there is not a scale to follow when trying to study and prepare for reassessment. African American teachers felt that the state licensure test is redundant, especially because Ohio requires teachers to have a master's degree when other states do not.

Theme 2: Play the Role of Disciplinarians Instead of Teachers

As an African American teacher, the experiences from the participants were the same; we are allies not wardens, therefore students can and will learn better from us in core content classes. African American teachers went to school for education and took a specific content licensure test to be able to teach in Ohio. African American teachers are qualified to be more than support roles for behaviors, special course teachers, and janitors. In fact, African American teachers pointed out that in their roles as teachers, they often have to wear many hats such as disciplinarian, counselor, and therapist because of their non-Black teachers fully mastering the art of behavior management.

Theme 3: Lack of Diversity in Education Across the Board

The hiring procedure in general are single-handedly the reason that people of color are not represented in the public school district. There is a hiring discrepancy in the United States in regard to having a true diversified teaching workforce. Across the board the teaching profession is heavily dominated by Caucasian women, followed by a mixture of African American, Hispanics, Asians, and those who identify as two or more races. There is not representation of any of the minority groups across the board, especially for men. There also is not a representation for those students who identify as anything other than heterosexual.

Theme 4: Satisfactory Pay to Retain African American Teachers

African American teachers like other teachers are not in the profession to get rich, however, the pay is less than satisfactory when it is the teachers who prepares the students for their futures. Higher pay to begin with and salary increases are a key component to retaining African American teachers, especially in Ohio because Ohio requires an advanced degree to become a teacher. African American teachers believe that they should have higher compensation because of the placement in more difficult working conditions and schools with more behavioral problems.

Theme 5: Difficult to Pass the State License Test

Across the board, African American teachers felt that the state licensure test in Ohio was difficult to pass (FGP1, FGP2, FGP3, FGP4, and FGP5). Soliciting outside help from tutors or online study guides should not have been necessary to pass the state test, especially knowing that the master's program did not teach any of this specific content for the state test (PGP2 and FGP5). The state licensure test has deterred African American teachers away because of an unsuccessful pass rate (FGP3). FGP2 stated,

This test is unfair to us if you think about it. So many African American and other minority teachers alike would be in the education field today if this biased test didn't make it hard for us to be teachers or educators.

Theme 6: African American Teachers are Needed as Positive Role Models

African American teachers are needed in the public-school system to be positive role models for not only African American students but for all students as well (FGP1, FGP2, FGP3, FGP4, and FGP5). African American teachers take on a task that many shy away from because of the complex stigma of behaviors that are associated with students of color, and it is important to see African American teachers in content lead classes, not just as disciplinarians, gym teachers, and janitors. FGP4 said,

when we are represented in elementary schools, we shape and construct the belief that education is important, and we can push students toward academia or even a career; because the first thing that students want to know is where we went to school and if we know any of the athletes.

Theme 7: Student Loan Forgiveness for Public-School Teachers

A pay increase for teachers has been a struggle for many years (FGP1, FGP2, FGP3, FGP4, and FGP5). F5 stated,

We pour a lot of the little back into the classrooms so that my students have more than enough, and if we can't get a pay increase, they should be willing to pay off our students' loans because they required the advanced degree.

F5 stated, "money isn't everything, but if they can't give it to us directly, our student loans should be the first to be paid off."

Research Questions Findings

The central question of this study was: What were African American teachers' experiences of becoming teachers in Ohio and what suggestions do they have for improving the hiring process? The following research questions guided this study.

1. What were African American teachers' lived experiences of becoming a teacher in Ohio?
2. How do African American teachers perceive the obstacles and catalysts of becoming and remaining teachers in Ohio?
3. How do African American teachers view diversity in the teaching force?
4. What policies do African American teachers recommend improving the recruit or hiring procedures?
5. What recommendations do African American teachers have for retaining African American teachers at schools?

The central question was used to explore the participants' perspectives and perceptions. What were African American teachers' experiences of becoming teachers in Ohio and what suggestions do they have for improving the hiring process? P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P6, P7, P8, P9, P10, P11, P12, P13, P14, and P15 all agreed that Ohio's state certification test that leads to licensure is extremely difficult and deters many African American teachers away from the profession.

Subquestion 1: What Were African American Teachers' Lived Experiences of Becoming a Teacher in Ohio?

P3, P5, P6, and P9 all agreed that having an undergraduate degree in education did not impact their success rate when trying to become certified in Ohio. P1, P2, P4, P5, P7, P8, P10, P11, P12, P13, P14, and P15 all had degrees in other fields of study and transformed into

education as the pathway that they wanted their careers to follow. While education was not their first choice, this group of educators took the necessary steps to becoming state-licensed teachers in Ohio.

Teaching in Ohio required teachers to obtain advanced degrees in education (P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P6, P7, P8, P9, P10, P11, P12, P13, P14, and P15) and an advanced degree did not guarantee placement into the field of education, nor did it help with the preparedness of the state licensure test. P1, P7, P9, and P14 used reciprocity from other states to obtain licensure, however, that required additional course work. P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P6, P7, P8, P9, P10, P11, P12, P13, P14, and P15 all agreed that in order to get their careers started that they had to start their careers in charter schools until their licensure steps were completed.

Subquestion 2: How do African American Teachers Perceive the Obstacles and Catalysts of Becoming and Remaining Teachers in Ohio?

A unanimous decree from all fifteen participants stated that obtaining a five-year license in Ohio was their greatest victory (P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P6, P7, P8, P9, P10, P11, P12, P13, P14, and P15). A challenge to becoming a teacher in Ohio was getting through the state issued certification test (P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P6, P7, P8, P9, P10, P11, P12, P13, P14, and P15). P1, P3, P4, P5, P7, P8, P9, P11, P12, and P13 strongly agreed that the Resident Educator Summative Assessment mentorship program was not offered at all times of the year which further delayed their process of becoming licensed. P1, P2, P3, P7, P8, P11, P12, and P13 felt that once they became licensed to teach, they were not placed in their preferred school districts because of their race. P2 stated, “I sought after a school in a suburban district because of their academic success and better pay, yet I was placed in an inner-city (which I love) school, with less pay and double the work.”

Subquestion 3: How do African American Teachers View Diversity in the Teaching Force?

Diversity in education is not true diversity yet labeled as Black and White (P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P6, P7, P8, P9, P10, P11, P12, P13, P14, and P15). P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P6, P7, P8, P9, P10, P11, P12, P13, P14, and P15 felt that the education profession is heavily dominated by White women with a few minorities spread thin across the board. P1, P2, P3, P5, P7, P8, and P10 stated that “I never had a Black teacher until later in life,” noting that in fact they never had a Black teacher in grade school. P1, P2, P5, P6, P7, P8, P11, P12, P13, and P14 all agreed that there is not a representation of men in the field of education except for gym, disciplinarians, janitors, or resource officers. P11 specifically noted that when discussing diversity, LGBTQ are not present in the school systems and that is a problem if we are trying to have diversity in the school systems.

Subquestion 4: What Policies do African American Teachers Recommend to Improve the Recruit or Hiring Procedures?

To improve the recruitment and hiring procedures in Ohio, P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P6, P11, P13, P14, and P15 believed that the major cities in Ohio (which are minority populated) should have specific partnerships with HBCUs to increase the awareness and need for African American teachers in the public-school districts. P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P6, P7, P8, P9, P10, P11, P12, P13, P14, and P15 unanimously noted that pay incentives and or regular pay increases are necessary to improve the hiring procedures. P1, P2, P4, P5, P6, P7, P8, P12, P13, and P14 felt that starting the pipeline for African American teachers as early as high school career centers is vital for African American candidates so they can start their undergraduate degrees in education early instead of education being a backup choice. P1, P2, P3, P6, P7, P8, P9, P10, P11, P12, and P15

believed that since the state of Ohio requires master's degrees there should be an alternative licensure pathway that does not include a licensure test.

Subquestion 5: What Recommendations do African American Teachers Have for Retaining African American Teachers at Schools?

P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P6, P7, P8, P9, P10, P11, P12, P13, P14, and P15 all agreed that salary is an important recommendation for retaining African American teachers in the education field. P1, P2, P3, P4, P7, P12, P13, and P15 believed that more professional development for African Americans to have the potential for career growth is necessary to retain teachers long-term. P1, P2, P3, P5, P6, P8, P9, P10, P11, P12, and P13 believed that since the demand for salary increases have not happened, school districts can have a student loan forgiveness for teachers so that their salaries do not go back into paying for a degree that the state of Ohio requires.

Implications

Since the desegregation of public-schools in May of 1962, the underrepresentation of African American educators in the school systems has continued to increase as the number of African American student occupants has continued to increase. Byrd and Edwards (2009) claimed that African American educators, whether they are male, female, teachers, administrators, or school counselors account for a marginalized 8%. In the following, current findings were compared with previous research findings in the literature.

Theme 1 discussed the perspectives and experiences of African American teachers becoming licensed in Ohio, and unanimously, the African American teachers all said that because of a biased state licensure test, it was difficult to be a certified teacher in Ohio. The findings support the research in Chapter 2 that report on the marginalization of African American

teachers in the public-school systems. P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P6, P7, P8, P9, P10, P11, P12, P13, P14, and P15 all corroborate that the state licensure test needs to be revisited, and if a master's degree is required, the master's program should prepare the teachers for the required test.

African American teachers felt that a master's degree alongside state mandated test is for lack of better words overachieving (P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P6, P7, P8, P9, P10, P11, P12, P13, P14, and P15). The state test has no type of study program that is provided and the review that the website gives is on a broad spectrum that it makes it difficult to study. P7 said, "I paid a study website to help with the Ohio Assessment for Educators 20 (Reading Content), and this study test was completely different from the actual test, and I felt as if I wasted my money." These African American teachers also discussed how the test has limited availability and if a test is available, they would have to travel outside of their school districts (suburban areas) to take the test.

African American teachers felt that because trying to obtain a license in Ohio was difficult because of the state licensure test and the Resident Educator Summative Assessment test/ profile builder, they had to seek alternative ways to becoming licensed in Ohio (P1, P7, P9, and P14). P9 stated, "some states surrounding Ohio do not require a master's degree, and it was easier for me to move to a neighboring state to obtain a license and then have it transferred." To coincide with what P9 said, P7 said,

From what I understand it was easier to have my licensed transferred over, however, I had to take additional course work at the community college in order to meet the credit hour requirements for a specific content of knowledge certification.

Chapter 2 discussed the idea that states mandate specific test for licensure and how it deters candidates away from the teaching profession (Fairclough, 2017).

The African American teachers in the study unanimously agreed that they all started their teaching careers in charter schools because of the complexities of becoming state certified in Ohio to teach in the public-schools (P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P6, P7, P8, P9, P10, P11, P12, P13, P14, and P15). Although African American students are represented more in the public-school systems, the decline and underrepresentation of African American teachers throughout the public-school systems remains constant in the United States (Fairclough, 2017). In these public charter schools, there are many more behavioral students, and special needs students and that increases the amount of work for African American teachers because they are already working hard to close the achievement gaps in education (P1, P2, P4, P7, P8, and P12).

Theme 2 stated that African American teachers were looked upon as disciplinarians. These inequities begin with the African American teachers being employed in districts where they are seen as disciplinarians instead of allies, as well as not being able to have a voice on any topic of diversity and inclusion that could bridge the gap that further led to the progressive achievement gaps for African American students (Milner, 2017). The African American teachers believed that when African American teachers are looked upon as disciplinarians, it discourages African American students from entering into the profession because of how they experienced teachers who looked like them and come from their same demographics.

The African American teachers in the profession felt that the scarce number of men in the profession were put in positions of support and largely never taught in core content classes because of their abilities to maintain difficult students. The findings support Stein (2019), who stated that African American teachers were hired for more specific roles such as disciplinarians and support staff. P3 said, “The roles of African American teachers extend pass discipline and core content classes could be ran more effective if given the opportunity.” Men at the primary

stages of education have a major impact on the growth and development of African American children, however, they are not the scape goat for those teachers who cannot manage behaviors.

School districts in urban areas are quick to employ African American teachers and educators because of their ability to identify with African American students, particularly those students who are deemed problematic. Chapter 2 discussed the idea of tokenism and supports the previous literature that African American teachers are hired to be representative of the entire population of African American students. African American teachers are essential to socially and culturally balancing the teaching profession and dominant perspectives. Research illuminates that African American have high academic and personal expectations for African American students, and when they are present in the classroom, African American student achievement increases (Byrd & Edwards, 2009). P3, P7, P9, and P11 concluded that doors of opportunity for growth must be opened for African American teachers to sustain them in the public-school districts.

Theme 3 stated that there is a lack of diversity amongst the educational workforce, specifically, the educational area is geared toward a specific group of people. According to Douglass (2018), “Black students are being educated by people who are not of their racial or cultural background.” The African American teachers felt that expanding the pool of educators to minority groups and all that minorities encompass can make a difference in how students of color is disciplined. The African American teachers believed that teachers should be reflective of the population in which they teach, but that should never limit their potential to teach in other districts with less behavior issues and the demand for more pay. Research has been conducted to show that a small percentage of African American educators enter into the workforce practice because of the discriminatory hiring practices that are put in place to keep them from advancing

in the workplace, as well as when they are accepted into the educational workforce, they are subjected to working with the more “difficult” students (D’Amico et al., 2017). African American teachers believed that it is important for teachers to be able to identify with their teachers, and that can be scarcely done because of the teach-student mismatch in public-schools.

African American teachers believed that African American students are subjected to harsher punishments due to cultural mismatch in the public-school systems. P7 said, “because non-Black teachers want to understand our students, the best thing they know how to do is get them kicked out of school for a few days and that’s not fair.” Milner (2017) asserted, “there is a need for having African American educators present in education continues to be an issue within the public-school system” (p. 24). P12 stated, “White teachers have a more negative attitude toward students of color, and the same thing that they would punish African American students for, or minority students for, they would turn a blind eye to White students” which directly supports Vilson’s (2015) stance that “non-African American educators have a more callous attitude towards African American students. The lack of diversity is crippling the school districts in the United States.”

African American teachers are no longer subscribing to the idea that African Americans are not being educated at the collegiate level and that is just a way of keeping the profession skewed toward White women. To support the hiring and retaining of African American educators and other minority educators for that matter, school systems should have in place nondiscriminatory laws that is inclusive and reputable for hiring educators of color (Milner, 2017). P1, P4, P7, and P8 spoke about the how the disparity of African Americans and people of color in the profession is disheartening, especially because Black and Brown students are represented more in the public-school systems. The African American teachers believed that

with the marginalized number of people of color in the profession, the slight chance at closing the achievement gap across the board is next to none.

Theme 4 stated that salary is a key component for recruiting and retaining African American teachers across the board. During the individual interview sessions, P1, P2, P4, P5, P6, P7, P8, P9, P10, P12, P13, P14, and P15 discussed the need to incentivize African American teachers and pay salaries that reflect their education levels. P2, P4, P5, P7, and P13 spoke about salary increases that are scale based instead of percentage based, and how that would help during the recruiting process of getting African American teachers to sign onboard. P15 specifically said, “I know it is frowned upon to ask about salary during the initial interview, but I just could not see myself settling for less than I was worth for a profession that benefits others and not me.” The salary of teachers is impacted by local school levies and federal policies, however, community members and state legislatures cannot take a hands-off approach if they want to increase retention in the public-schools.

African American teachers believed that district funding should be targeted to onboarding experiences of teachers of color especially since they are more than likely to be placed in schools with students who are deemed more problematic. Vilson (2015) asserted that African Americans, when hired, are usually paired with problematic schools within their district to act as a disciplinarian instead of an ally for students of color. P8 said,

It gets hard showing up for a job every day when you have to support other teachers with their classroom management, so I would say that they would have to pay us more since we are taking on more than what we signed on for.

Limitations

Three limitations were present in this study. The first limitation involved the small sample size of the individual interview participants. The small sample number of participants might indicate that the results of this study are not generalizable to a larger population. The study participants had to meet specific requirements to allow for relevant information to be collected for this study and there were a few minor difficulties with finding willing participants during the summer months.

The second limitation of this study involved time constraints. Some of the participants took more than a week to send back consent forms after initially expressing interest, which was followed by finding a concrete time for the five participants in the focus group discussion to meet during the summer also presented its challenges. Eventually, all of the participants were able to commit to a day and time to meet on Zoom for the focus group discussion.

The third limitation involved the potential lack of honesty during participant interviews. The criteria that was necessary for this study may have given an indication that I was looking for specific information and there is not practical method to accurately determine whether a participant was fully honest in their responses, therefore, the validity of the participant responses could have posed as a limitation to the study. The interview responses were carefully recorded, and the participants were able to verify that their data were accurately transcribed completely.

Recommendations

Recommendations were derived from the findings of this study. Based on the findings of this study, there are four recommendations to improve policies that aid in the recruitment process and three recommendations for hiring and retaining African American teachers in the public-school system (see Appendix D). State and local policy holder must work together to increase the

diversity in the educational workforce and must be receptive to feedback when discussing outdated laws and policies in the public-school systems. The findings of this study collaborate with the following discussion of recommendations for educational leaders, administrators, teachers, and future researchers.

Recommendations for Educational Leaders

Educational leaders include policy makers in the department of education such as the commissioner, superintendent, and directors. Educational leaders need to create and enforce policies that are nondiscriminatory and ensure that the hiring policies and procedures benefit all teachers. Educational leaders must create incentives to attract and compensate African American teachers and incorporate clear pathways for African American teachers' growth. Educational leaders must communicate clearly and effectively with all teachers and set up clear mentorship programs that help to develop African American teachers. One African American teacher stated, our voices are more important than they give us credit for, especially since we are at the forefront of their organizations and doing the hardest work of all. Educational leader should be kept abreast of all policies and procedure changes and be prepared to have pushback or be questioned by teachers who feel as if they have no voice or say-so in the decision making of the schools.

Another recommendation for educational leaders to build a more inclusive teaching work force is to have an African American caucus at the board level that will provide a diverse set of thinking and ideas that promotes diversity and inclusion. African American board members should be hired and retained to help provide an ethnically and culturally dynamic team that promotes safety and security. These members can help to create initiatives and academic achievement for a diverse population of students. Having a Black Caucus can also promote and

build public awareness for issues encompassing racial disparity and equity in the public-school systems.

Educational leaders must be active listeners and understand that the concerns of African American teachers and minority teachers are valid and must be respected just as those concerns of Caucasian teachers are valid and respected. African American teachers are equipped with the education and world view to be the necessary change in the school systems that promote inclusivity and academic growth of all students. Educational leaders need to understand that African American teachers have the greater ability to engage with diverse students, African American students are less likely to have discipline issues, and all students were exposed to multiple perspectives that help to improve critical-thinking skills, creativity, and problem-solving skills.

Recommendations for Administrators

Based on the findings of this study, school administrators must utilize their African American teachers for more than discipline issues and put African American teachers in more content led classes so that the students are being exposed to different learning styles and techniques. Policies that administrators can implement to retain African American teachers is intentional preparation and hiring with adequate support for African American teachers to have opportunities for growth. Another recommendation is that there can be a partnership created with HBCUs specifically, and other universities that exchange commitment for teaching to forgive student loans. Administrators can collaborate with board members to adjust the teacher licensure test and create realistic opportunities for African American teachers to display their competency.

According to Milner (2017), “Black teachers can have a meaningful impact on Black students’ academic and social success because they often deeply understand Black students’

situations and their needs” (p. 92). It is the duty of human resources to seek, recruit, and retain highly qualified African American teachers. Administrators need to be clear and provide support for African American teachers in the profession. Administrators should listen to feedback and support the decisions of the African American teachers as they stand; asking for support or help is usually the last resort. The voices of teachers are important across each level of learning. In addition to being an active listener to African American teacher voices, administrators must take in account the marginalized voices of members from the LGBTQ+ community as well. Like African Americans, the LGBTQ+ community offers a wide spectrum of knowledge and care for students whose voices do not represent the larger population, and it is imperative that students have representation across the board from all minority groups.

Administrators can celebrate differences will simultaneously cultivating the opportunities for professional growth for African American teachers. Williams (2018) found, “One of the biggest disparities in the nation’s education system is the disproportionate number of African American teachers compared to the number of African American students” (p. 336). One African American teacher said, “If I were given the chance, I know I could change the culture of the middle school, but they have their people, and we continue to struggle except for a few of us.” Administrators must intentionally seek individuals who are qualified and are representative of the student population.

Recommendations for Teachers

Based on the findings of this study, African American teachers should not be discouraged by what is perceived to be biased state licensure testing, discriminatory hiring practices, and being placed in roles that only support content or larger teachers. In building a community that reflects the entire population instead of a select few, law makers must create, develop, and

implement laws that directly promote hiring a culturally and racially diverse staff, as well as giving the educators more open options to choose where they teach (Milner, 2017). African American teachers must continue to be the beacon of light for African American students, because the marginalization of African American teaches in the profession has limited the experiences of African American students to have been taught by someone who looks like them and understands their culture. African American teachers must continue to advocate for developmental opportunities so they are represented across all platforms in education.

African American teachers must continue to communicate with their colleagues and administrators. When onboarding with a school district, it is important to communicate with your peers who you are, and your visions to help close the achievement gaps for African American students in comparison to Caucasian students. When communicating with your peers, it is imperative that boundaries be set, and school administrators are in the position of support roles and not the African American teacher. Cockburn (2000) explained, “Becoming aware of African American Culture and how it influences students in the classroom is the starting point for school systems” (p. 51), and that is the job of the administrator, not the teacher. African American teachers, continue to support African American students, and all students because embodying one group of students to do well, links the rest of the students to achieve high success. No matter the difficulties, African American teachers should embrace being the voice of the African American community, and encourage their friends, family, and colleagues to join the teaching workforce.

Recommendations for Future Research

The research method involved a qualitative method with a case study design. The interview responses and focus group discussion responses were used to create general themes

and emergent themes. Ohio is one of many states in the nation who is currently experiencing shortages of African American teachers. With no change in sight, further research should be done to examine the mind and psychology of African American teachers as it pertains to the catalyst and obstacles correlated with becoming and sustaining a career as a teacher. A quantitative approach could be applicable to the study's topic to research the relationship between African American teachers and their perspectives of the hiring process in states outside of Ohio. Researchers could use an experimental study to investigate the relationship between African American teachers and their perspectives of the hiring process in states outside of Ohio. Future researchers can explore Caucasian teachers' perceptions of the hiring practices, policies, and requirements to becoming a teacher in Ohio. The perceptions of Caucasian teachers might be interesting and may create a deeper understanding of the hiring practices.

This study examined the perspectives of African American teachers of what it takes to become a teacher in Ohio, what was discouraging, why they remained, and what needs to be done in order to try and mend the diversity disparity in education. Future researchers can consider the following recommendations.

1. Extend this study to include African American teachers in other states who resemble the same demographics to further examine the issues with recruitment and retention of African American teachers.
2. Extend the study to research human resource practices to determine how and what policies impact the recruitment and hiring of African American candidates.
3. Future researchers can explore the roles of school administrators and how they aid or prohibit the hiring of African American teachers.

The three research recommendations are important to future researchers as they may serve to clarify experiences, perspectives, and opinions of African American teachers.

Furthermore, the findings from the African American teachers might provide policymakers with a more precise understanding of why African Americans decide to become teachers, why hinders them from joining the profession, and how race and culture plays a part in this equation.

Conclusion

Each passing year, the student enrollment in Ohio is becoming more diverse. In the United States, the population of African American teachers that make up the workforce equates to 8%, and in central Ohio, that number is 4.6% (Fairclough, 2017). There are not nearly enough African American teachers to service the growing number of minorities in the educational workspace. The general problem was that as the student population was becoming more diverse, the diversity of teachers was not (Fairclough, 2017). Bryan and Williams (2017) found, “One of the biggest disparities in the nation’s education system is the disproportionate number of African American teachers compared to the number of African American students” (p. 336). The specific problem within this central Ohio school district is that the pool of African American teachers is much less than their counterparts which should be addressed in building the numbers of quality teachers in this public-school system. Stein (2019) explained that there was a hiring discrepancy in the recruiting and hiring process of African American teachers in Ohio.

The purpose of this study was to examine the perspective of African American teachers in Ohio to understand their perceived obstacles and catalyst to becoming and remaining a teacher in Ohio. African American teachers believed that biased unfair state licensure test is at the foundation of the disparity. Followed by lower salaries and unethical human resource hiring practices to be major obstacles for African American teachers to remain in the profession. In

addition to the above, African American teachers perceive the relationship between the teacher and student to be a catalyst of remaining in the profession because African American teachers signed on to be content teachers and allies, not disciplinarians and in student support roles.

A qualitative single descriptive case study design was adopted for this study. The perspectives, opinions, and experiences of African American teachers are important because it is quite clear that Ohio's teaching workforce is not diverse, in any capacity, particularly in the classrooms, in administration, and at the educational policy level. Overall, African American teachers' recommendations to diversify the educational workforce are important to recruiting, hiring, and maintaining African American teachers in the educational workspace. The teachers, principals, policymakers, and superintendents must share a mutual responsibility on the ways to increase the number of African American teachers in the Ohio public-school systems. Ohio needs to recognize the racial disparity between the teacher population and the student population. It is evident that Ohio is experiencing a shortage of African American teachers and the recruitment of African American teachers to be representative of the African American students depends on the educational leaders making policies that impact the African American and minority teachers wanting to be a part of this dynamic work.

The major findings of this study are offered as an instrument for understanding how biased practices and policies that are geared toward Caucasian teachers impact African American and other minority teachers, which then trickle down into the way that African American students and other minorities are treated in the educational workforce. Increasing the number of African American teachers in Ohio must have a multi-faceted approach, and the perspectives of African American teachers must not go unheard. Increasing the number of African American teachers in Ohio is only half of the battle. Educational leaders must shift away from Eurocentric

ideologies that ingrain a sense of superiority over African American teachers by way of social privilege. Paying attention to cultural diversity and racial inequalities in education can perpetuate a new system of change that offer a new way of thinking to underscore policy decisions that have been restrictive and exclusive for far too long.

The results of this qualitative case study can help educational leaders and policy makers understand why there is a marginalization of African American teachers in the public-school districts nationwide. The significance of this study is to provide additional insight into the field of educational disproportionality and what can be done to mend this gap. Educational leaders need to dedicate their time to revisiting the state licensure procedures and create alternative pathways that are obtainable by teachers who hold master's degrees. The perspectives of the African American teachers provided a comprehensive list of factors that can either lead to an increase or continue to add to the continuance of there not being an African American presence in the school systems. Therefore, the school board of directors and policy makers should always put the students in the school buildings first by understanding that representation matters, and it is important that legislation and policies are created to be inclusive of all demographic backgrounds in the teaching workforce.

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Appendix A: Previous Research Studies

Date	Author	Paper/Dissertation title	Research question	Research method/ Design	Research findings
1970	Abrahams, R.	Afro-American Language and Culture in the Classroom	How can teachers relate to students who are not from their cultural background?	Qualitative interviews	The discipline rate for students of color is overrepresented when African American teachers are not in the public-school systems.
1980	Hilliard, G.	The changing black teacher and diminishing opportunities for Black Teachers	How are the hiring practices limiting African American teachers in the public-school systems?	Qualitative	This research found that the limited number of African American teachers in the public-school systems face many barriers before teachers.
1980	James, R.L.	Black Teachers, Black Education: Issues Impacting the African American Hiring process in education	How do teachers perceive the hiring process when graduating from college?	Qualitative case study	This research found that having African American educators find hindrances in the hiring practices from out of college.
1992	Heller, R.	What affirmative action? Where are the minority educators?	How are the hiring practices of districts around the city impacting the hiring of African	Qualitative	This research found that the retention of African American teachers impacts the

			American Teachers?		growth of students.
1997	Graybill, S.	Questions of Race and Culture: How They Relate to the Classroom for African American Students	What factors motivate African American teachers to work in culturally specific schools?	Qualitative	Representation of culturally diverse schools impact the academic growth of African American students.
1998	Henry, A.	Taking Back Control: African American Teachers Identities in the Classroom	How important is it to have representation culturally relevant teachers in the classroom?	Qualitative	The underrepresentation of African American teachers impacts African American students.
1999	Ford, D.	Factors Affecting the Career Decision Making of Minority Teachers in Gifted education.	How does teacher involvement in the hiring process impact future African American teachers?	Qualitative	The warrants for this research are to explore the retention of African American educators.
2009	Davis, G.	The Relationship between racial identity, motivation, and the academic performance of African American Students	What is the role of teacher and relationships of students of color with teachers who reflect their same demographics?	Qualitative case study	The findings from this study indicated that: (a) a statistically significant relationship exists between racial identity and students' academic performance.
2011	Bireda, S. & Chait, R.	Increasing Teacher Diversity: Strategies to	What are the key ingredients for hiring and retaining a	Qualitative case study	Recruitment alone will not solve the minority teacher

		Improve the Teacher Workforce?	diverse set of teachers?		shortage, but highly effective strategies may increase the number of entering teachers to a rate that outpaces turnover.
2015	Davis, R.	Examination of Factors Which May Contribute to the Underrepresentation of African American Teachers	What are the hindrances that African American Teachers face when becoming educators?	Qualitative	While the dynamics of school becomes culturally diverse, the underrepresentation of African American teachers continue to be an underlying factor that deprives students of color from having role models who reflect their ethnicity.
2012	Walker, L. C.	African American Male Elementary Teachers Perceptions on Factors that Influence their Retention and Attrition: A Qualitative Study	What factors contribute to the attrition and retention of African American male elementary teachers?	Qualitative	Money and work-related issues were the overall dominant themes or factors why participants would leave.
2013	Banerjee, N.	Effects of Teacher Diversity and Student-Teacher Racial/Ethnic Matching in Elementary Schools on	How important is representation of different backgrounds in the public-	Qualitative case study	The findings show that Black students experience marginal improvements in both math

		Educational Outcomes	school systems?		and reading achievement growth by third grade when they are placed with non-Black teachers.
2013	Ferguson, D.	The Underrepresentation of African American Women Faculty	How does teachers' perspectives influence education in K-12?	Qualitative	The findings of this research found that Black teachers impact the quality of student learning.
2015	Richardson, S. D.	The Perceptions of Black Teacher Regarding Their Decision to Teach and Satisfaction with their Work Experiences in Predominately White K-12 Schools.	What are the perceptions of Black teachers regarding their satisfaction with their work experiences in predominantly White K-12 Schools?	Qualitative	The overall findings indicated that a large percent of Black teachers in predominantly White schools are not satisfied with their jobs.
2016	Farinde, A.	Retaining Black Teachers: An examination of Black Female Teachers	What are the perspectives of African American Teachers when becoming teachers?	Qualitative	While African American women have been participating in higher education for more than a century, they remain significantly underrepresented among college and university professors in America.

2016	Ursery, M. D.	Black Teachers' Perceptions of the Obstacles and Catalysts of Becoming and Remaining Teachers in Connecticut	What do Black teachers perceive to be the key catalyst to becoming and remaining teachers in Connecticut?	Qualitative	The results of this study found that Black teachers perceive salary, inadequate teacher support, unfair human resource recruiting and hiring practices, and poor perceptions of teaching to be the primary obstacles of becoming a teacher.
2017	Bryan & Williams	We Need More than Just Black Male Bodies in the Classroom: Recruiting and Retaining Culturally Relevant Teachers	What impacts do students of color have when they access teachers who reflects their same demographics	Quantitative	The lack of diversity of teachers and among males in K-12 to provide recommendations to the field of early childhood education, with specific attention to recruiting and retaining culturally relevant Black male teachers in early childhood education.
2017	Cagle, F.	The cost of color in public education—An Examination of Disproportionate Suspensions	What is the correlation between African American students being suspended in comparison to	Quantitative	The focus of this study is to investigate why Black students are suspended more than Caucasian students in a rural high

			Caucasian Students?		school in the center of North Carolina.
2017	D'Amico et al.	Where are all the black teachers? Discrimination in the Teacher Labor Market	How is the hiring and retention of African American teachers impacting the diversity of the teacher pool?	Quantitati ve	Researchers and policy makers have long noted the lack of racial diversity among the nation's public- school teachers and identified supply as the root cause.

Appendix B: Initial Recruitment Email

Hello,

My name is Feon Battiste. I am a doctoral student at Abilene Christian University's Organizational Leadership Program. I am respectfully requesting for your participation in a doctoral research that I am conducting entitled: The Underrepresentation of African American Teachers in a Public-school System: A Case Study. The intention of this study is to gain an understanding of African American teachers' perspectives on the hindrances that impact African American teachers becoming teachers in Ohio.

Participation is completely voluntary, and you may withdraw from this study if you so choose. The study is completely anonymous; therefore, I will not require you to impart any personal identifying information. Participating in this study requires you to have an individual interview and if chosen, a participant in a focus group discussion. If you are willing to participate in this study, there is an informed consent attached that would require your signature.

[Link to Informed Consent Form_Battiste_Research](#)

Your participation in this research were a great contribution to the understanding of the hindrances and obstacles that African American teachers face when trying to enter into the educational workforce.

Thank you for your time and participation.

Sincerely,

Feon Battiste, B.A, M.Ed, Doctoral Student, Abilene Christian University

Appendix C: Informed Consent Form

Confidentiality:

As a participant in this study, any information that you will provide including your perceptions and opinions were kept confidential at all times. Your name and specific school will not appear during the interview and focus group discussion process. Names, email addresses, and registration information for zoom links will not be collected. The data that were collected were collected very well could become part of a published product; however, any identifiers to you as the participant will not be included.

Right to Withdraw:

I have read and understand the above statements and what is being request of me in this study. I understand participating in this study is voluntary and I am free to withdraw for any reason, at any time by sending an email and requesting to be withdrawn. There is no penalty for not participating.

Contact Information:

If you have questions, please contact me:

Feon Battiste

If I am not able to answer your questions, you can contact my dissertation chair:

Dr. Libi Shen

Certification:

I have read and understand the above statements and what is being request of me for this study. I understand participating in this study is voluntary and I am free to withdraw for any reason, at any time without penalty by emailing Feon Battiste. I certify that I am willing to participate in this research study.

Signature of Teacher

Appendix D: Interview Categories, General Themes, and Participants' Codes

Interview Categories	Themes and Codes
Experiences of Becoming Teacher in Ohio	Undergraduate in education (P3, P5, P6, P9) Non-education background (P1, P2, P4, P7, P8, P10, P11, P12, P13, P14, P15) Further education in order to teach (P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P6, P7, P8, P9, P10, P11, P12, P13 P14, P15) Transfer from out of state (P1, P7, P9, P14) Charter school alternative teaching (P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P6, P7, P8, P9, P10, P11, P12, P13 P14, P15) Other (P11)
Victories, challenges, or obstacles in hiring process	Licensed for 5 years in Ohio (P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P6, P7, P8, P9, 10, P11, P12, P13, P14, P15) Challenge passing licensure test (P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P6, P7, P8, P9, 10, P11, P12, P13, P14, P15) Mentor program offered during certain time (P1, P3, P4, P5, P7, P8, P9, P11, P12, P13) Not placed in desired school system (P1, P2, P3, P7, P8, P11, P12, P13)
Catalyst of remaining a teacher in Ohio	Respect in profession (P1, P2, P3, P5, P7, P9, P10, P11, P12, P14, P15) Discouraged from leadership positions (P3, P7, P8, P9, 10, P11, P12, P15) Heavy workload (P1, P2, P3, P8, P9, P10, P11, P13, P14) Disciplinarian role (P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P6, P7, P8, P9, 10, P11, P12, P13, P14, P15) Inconsistent Expectations (P3, P4, P5, P6, P7, P8, P9, 10, P13, P14) Inconsistency with staff recognition (P1, P2, P3, P4, P6, P7, P8, P11) Other (P4, P5, P7, 913)
View of diversity in teaching	Singular race in the profession (P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P6, P7, P8, P9 P10, P11, P12, P13, P14, P15) Lack of men (P1, P2, P5, P6, P7, P8, P11, P12, P13, P14) LGBTQ not present (P11)
Policies to improve recruitment process	Specific partnerships with HBCU's (P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P6, P11, P13, P14, P15)

Salary (P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P6, P7, P8, P9, P10, P11, P12, P13, P14, P15)

Pipeline for African American educators (P1, P2, P4, P5, P6, P7, P8, P12, P13, P14)

Alternative license programs (P1, P2, P3, P6, P7, P8, P9, P10, P11, P12, P15)

Recommendations for retaining
African American teachers

Salary (P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P6, P7, P8, P9, P10, P11, P12, P13, P14, P15)

More training for teachers (P1, P2, P3, P4, P7, P12, P13, P15)

Student Loan forgiveness (P1, P2, P3, P5, P6, P8, P9, P10, P11, P12, P13)

Other (P15)

Appendix E: Focus Group Categories, General Themes, and Participant Codes

Focus Group Categories	Themes and Codes
Victories, challenges, or obstacles applying for a teaching job in Ohio	Teaching in charter without license (P1, P3, P4, P7) Passing license test (P1, P3, P4, P7, P12) Other (P3)
Perception of the hiring process in Ohio	Complex steps to hiring (P1, P3, P4, P7, P12) Inside connection for hiring (P3, P4, P12) RESA difficult to complete (P1, P3, P4, P12) Discriminatory biases for African Americans (P1, P3, P7, P12) Other (P4)
The reason why African American teachers are needed or not needed	Representation is important (P1, P3, P4, P7, P12) Positive Role Model (P1, P3, P12) Encourage African American students to work hard (P3, P4, P7) Other (P3)
Recommended policies for hiring African American teachers	Recruitment from HBCU's (P1, P3, P4, P12) Targeted recruitment (P1, P3, P4, P7, P12) Internships in schools (P1)
Suggestions for retaining African American Teachers	Leadership not disciplinarian (P1, P3, P4, P12) Salary (P1, P3, P4, P7, P12) Professional Development (P1, P3, P12) Student loan forgiveness (P1, P3, P12)

Appendix F: IRB Approval

ABILENE CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY

Educating Students for Christian Service and Leadership Throughout the World

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320 Hardin Administration Building, ACU Box 29103, Abilene, Texas 79699-9103
325-674-2885



May 26, 2021

Feon M. Battiste
Department of Graduate and Professional Studies
Abilene Christian University

Dear Feon,

On behalf of the Institutional Review Board, I am pleased to inform you that your project titled "African American Teachers Experiences of Becoming Teachers in Ohio: A Case Study",

was approved by expedited review (Category 6 & 7) on 5/26/2021 (IRB # 21-061). Upon completion of this study, please submit the Inactivation Request Form within 30 days of study completion.

If you wish to make any changes to this study, including but not limited to changes in study personnel, number of participants recruited, changes to the consent form or process, and/or changes in overall methodology, please complete the Study Amendment Request Form.

If any problems develop with the study, including any unanticipated events that may change the risk profile of your study or if there were any unapproved changes in your protocol, please inform the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs and the IRB promptly using the Unanticipated Events/Noncompliance Form.

I wish you well with your work.

Sincerely,

Megan Roth

Megan Roth, Ph.D.
Director of Research and Sponsored Programs