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Examining How Black Administrator Employment Decisions are Impacted by the Behaviors of
Supervisors

A dissertation
presented to
the faculty of the Department of Educational Leadership
East Tennessee State University

In partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree
Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership, School Leadership

by
Annie Wilson Whitaker
May 2022

Dr. Bill Flora, Chair
Dr. Chassidy Cooper
Dr. Pamela Scott

Keywords: retention, Black educators, supervisor behaviors

ABSTRACT

Examining how Black Administrators Employment Decisions are Impacted by the Behaviors of Supervisors

by

Annie Wilson Whitaker

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to understand how Black public school administrator employment decisions are impacted by the behaviors of supervisors in Virginia. Commonalities among the lived experiences of Black public school administrators were examined in order to identify specific behaviors which impact employment decisions.

Transcendental phenomenological qualitative research design was utilized. Participants were identified through gatekeeper introductions and then narrowed through snow-ball sampling. Data was collected through open-ended face-to-face interviews with 12 Black public school administrators in Virginia via a secure online platform. The data was analyzed in order to identify emergent themes which represent the lived experiences of Black public school administrators in Virginia and how the behaviors of their supervisors impacted their employment decisions. The findings could be utilized to develop supervisory practices that will increase the hiring and retention of Black educators in Virginia.

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to the twelve research participants who volunteered to be vulnerable and open in their discussions with me. I am so appreciative of the trust each person gave me and can only hope that this work is a reflection of their shared experiences which will be used to improve practices and enhance working and learning conditions for all.

I also dedicate this work to the gatekeepers without whom the research would never have moved past Chapter Two. Each of you vouched for me and reached out to colleagues and friends to encourage them to participate in the study. I am thankful for your contribution to this work but even more honored to be trusted by you.

I would be remiss to not dedicate this work to my husband, Lincoln, and children Shelley and Anastatia. Your love, patience and support are unmatched. I appreciate all of the snacks, meals, love, and words of encouragement from each of you. I know how unselfish you have been and thank you with all I have.

Lastly, I dedicate this work to my Mammaw, Shelley Randolph, and Mother, Nancy Randolph Wilson who instilled in me work ethic, self-efficacy, motivation, and stick-to-it-tiveness.

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Chapter 1. Introduction

Although students are ensured access to an equitable education in America, the predictability of outcomes for students who are Black is evidence that inequities still exist which negatively impact Black students in a disproportionate way. Kalogrides et al. (2019) summarized the dilemma, “Racial and ethnic disparities in children’s academic performance are a stubborn feature of the U.S. educational landscape, an indicator of continued racial inequality of educational opportunity” (pp. 1164-1165). Shores et al. (2020) scrutinized the inequalities between Black and White students in public school through an examination of data regarding discipline, grade-level retention, identification for gifted services, special education classification and taking advanced placement course and found that Black students were consistently underrepresented in areas that were reflective of advantage in schools across the country. The U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights (2014) data collection highlighted the disproportionality of suspension rates for all students of color with Black students being suspended or expelled at three times the rate as that of White students. Branstetter et al. (2018) conducted a comprehensive analysis of changes over time in the outcomes for different racial/ethnic groups in the United States and reported a 25 to 32 point gap in the achievement of White and Black students in reading and mathematics in 2017. These significant disparities in student discipline and achievement are factors that contribute to the achievement gap. It is essential to understand factors which directly or indirectly affect the predictability of outcomes for Black students so that the trajectory for these students can be disrupted through intentional systems change.

Barmer et al. (2020) reported that across the nation approximately 80% of every school division budget is allocated to salaries and benefits for personnel. This means the most valuable resource divisions have to support student needs are people. As such the teachers, aides, bus drivers, cafeteria workers, coaches, and administrators who help to create the school experience for our Black students have the most significant ability to disrupt the predictability of outcomes for Black students.

However, in recent years a decline in the number of Black teachers entering the profession as well as those staying in the profession has been noted; Ingersoll et al. (2019) reported an increase in the minority turnover rate from 2004 to 2013 from 18% to 25% with total turnover rates being higher for minority teachers than non-minority teachers. Job dissatisfaction due to: a) school administration, (b) how assessments and accountability affect teaching, (c) student discipline problems, (d) lack of input into decisions and (e) lack of classroom autonomy over their teaching were noted as the top self-reported reason minority educators choose to leave the profession (Ingersoll et al. (2019).

Research conducted by Carver-Thomas (2018) for The Learning Policy Institute identified improved school leadership as one of the four practices to support the recruitment and retention of teachers of color. The report summarizes the thinking behind the development of the research question for this study,

Recent evidence shows that administrative support is especially critical in improving the retention of teachers of color. School administrators are responsible for making hiring

decisions, being instructional leaders, setting norms for students and staff, nurturing a positive and encouraging culture, keeping schoolwide systems running smoothly, and more. State and district policies can help school leaders develop the skills to do these things well and create school environments in which teachers want to stay. (Carver-Thomas, 2018, p. 8)

Focus on the behaviors of the leaders who build up and support Black students and staff through evidenced based strategies which result in positive outcomes is needed. However, this is an area which has been overlooked. A shift from teaching content to teaching people is needed, and this begins with the top leadership. For any meaningful change to occur those in positions of leadership need to understand what they are facing to respond correctly. Therefore, it was both logical and meaningful to examine the phenomena of how the behaviors of supervisors impact those they lead in order to learn how to better support Black administrators.

Statement of the Problem

There is a shortage of Black educators in public schools; longitudinal data analyzed by Bartanen and Grissom (2019) confirmed that Black principals had a significant impact on the probability that a Black teacher would be hired, retained in the profession, and would positively impact the achievement of Black students regardless of the race of the teacher. Understanding the impact of the behaviors of supervisors on the retention of Black educators is necessary in order to ensure Black students have access to educators proven to have a positive impact on their educational outcomes. While research exists which examines positively impactful behaviors of supervisors on public school administrators, a focus on Black public school administrators is

necessary in order to better understand supervisor behaviors which most impact the employment decisions of those they supervise. In addition, unsupportive organizational environments have been examined through a focus on Black professionals across various employment fields, however an in depth examination of the impact of the behaviors of supervisors on public school administrators through a lens of racially supportive environments has not been examined.

Proximal to this study was the effort to give context to the shortage of Black educators in Virginia. To address this problem, the purpose of this study was to examine how the employment decisions of Black public school administrators in Virginia are impacted by the behaviors of their supervisors. To gather data, interviews with 12 Black administrators were conducted, transcribed, and analyzed. Emergent themes were identified and examined to enhance understanding of how the employment decisions of Black public school administrators are impacted by the behaviors of supervisors. Findings may be utilized to develop supervisory practices that will increase the hiring and retention of Black educators in Virginia.

Significance of the Study

It is necessary to understand the lived experiences of Black public school administrators in Virginia in order to identify supervisor behaviors which have the greatest impact on employment decisions. The Virginia Department of Education, Road Map to Equity (2020), “establishes our education equity priorities, advances tools and resources to support local school divisions, and affirms our commitment to dismantle any and all forms of inequity in Virginia’s public education system” (p. 7) and prioritized strategies into two categories: (a) increasing the cultural proficiency of Virginia’s educator workforce, and (b) closing opportunity gaps for

Virginia students. As such, many leaders in public school divisions across Virginia are focused on strategies to increase the recruitment and retention of Black administrators. Carver-Thomas (2018) noted one of the promising practices to increase the retention rates of teachers of color was to improve school leadership and thus impact school teaching conditions, noting that ineffective school leadership can be correlated with teachers being twice as likely to leave their classrooms. As leadership is comprised of many behaviors exhibited by the supervisor it is important to narrow the focus of administrative support to examine specifically how the behaviors of supervisors impact the employment decisions of Black administrators.

Levin and Bradly (2019) examined the integral role principals play in ensuring students are successful and identified a need for greater understanding of the many facets which negatively impact turnover while also studying strategies which positively impact turnover rates. Through exploring the shared experiences of Black administrators and their responses to supervisor behaviors as evidenced through decision making regarding employment a better understanding of the phenomenon will be gained.

The significance of this study is that it will provide findings that will enhance the paucity of research in the area of understanding the decision making process for Black public school administrators. The study of phenomena allows researchers to learn about and make sense of the human experience. Examining the impact the behaviors of supervisors have on Black administrators' employment decisions may provide a piece of information which could aid in understanding how to disrupt the status-quo through the implementation of research based strategies.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to understand how Black public school administrator employment decisions are impacted by the behaviors of supervisors in Virginia. Commonalities among the experiences of Black public school administrators were examined in order to identify behaviors which impact the employment decisions of Black administrators. The identified behaviors could later be used to develop leadership practices which will positively impact the retention of Black administrators in school divisions and ultimately positively impact the predictability of outcomes for Black students by providing learning environments in which Black students see themselves reflected.

Conceptual Framework

There is a paucity of research focused on understanding how Black public school administrator employment decisions are impacted by the behaviors of supervisors in Virginia. As such a conceptual framework was utilized to structure the study. Examining constructs surrounding minority teacher shortages, leadership preparation and development, and school climate and race comprised the central tenants of the conceptual framework.

Research Questions

The research questions in the study were aligned with the purpose of understanding how Black public school administrator employment decisions are impacted by the behaviors of supervisors.

Research Question 1

What are black administrator perspectives of supervisor behaviors?

Research Question 2

Why do certain behaviors of supervisors influence Black administrators decisions regarding employment?

Research Question 3

Which behaviors of supervisors most influence Black administrators' employment decisions?

Definition of Terms

Explicit definition of terms are provided for clarity and to ensure understanding of the term in relation to the study.

Administrative Support-“Administrative support refers to the extent to which principals and other school leaders make teacher’s work easier and help them improve their teaching.” (Boyd et al., 2011, p 307).

Behavior- any observable activity in a human.

Black public school administrator-(Black administrator) any self-identified Black educator who serves in an administrative position in a public school division in the Commonwealth of Virginia

Education Equity- Eliminating the predictability of student outcomes based on race, gender, zip code, ability, socioeconomic status or languages spoken at home. (Virginia Department of Education, 2020, p.10 Adapted from the National Equity Project. Educational Equity Definition).

Formal mentoring- any mentoring relationship established through either appointment or supervision.

Informal mentoring- any mentoring relationship which is not established through appointment or supervision

Marginalized populations- a group of individuals who are treated as insignificant due to their membership in a group in which membership is based solely on factors over which the individual has no power.

Participant- Black public school administrators from Virginia districts and schools of different sizes with varying populations of Black students who indicated that the behaviors of their supervisor(s) were a component of their decision making regarding employment who were interviewed for this research.

Social capital- “Social capital is the property of relationships; if either actor withdraws, the relationship and the social capital dissolve” (Brass & Krackhardt, 1999, p. 180).

Supervisor- any individual who has or had the authority to direct the actions of the Black public school administrator.

Limitations and Delimitations

12 participants were interviewed for this phenomenological study. While this sample size does provided a significant enough representation of the population to examine the problem, the limited number of Black public school administrators interviewed limits our understanding of the lived experiences of the population as a whole.

The study did not aim to address how students or teachers are impacted by the behaviors of supervisors but instead places laser focus on only the behaviors of supervisors which impact the employment decisions of Black public school administrators in Virginia. Other factors

contributing to a Black administrator's decisions regarding employment were not analyzed, and the study was no intended to be able to provide a comprehensive understanding of why Black administrators in Virginia make employment decisions.

Overview of the Study

This phenomenological study contains five chapters which are organized succinctly to provide an overview of the problem, review of current research and relevant literature, detail the research methodology, provide analysis of the data collected, and give implications for future study. Chapter one is designed to introduce the reader to the formal reason the researcher is engaging in the study, to explain the dominant problem and population affected, provide rationale for the study, and to provide the purpose of the study. In this chapter the reader becomes aware of the framework the researcher will utilize when analyzing the data and the central and supporting research questions which will guide the researcher to an understanding of the phenomena. Chapter two is intended to provide a synthesis of research which is relevant to the study while identifying gaps in the research which support the significance of the study and details the conceptual framework through which the data will be analyzed. The purpose of Chapter three is to provide an overview of the research methodology by detailing the qualitative design, defining the role of the researcher, intentionally focusing on ethics, and providing the setting, the sampling method through which the research participants will be selected, detailing data collection processes and procedures for data analysis while defining how measures of rigor will be addressed. Analysis of data is the focus of chapter four. In this section participant profiles are provided and an analysis of participant interviews and researcher's notes were conducted.

The chapter concludes with an overview of the results of the study. Chapter five details the researcher's conclusions and recommendations for practice and further investigation.

Chapter 2. Review of Literature

Introduction

This research is intended to aid in developing an understanding of how Black administrator employment decisions are impacted by the behaviors of their supervisors so that leadership practices which could positively impact the recruitment and retention of Black administrators in Virginia can be identified. There is a gap in research which provides a specific focus on how Black administrators' employment decisions are impacted by the behaviors of their supervisor, as such within the conceptual framework of this study I focused on enhancing the understanding of the retention of minority administrators which centers on an examination of the problem and variables which could impact the problem.

The literature review is focused on essential research which structures the conceptual framework by examining constructs of minority teacher shortages and retention, leadership preparation and professional development, and school climate related to race and then narrows to an examination of supervisor behaviors categorized by whether the behavior is reflective of administrative support or not and then grouped into corresponding themes of supervisor behaviors.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework provides the structure through which the relational concepts are brought together in order to address the problem of the shortage of Black educators in public schools in Virginia. Key to the framework is an examination of the current understanding of the problem as well as efforts to address the problem are examined. Across the nation students of

color make up 50% of the student population while teachers of color make up only 20% of the teaching body (Carver-Thomas, 2018). The Task Force on Diversifying Virginia's Educator Pipeline (2017) statistics show that Virginia mirrors these rate with non-White students comprising of 49% of the student body but only 21% of the teaching body. In addition, there has been a significant decline in the percentage of the teaching force Black teachers represent with a decrease from 8% in 1987 to 6.7% in 2015 (Carver-Thomas, 2018). While recruiting minority educators into the field is important the work is fruitless if Black educators do not remain in the field.

Among other variables, the lack of access to quality educators has a significant impact on student achievement (Virginia Department of Education, 2020). The Civil Rights *Data Snapshot: Teacher Equity* (2014) provides a snapshot of racial disparity in the equitable access to teachers and found that Black students are four times more likely to attend schools where 80% or less teachers are licensed. In addition to having less access to highly qualified teachers, Black students are less likely to have access to teachers who look like them. Carver-Thomas (2018) found that students benefit for several years after having even one Black teacher in elementary school. Research on the role that same teacher-student race plays in student outcomes has provided insight into the impact of these relationships on student outcomes.

Boyd et al. (2011) conducted large-scale data analysis to examine research relevant to teacher retention and further extended the research by examining data on first year teachers' reports of working conditions from all New York City Public Schools and identified leadership as playing a significant role in the decisions teachers made regarding their careers. Emerson and

Murphy (2014) also detailed the integral role supervisors play in the retention of Black educators specifically and noted the role the minority educator evaluation of beliefs and choices of supervisors had when they were making decisions regarding joining or leaving an organization.

These findings were echoed in the work of Ingersoll et al. (2019) who reported on the minority teacher shortage by focusing on recruitment, employment, and retention and identified a need to examine organizational roles governed by leadership,

Underlying most of the commentary and policy on this issue has been the assumption, largely untested, that minority teacher staffing problems are rooted in the front end of the teacher supply pipeline. ... In contrast, little attention has been paid to where minority teachers tend to be employed, what happens to minority teachers once they are employed, or to the role of the employing organizations in teacher staffing problems. (p. 5)

Examining how leaders are prepared for their roles and the ongoing professional development they receive is essential to addressing the shortage of Black educators as teachers with subpar leaders are twice as likely to want to exit the classroom (Carver-Thomas, 2018, p. 37). Levin and Bradley (2019) detail the importance of professional learning in their work addressing principal turnover both in terms of being a reason principals leave (p 3) and a strategy for retaining principals (p.5). Gooden and Dentley (2012) reinforced the importance of the role when describing the rationale behind their work to ensure leadership preparation programs keep race at the center of their frameworks as they viewed challenging discriminatory practices as an essential tenet of education.

Examining school climate as a component of the conceptual framework is integral to understanding and addressing the problem. Grooms et al. (2021) studied the retention of educators of color through the context of racialized school climate in order to have a better understanding of factors which encourage or discourage teachers of color from staying in schools and found that there was a correlation between teaching satisfaction and perception of support noting that teachers who reported positive perceptions of the level of support provided also had positive views of the mission and beliefs of the division as related to race (193).

Gershenson et al. (2016) examined 16,810 student-teacher pairs to analyze teacher expectations for students by race and determined that teachers have lower expectations for Black students across the board with non-Black teachers having significantly lower expectations for their Black students than Black teachers do. The Virginia Department of Education (2020) has developed an equity audit tool which provides a framework through which school divisions can analyze students access to equitable learning opportunities based upon the overarching notion that, “Education Equity is achieved when we eliminate the predictability of outcomes based on race, gender, zip code, ability, socio-economic status or languages spoken at home” (p. 2). Browne (2012) synthesized the impact others can have, “Our ideas about self are largely a reflection of others’ ideas about us, good and bad, or in between. Schools have an enormous influence on how we come to see ourselves, the hopes and dreams we acquire, and our achievement motivation” (p. 12). Shores et al. (2020) clearly delineate the role personnel must play in disrupting the predictability of outcomes for Black students, “Racial disparities in outcomes like disciplinary policy, classification, and access to advanced courses are strictly the

result of decisions made by school personnel, and because schools create these categories, they can also eliminate them” (p. 2122). Khalifa et al. (2016) conducted a synthesis of literature regarding culturally responsive schools and noted that effective leaders understand the need to have culturally responsive staff members who are able to meet the needs of low income children of color and highlight the importance of developing administrators who are effective at recruiting and retaining these teachers.

Supportive Administrative Behaviors

“Administrative support refers to the extent to which principals and other school leaders make teacher’s work easier and help them improve their teaching” (Boyd et al., 2011, p. 307). This same support is extended from division leadership to those they supervise; as such the role central office administrators take on when supporting principals should be deliberate and focus on building strong working relationships (Levin & Bradley, 2019).

Administrative support is exhibited through a variety of behaviors which will be identified through analysis of the participants' lived experiences. It is anticipated that participants will report that intentional focus on providing supportive environments through the establishment of peer networking groups which strengthen social capital, development of strong mentoring relationships, targeted professional development with like-minded individuals, and regular opportunities to showcase one’s talents play a significant role in their employment decisions.

Providing Clear Expectations and Meaningful Feedback

Establishing an environment where employees can be successful because they understand what is expected and are provided ongoing feedback towards goal progress is essential to ensuring employees remain engaged. Branham (2011) analyzed 20,700 post-exit surveys to determine why people leave their positions and identified four fundamental human needs that impacted whether an employee began thinking about leaving their employer:

1. The need for trust;
2. The need to have hope;
3. The need to feel worthy and respected; and
4. The need to feel competent as you gain mastery. (p.24).

A common theme amongst each of these needs is the importance of the role of the supervisor. In order to have these needs met the employee needs to 1) be able to trust that their employer and supervisors are treating the employee fairly by doing what they promise, and devoting resources, and the necessity to ensure that leaders know how to coach and support employees through goal setting and meaningful feedback; 2) have hope that they have the ability to grow and acquire new skills which will provide opportunities for advancement; 3) feel worthy and respected knowing that they are contributing to the organization and are recognized for their contributions; and 4) feel competent using their skills in challenging situations and that they will be able to gain mastery by receiving feedback which helps them excel at current tasks while being prepared for future opportunities. (p. 24). Integral to each of the four needs is the ability of the supervisor to engage in honest communications in which they provide meaningful feedback

regarding employee performance, goal setting, reflection, and progress towards achievement as when these needs were not met employees reported feeling a lack of respect and support, felt bored or under challenged, and resulted in the employee leaving the organization (Branham, 2012, p.25).

Marzano and Carbaugh (2018) provided an overview of the updated Marzano Focused School Leader Evaluation Model detailing the need to continually revise school leader evaluation models. The new model moves the growth and development of school staff from within another domain to its own domain, Continuous Development of Teachers and Staff. Including balanced growth and evaluation into evaluation models is integral to ensuring effective leadership evaluation tools are implemented, “the model must identify essential behaviors required, define clear measurement and standards and perhaps most critically, the model must be built to support feedback and growth objectives.” (p. 16).

To promote feedback conversations between teachers and learners that result in individual growth and development Ramani et al. (2019) developed a guide which included specific strategies for implementation; while the recommendations focused on teacher student relationships within the medical community specifically, the strategies are intended for anyone who wishes to utilize meaningful feedback to enhance individual performance and growth. The recommendations focus on the importance of balance between the roles of institutions, teachers (supervisor) and learners (administrators), “a psychologically safe space is essential for meaningful feedback conversations, where educational alliances are developed, self-esteem and autonomy are addressed, and co-creation of learning experiences occur.” (p. 1347).

In a report commissioned by the Wallace Foundation Anderson and Turnbull (2016) detailed findings from the Principal Pipeline Initiative in which six school divisions across the county received grants to implement one of four key components into principal evaluation processes in order to improve school leaders' ability to enhance teaching and learning in their buildings. The component, evaluation and support for systems aligned with district-adopted standards for leaders, was tailored to the needs of the division and implemented through feedback processes focused on ongoing support. While divisions worked to provide professional development aligned with individual principal needs, principals in the study reported that training provided through coaching and modeling approaches resulted in participants having a better understanding of principal leadership as a whole and had a greater impact on their individual growth.

Hvidston et al. (2015) addressed principal evaluation effectiveness by analyzing feedback from 82 principals and found that, “Principals were very clear regarding the importance of feedback in an ideal evaluation. They requested specific feedback to improve instructional leadership and target areas for improvement. (Hvidston et al., 2015, p.28). Mone and London, 2018, provide tools for managers to implement in order to guide the growth of their employees and focus on the importance of creating trusting relationships that allow for the establishment of meaningful goals which are supported by ongoing feedback and coaching.

Creating Opportunities for Peer Networking

“Social capital is the property of relationships; if either actor withdraws, the relationship and the social capital dissolve” (Brass & Krackhardt, 1999, p. 180). Relationships developed

through school based social networks are essential to positive school working conditions and impact decisions about employment (Bristol & Shirrell, 2019). Johnson et al. (2011) described the role of social capital as, “the resources that teachers can access through peer collaboration to support their on-going learning” (p.1).

While many school divisions work intentionally to hire minority candidates a focus on building strong support networks is essential. San Martin (2020) interviewed 14 minority, female, tenured, public school administrators to learn about their experiences and found that developing minority recruitment practices and not supporting them was damaging to minorities and nonminorities alike. Participants found particular value in strong peer relationships with other minority administrators which often provided opportunities for future mentoring (San Martin, 2020).

In research conducted by Amos (2020) among Latina bilingual educators the development of opportunities to engage in strong peer networks are highlighted as integral to supporting the needs of teachers of color. Bristol (2018) studied the experiences of Black male teachers who were either identified as loners in the school or groupers based upon whether or not there were other Black male teachers in the school. "Groupers suggested they would remain in their schools when compared with Loners. Specifically, Loners noted that challenges with colleagues influenced their decisions to leave."(p. 344). It was relationships, those with colleagues and administrators, which were the most often noted reasons for wanting to leave the profession (Bristol, 2018). Bristol concluded that decisions to stay or leave were dependent in part on whether the teacher was one of many or the only Black male teacher as feelings

regarding relationships with other employees in the building and isolation related to race and/or gender impacted decisions to continue working for a division (Bristol, 2018).

Pizarro and Kohli (2018) presented data regarding Black teachers and the impact of racial battle fatigue, a term coined by William Smith (2008) which, “addresses the physiological, psychological, and behavioral strain exacted on racially marginalized and stigmatized groups and the amount of energy they expend coping with and fighting against racism.” (p.617) Being engaged members of a community consisting of like-minded individuals was identified as a key component of being successful.

To combat the isolation and alienation they felt, the teachers in this study all found that having friends and colleagues committed to racial justice with whom they could connect, plan, and organize, was foundational to persisting and succeeding in the hostile racial climates of K-12 schools. (Pizarro & Kohli, 2018, p. 985)

In addition to building strong collaborative networks Bristol and Shirrell (2019) found that educators benefit from professional learning opportunities which are planned intentionally with social dynamics in mind and recommend that leaders intentionally focus on the needs of different ethnic or racial groups who are participating in professional development together. In addition, they recommend examination of policies geared intentionally at reducing isolation and improving retention such as intentionally grouping teachers of color in one school.

Providing Appropriate Mentoring

Allbright et al. (2019) examined outlier districts in California who were effectively implementing recruiting and retention strategies aligned with the goal of closing the opportunity gap and found that these strategies resulted in teachers being 50% less likely to leave for a neighboring division; one strategy important for the retention of Black teachers was access to Black mentors. Bartanen and Grissom (2019) found that Black principals had a significant impact on the probability that a Black teacher is hired and increased the likelihood that the teacher would not leave. Their research, conducted through an analysis of longitudinal administrative data from Missouri and Tennessee, also provided a conclusion that Black administrators had a positive impact on Black students' achievement in math even when not assigned to a Black teacher.

Cook and Glass (2015) analyzed corporate practices to identify how minority leaders impact policies focused on equity and identified minorities receiving less mentoring as one of the barriers which limit the ability of minorities to move into leadership roles. This access is essential to school level administrators as well as prepared principals who have participated in internship opportunities and have a mentor stay longer in high needs schools and report less stress (Levin & Bradley, 2019). Davis and Darling-Hammond (2012) examined five innovative principal preparation programs and reported that candidates who graduated from programs where districts and universities provide ongoing opportunities for group mentoring were more likely to be successful.

San Martin (2020) examined the effectiveness of division level diversity management practices on the recruitment and retention of minority female administrators and reported,

Mentors can provide significant encouragement, identify emerging problems, suggest ways to alleviate stress, help to identify and nurture suitable career interests, provide emotional support, and enable candidates to continue challenging courses of study and make tough decisions about their futures. (p. 249).

However, women of color felt that they were receiving less assistance with advancement through mentoring relationships and noted that those in higher leadership positions were not regarded as individuals who were serving in coaching capacities (San Martin, 2020). Curtis (2017) also identified that mentoring programs developed from a patriarchal viewpoint did not address the unique needs of Black women in leadership roles.

While access to mentors who are also minorities committed to social justice is ideal it is not always achievable; therefore, when assigning white mentors to minority leaders the individual chosen for the mentoring role should have some of the same characteristics and/or experiences of the mentee (San Martin, 2020).

Providing Opportunities to Grow and Showcase Talent

Inadequate preparation and professional development was identified as one of the top five reasons Principals reported for leaving their jobs in Levin and Bradley's 2019 Learning Policy Institute report on principal turnover, and as such "providing high-quality professional learning opportunities, both initial preparation and in-service, to give principals the necessary skills and competencies for school leadership," (p. 5) was listed as one of the top strategies to retain

principals; "such learning opportunities build the capacity of principals to lead across their full range of responsibilities, fostering school environments where adults and students thrive" (p. 9).

Lewis and Scott (2020) analyzed data from the National Center for Education Statistics 2017-2018 survey conducted with Principals from across the national and reported on their findings as related to professional development opportunities respondents had participated in and found that attendance at conferences or workshops and participation in networks developed by external agencies or through internet access were the types of professional development most often attended by Principals with growth opportunities developed by their employer being attended less often. While 92% percent of those individuals responding reported participating in professional development intended to enhance their instructional leadership, only 49% engaged in learning opportunities which were focused on enhancing their skills in the area of human resources management (Lewis & Scott, 2020).

When creating professional development opportunities intended to build the capacity of administrative leaders one of the first steps is to be aware of the needs of the participants; an "awareness of social networks and their importance in gathering information, creating change, acquiring resources, coordinating activities or missions, and providing help in personal career advancement" should remain at the center of the planners' process (Brass & Krackhardt, 1999, p.189). Johnson et al. (2011) identified the intentional acknowledgement of both individual needs as well as the role of social relationships while in the process of creating professional development for educators in order to ensure that collaboration occurs and expertise is shared.

The impact of meaningful professional development which is intended to build the capacity of the individual is even more relevant and essential when working to retain educators who are Black because these professionals must learn both the same strategies their non-marginalized coworkers do, but they must also learn to navigate the political and cultural environments which can permeate organizations (Pizarro & Kohli, 2018). San Martin's (2020) study to identify specific strategies which positively impact the retention of minority women in administration showed that often district HR and leadership departments neglect to ensure they develop programs to address the needs of minoritized employees. Burciaga and Kohli (2018) reported on the cultural wealth of teachers of color stating, "It is not enough to just recruit teachers of color; the field of education must look more closely at the pedagogies of justice-oriented teachers of color, cultivating and building upon the rich and complex strengths they carry into classrooms" (p.11).

Leaders are responsible for ensuring Principals are equipped to navigate concerns that could arise related to race or ethnicity (Bristol & Shirrell, 2019). The development of these skills is essential so that leaders in schools and at the district level can work proactively to combat dynamics which are in play outside of the organization from becoming replicated within the smaller school environment (Bristol & Shirrell, 2019). Pizarro and Kohli (2018) focused on the importance of creating professional development opportunities for educators of color which intentionally address racial battle fatigue and remind them of their importance to the community. By providing minority educators with explicit strategies for confronting racism they are better prepared and able to respond to racism when it is experienced (Pizarro & Kohli, 2018).

Baker and Demerouti (2014) detail that workers are more likely to be engaged when they have both the opportunity to be engaged in challenging work and have the resources to accomplish the tasks at hand. Bryan and Ford (2014) examined the recruitment and retention of Black male gifted education teachers and identified the need for school administrators to ensure that opportunities are available to explore roles other than those related to discipline and coaching where they can highlight skills that focus on their leadership and instructional capacity. These findings were also consistent with those of Pizarro and Kohli (2018) who found that when the experiences and strengths of teachers of Color are not recognized but instead are suppressed and the many assets these educators bring to schools are overlooked it can result in emotional and psychological impacts.

Griffin and Tackie (2016) wrote on the perspective of Black teachers,

Too often, though, black teachers said they also feel hindered professionally. Some spoke of finding themselves restricted to teaching black students only; some told us that no matter how much extra time and effort they put into their classroom instruction, their voices were stifled in staff meetings; some said that no matter how well they related to students, they were asked to “tone down” their personalities and behave in a more “professional” manner; many reported that they have been pigeonholed by colleagues, parents, and administrators, pressured to take on the same few teaching assignments and leadership roles over and over again. In short, many participants said they felt undervalued and unappreciated, given few opportunities to build their pedagogical and subject-matter expertise and advance as professionals" (pp. 39-40).

One way Black administrators are able to showcase their talents is through autonomy over the daily decision making necessary to lead a school such as hiring, evaluating staff, and making determinations regarding student discipline; having the prerogative to make determinations about these type of subjects increases principal feelings and fulfillment and reduces the likelihood that they will leave their position (Levin & Bradley, 2019). It is important to intentionally support by building their skills and ability to complete the intricate daily operations of a school as Principals seen as being more effective are less likely to leave for non-promotion related reasons. (Levin & Bradley, 2019).

Lack of Support for Black Administrators

Emerson and Murphy (2014) examined identity threat at work by exploring situational cues which affect racial and ethnic disparities in the workplace and provided recommendations for leaders; it is recommended that those in roles of leadership to include governing boards, superintendents, and human resources be aware of how minority employees are often asked to fit into a system that was not developed with their experiences in mind and should work to identify interactions of supervisors which affect minority personnel specifically. Khalifa et al. (2016) conducted a literature review of culturally responsive leadership and wrote about the responsibility of leaders to,

use their understanding to envision and create a new environment of learning for children in their building who have been marginalized because of race and class. They must be keenly aware of the inequitable factors that adversely affect their students' potential.

Likewise, they must be willing to interrogate personal assumptions about race and culture and their impact on the school organization. (p.1281)

San Martin's (2020) phenomenological study of the lived experiences of 14 minority administrators showed that these individuals felt that their division leadership and human resources staff were not aware of the leadership potential of this group of employees and failed to recognize how their experiences and identity had positive impacts on the division while also overlooking their responsibility to not only hire minority employees but to intentionally create and promote programs aimed at meeting the needs of minority employees. The majority of the participants indicated that they did not believe that division level administrators at the director and/or Superintendent level valued them as individuals or the contributions they brought to the district (San Martin, 2020).

Kohli (2018) examined the impact of hostile racial climates on teacher of color in urban schools and found that teacher of color felt the responsibility to engage in extra work while simultaneously feeling that they are not recognized for it or identified as having the potential to be leaders with some participants reporting that they had been explicitly discouraged from pursuing higher degrees in school leadership.

Unsupportive Organizational Contexts

Achinstein et al. (2010) described unsupportive organizational contexts as including, "a lack of multicultural capital as reflected in low expectations or negative attitudes about students of color, lack of support for culturally relevant or socially just teaching, and limited dialogue about race and equity in the school" (p. 89).

The Virginia Department of Education's (2020) Roadmap to Equity provides an overview of factors which could be used to determine whether the same expectations and attitudes are held regarding Black students. The report highlighted disproportionality in Virginia's schools in 2018 and reported that while Black students made up 22% of the total student population they represent 52% of all students suspended with only five of 132 school divisions showing no disproportionality (Virginia Department of Education, 2020). In addition 12.3% of teachers were Black with 81.8 % of teachers being White; the importance and impact of Black teachers for a supportive organizational context was noted as well with Black students being 13 percent more likely to enroll in college if they have had one Black teacher by third grade (Virginia Department of Education, 2020). School wide impacts were identified as well as schools report a .03% decrease in suspension rates for Black students when the number of Black teachers increases 1% (Virginia Department of Education, 2020). Black students in the 2018-2019 cohort were enrolled in less Advanced Placement or Dual Enrollment courses and were awarded less advanced diplomas than White, Asian, or Hispanic students (Virginia Department of Education, 2020). In addition while representing 22% of the total population only 12% of students referred for and identified for gifted services are Black with 16% of students enrolled in the state's Governor's Schools being Black students (Virginia Department of Education, 2020).

When identifying unsupportive organizational contexts it is important to examine support of culturally relevant teaching. Amos (2020) explored the perceptions of Latina bilingual educators and their relationships with White colleagues who make up a majority of the teaching force and found that teachers of color felt they did not receive support in creating schools which

were multicultural and focused on social justice from White colleagues or administrators. It is the policies and practices within the structure of an organization that create environments which are unsupportive to teachers of Color (Kohli, 2018). Jackson and Kohli (2016) wrote on the racialized contexts of schools noting that literature tends to focus on the hiring and retention of teachers of Color without addressing the fact that often these teachers are hired into unsupportive environments.

An examination of district practices intended to improve diversity and inclusion was conducted by San Martin (2020) who focused on the need for divisions to implement policies which are intended to explicitly support the needs of diverse employees. Neglecting the needs of minority employees creates more problems and does not address the desire of these employees to build strong positive collegial relationships and grow professionally (Amos, 2020).

Limited dialogue about race and equity in schools is also indicative of an unsupportive organizational context (Achinstein et al., 2010). A lack of conversations about race can lead to teachers of Color feeling that they are alone in their advocacy for racial justice (Kohli, 2018). Grooms et al. studied the retention of educators of Color within the context of institutionalized racism and found that Employees of Color have described a negative sense of school belonging when they do not believe there is a commitment to diversity related concerns in which they have little influence over issues related to race. Khalifa et al. (2016) reflected on the importance of critical reflection in creating a culturally responsive school environment and noted that such reflection should be a beginning point in decision making.

Racialized School Climate

Grooms et al. (2021) focused on racialized school climates in order to have a better understanding of how they impact educator retention by conducting path analysis utilizing the Ho and Au (2006) Teacher Satisfaction Scale and found that racialized school climates had a significant impact on the race-based stress and had a significant direct effect on educators of Color and their feelings of satisfaction with work.

Kohli (2018) examined the impact of hostile racial climates on the “well-being, growth, and retention of teachers of Color” (p.322) and found that often these teachers, are being recruited into schools for particular assets, such as their language abilities and positive student relationships. However, teachers of Color are far more complex than just these qualities. The participants in this study were committed to racial justice and, as empowered people, brought many strengths into the classroom with them—they brought history, knowledge of self, advocacy, and love, to name but a few. But they were not valued for these powerful and transformational tools. Instead, the teachers of Color were often invisibilized, stereotyped, questioned or even “othered” from their community. (p. 321)

Teachers of Color often report that they work harder to create more equitable educational environments; this can result in conflicts which lead to the individual's feeling alienated (Amos, 2020). Teachers of Color can experience emotional and physiological responses to racialized school climates which take a toll (Pizzaro & Kohli, 2018). Franklin et al. (2014) examined factors prevalent in racialized school climates which they reported can lead to racial battle

fatigue (RBF) in respect to minoritized Latina/o college students; “RBF examines how racial microaggressions impact the psychological, physiological, and behavioral stress responses of people of color (p.304), and, “asserts that racism is a psychosocial stressor that compromises health outcomes, which impact the educational, social, professional, and interpersonal well-being of people of color” (pp. 306-307). Practices that can be seen within schools which are visible representations of a racialized school climate can include embracing a color blind ideology and implementing and maintaining programs which exclude discussion of race (Khalifa et al., 2016).

The lack of intentional focus on ensuring that practices within schools are not racially based can result in educators withdrawing from their school based social networks instead of building supportive relationships with colleagues (Amos, 2020). Negative feelings regarding school membership results in employees feeling less comfortable to address and impact concerns regarding race (Grooms et al., 2020). Jackson and Kohli (2016) reflected that teachers of Color can feel recruited because of and then later exploited and overworked for the same thing, their Color and reminded readers of the ethical responsibilities to these individuals.

Microaggressions. “Microinsults are verbal and nonverbal (often snubs) racist behaviors that communicate an insulting message to the targeted individual, microinvalidations are the actions that deny or invalidate the thoughts, feelings, and experiences of people of color” (San Martin, 2020, p.42). DeCuir-Gunby et al. (2016) describe microassaults as the “direct and explicit verbal or nonverbal attacks that are intended to hurt or offend someone” (p. 393). These behaviors are purposeful and intentionally send an insulting message to someone based upon race (San Martin, 2020).

Smith et al. (2011) detailed that the message sent by the microaggression is often that the individual on the receiving end is not welcome. Kohli and Solorzano (2012) examined microaggressions in the classroom noting that microaggressions occur so often and are most often not diagnosed which can result in racism affecting individuals in a profound way. DeCuir-Gumby et al. (2016) examined the impact of microaggressions on educator job satisfaction and highlighted that better understanding will help lessen the impact on Black educators' experiences. Some Black administrators have reported co-workers responding to their competence with microaggressions and in some cases by intentional sabotage (Amos, 2020). The decision to leave an organization sometimes aligns with how the response to a microaggression is received and whether the pushback to the microaggression was excessive and/or if the benefits of employment were not greater than the stress incurred by the Black administrator (San Martin, 2020). These findings were echoed in the work of Smith et al. (2011) who noted that increases in microaggressions lead to less happiness and job satisfaction and the result of unavoidable race-related stress leads People of Color to feel mentally, emotionally, and physically drained.

Chapter 3. Research Methodology

Introduction

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to understand how Black public school administrator employment decisions are impacted by the behaviors of supervisors in Virginia. Commonalities among the experiences of Black public school administrators were examined in order to identify behaviors which influenced the employment decisions of Black administrators. The identified behaviors could later be used to develop leadership practices which will positively impact the retention of Black administrators in school divisions and ultimately positively impact the predictability of outcomes for Black students by providing learning environments in which Black students see themselves reflected.

This chapter contains the research questions, details of the research method and design and includes rationale for the selection of the research modality. The role of the researcher is explained and the selection of participants, and methods for data collection and analysis are provided.

Research Question 1

What are black administrator perspectives of supervisor behaviors?

Research Question 2

Why do certain behaviors of supervisors influence Black administrators decisions regarding employment?

Research Question 3

Which behaviors of supervisors most influence Black administrators' employment decisions?

Qualitative Design

Phenomenological exploration provides focused attention on how people make sense of shared experiences in order to gain a better understanding of our lives through the process of examining the lived experiences of a population and identifying central themes (Patton, 2015). Understanding how the behaviors of supervisors impact Black public school administrators' employment decisions in Virginia is a complex problem and as such required an approach that allowed for the complexity of ranges of human experiences the participants brought to the table while intentionally acknowledging that the researcher brought their own experiences as well. A phenomenological approach was selected because it includes steps which ensured that the participants were provided ample opportunity to share their experiences while ensuring that the researcher examined personal bias and maintained focus on the experiences of others.

Role of the Researcher

Bloomberg and Volpe (2019) described the role of the researcher, "As the researcher, you actively create the link among problem, purpose, and approach through a process of reflecting on your problem and purpose, focusing on researchable questions, and considering how to best address these questions. " (p. 92). The researcher utilized the approach their description provided to gain a better understanding of the phenomena when analyzing the lived experiences shared by the participants during the interviews.

Maxwell (2013) detailed the importance of addressing the role researcher goals have in qualitative study as goals are important both when creating and conducting the study and when addressing areas that can be threats to validity or could be impacted by bias (p. 217). As such

researcher experiential knowledge and research goals developed through their own lived experiences had to be explicitly addressed to ensure the researcher remained cognizant of how attitudes and beliefs influence understanding. Researcher personal, practical, and intellectual goals played a part in the design of the study and contributed to the study throughout the research process.

The first step in phenomenological research is Epoche, a refrain from judgment (Peoples, 2020). This means the researcher had to examine personal assumptions, identify and address any potential bias, and intentionally remain aware of her inability to truly understand the participants' experiences, thoughts, or feelings. The drive to improve outcomes of Black students is the foundational impetus for the study and is a personal goal of the researcher. Therefore a personal connection drives identification of the problem and the urgency to better understand phenomena which will help to make meaning of variables not yet understood or addressed which could positively impact the outcomes for Black students. It is the belief of the researcher that in order to do this a substantive change must occur and that an understanding of how the employment decisions of Black administrators are influenced by the behaviors of supervisors could positively impact outcomes of Black students.

Ethics

“In transcendental phenomenology, the goal is to illuminate the essence of the phenomenon, the entirety of it, without the corruption of personal bias” (Peoples, 2021, p. 57). Recent heightened racial tension driven by politics, media, and individual behaviors brought to the foreground the importance of the education system in shifting paradigms to ensure that all

students are truly provided the equal opportunity to which they have a right. The role of the researcher is inherently intrusive; throughout the study it was essential that the researcher be cognizant of shifting current climate and the impact the interview questions may have on participants.

Gatekeepers will be used to introduce the potential participants to the purpose of the study. Creswell and Creswell Báez (2021) highlight the role gatekeepers can play when conducting research with marginalized populations as sometimes participants may feel more comfortable with insiders. In addition gatekeepers will be able to help alleviate potential mistrust of the researcher who is not a member of the population being studied. No employees from the school division the researcher currently works in will be selected to be participants in the study. However, gatekeepers have been identified from this group and will be provided with explicit protocol for inviting members to participate which will ensure dependability of the data.

In order to ensure confidentiality each participant will be assigned a code which will allow for personal information to be omitted when providing a summary of the lived experience shared with the researcher. To establish trust and ensure credibility participants will be aware that they will be provided with a copy of the transcript for review prior to analysis by the researcher. In addition, the participants will be provided a copy of the final product so that they will have recognition of their contribution to the understanding of the phenomenon as experienced by others participating in the study. The researcher will also extend reciprocal offerings to participate in discussions, forums and other outlets which work to promote the advancement of the study through shared future interactions with participants.

Setting

As an educator in Virginia focused on improving the educational outcomes for Black students, Virginia was selected as the setting for the study. In order to understand the setting for the research it is important to describe the changing educational climate regarding works within this study that are focused on initiatives of Equity led by leadership at the Department of Education.

At the time the research topic was selected in the fall of 2020 there was significant focus in education across the Commonwealth of Virginia on work related to equity. An emphasis on the importance of the work was driven through Virginia's Roadmap to Equity created by the Virginia Department of Education (2020) which provided resources and tools to help guide divisions in the work to, "eliminate the predictability of student outcomes based on race, gender, zip code, ability, socioeconomic status or languages spoken at home." (p. 08). In December of 2021 the Virginia Superintendent of Instruction announced his resignation which was effective a few weeks before changes in Governorship. On January 15, 2022, the date of inauguration, Governor Youngkin issued multiple executive orders. Executive Order Number One (EO1) called for, "ending the use of inherently divisive concepts, including critical race theory, and restoring excellence in K-12 public education in the commonwealth." (p. 1). The executive order called for a review of all policies, guidelines, websites, best practices, and other materials which had been produced by the Department of Education in order to, "identify those that promote or endorse divisive or inherently divisive concepts." (p. 2).

This information is important in understanding the setting as the gatekeepers invited potential participants to participate in the study beginning on January 13, 2022 and continuing through the week after during which time EO1 was announced. Interviews were conducted during the time EO1 was being executed and the review at the Virginia Department of Education was being conducted. Four days prior to completion of this dissertation on February 23, 2022 the new Superintendent of Public Instruction Jillian Balow published the report mandated in EO1 and provided a list of VDOE resources that had been rescinded. Many of the materials that were rescinded were utilized in the conceptual framework of the study. The list of rescinded items was provided with dates beginning the month before in January 25, 2022 and ending September 2, 2022:

- All Resources Included on VDOE’s EdEquityVA Website, Including EdEquityVA Resources, and Resource Repository ;
- Diversity, Equity, Inclusion Audit Tool (Superintendent’s Memo 280-20)
- Navigating EdEquityVA: Virginia’s Roadmap to Equity (Superintendent’s Memo 309-20)
- All Resources Included on VDOE’s Culturally Responsive Website
- Superintendent’s Memo #050-19
- “Teaching 9/11” EdEquityVA Web Series
- Virginia L.E.A.R.N.S.
- Virginia Math Pathways Initiative (VMPI)

Sample

The 12 participants selected as the study sample were Black public school administrators in Virginia identified through gatekeepers introductions who represented both urban and rural areas, worked in schools with large and small populations of Black students, were supervised by administrators from varying ethnicities, and indicated that they had weighed the behaviors of supervisors when making decisions about employment. This sample was identified to ensure transferability across school divisions in Virginia.

Five gatekeepers invited potential participants via email by sending the template gatekeeper email found in which they had been reviewed and approved in advance. Those who responded to the call to participate were asked to answer an online questionnaire intended to ensure they had experiences which would allow them to help the researcher better understand the phenomena.

Sampling Strategy

When designing the research, it was imperative that the researcher be able to access potential participants reflective of the sample who could add to the understanding of the phenomena and was essential that the researcher be able to establish trusting research relationships in which the participants felt safe sharing personal experiences. For this reason purposeful sampling was utilized to identify gatekeepers. Snowball sampling was then utilized through gatekeeper introductions who were aware of the intended sample. The method provided an opportunity to select participants from minoritized populations reflective of the sample who were able to aid in understanding the phenomena while also addressing potential participant

concerts of mistrust (Creswell & Creswell Báez, 2021). As a White, female, division-level administrator conducting the research, the request to explore the lived experiences of Black administrators could have been met with anxiety or apprehension. However, gatekeepers who have established trusting relationships with the researcher may have provided the security needed for potential participants to feel comfortable engaging in this discussion.

Five gatekeepers, who hold various roles in public education in Virginia, were asked if they would help aid in the research by identifying and inviting potential participants. The researcher contacted each of the gatekeepers and provided background information on the purpose and goals of the study and sample communication for gatekeepers to share with potential participants. The gatekeepers were provided an opportunity to review and revise the invitations prior to approval from the research board. Invitations, found in Appendix A, were sent to potential participants. The invitation included a link to the online survey, found in Appendix B, where individuals interested in participating reviewed the research purpose, goals, and informed consent and responded to questions intended to ensure that the population sample was represented.

Twelve of the fourteen individuals who completed the online questionnaire were asked to participate as they met the criteria for the study. The two respondents not selected indicated that they had not had experiences in which their decisions regarding employment were influenced by the behaviors of supervisors.

Data Collection Procedures

Due to restrictions from the coronavirus interviews were conducted utilizing Zoom meetings through use of a secured license. The interview was recorded and transcribed and provided to the participants for review. Open-ended interviewing was essential to this phenomenological study as it helped to ensure the participant was able to communicate their experience and point of view. To allow for the fluid interview format necessary in order for the researcher to understand the lived experiences while maintaining the structure needed for research interview protocol and questions, found in Appendix C, geared towards answering the overarching questions were developed. Utilizing the protocol and initial questions to guide the focus of the interview resulted in participants being able to share their experiences on the same topics while providing the flexibility for follow up questions responsive to the individual participant which resulted in a better understanding of the essence of the phenomena.

Data Analysis

“Phenomenological data analysis is the process of transcending the mundane nature of each description to reveal the essence of the phenomenon” (Peoples, 2021, p. 58). Understanding this essence through the examination of the lived experiences of a group of people means that the analysis process will continue to change throughout the process as new themes emerge (Peoples, 2021).

ATLAS.ti qualitative data analysis software was utilized to conduct text analysis through phenomenological reduction, bracketing, and theme analysis. First, a text database was developed by transcribing the interviews and uploading the field notes. Next the process of

phenomenological reduction was implemented in which the phenomenon is held up for inspection; this was done by reviewing the entire database of interviews slowly while making initial observations and recording them. During the next reading the researcher began dissecting the data into segments by identifying information which could help to address the research questions. Next the researcher worked to determine the essence of what was being said by creating and applying codes. To ensure the researcher was able to identify data without being affected by extraneous factors or bias bracketing was conducted by locating items or statements that speak to the phenomena, interpreting the meaning of the phrases, inspecting the meaning to identify what they reveal about features which recur across the phenomenon, and finally identifying themes which define the recurrences and labeling those themes with codes. The data was then equalized across participants into clusters utilizing code document recurrence tables in ATLAS.ti. The process of imaginative variation allowed the researcher to explore variations which could explain the phenomenon. Finally, the researcher synthesized the information in order to identify the essence of the phenomenon through interpretation and answer the research questions. The researcher went past descriptive data to make sense of findings, draw conclusions, and offer explanations. The use of ATLAS.ti data analysis software resulted in the development of an audit trail which will ensure that the researcher documented the events, processes, and methodologies throughout the process and provides a log of evidence that can be utilized in analyzing the dependability of the study and planning for the replication of study.

Measures of Rigor

The researcher examined the trustworthiness of the study by employing multiple strategies intended to detail the credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability of the study. Creswell and Creswell Baez (2021) detailed the significance of validating findings when conducting qualitative research as it requires the researcher to interpret meaning from participant answers. Bloomberg and Volpe (2019) further describe the importance of ensuring trustworthiness by providing evidence that the researcher's analysis is truly representative of the participants. Further when the population being studied can be identified as a marginalized group it is particularly important for the researcher to intentionally focus on ensuring that the needs of the participants are met by selecting the appropriate research processes and measures of rigor (Creswell & Creswell Báez, 2021).

Credibility

It was important to assure the credibility of the researchers' portrayal of the participants' lived experience in order to ensure that the feelings, thoughts, and actions of the participants are accurately represented (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019). The researcher utilized member checking and worked intentionally to identify disconfirming evidence.

Member Checking. Due to the sensitive nature of the interviews conducted, providing an opportunity for member checking was an essential measure of rigor for determining the validity of the research (Creswell & Creswell Báez, 2021). Participants were provided an opportunity to review the transcript of their interview in order to ensure the accuracy of the data that was analyzed. While member checking in qualitative research can sometimes provide the

opportunity for the participant to determine whether the researcher's interpretation is correct in instances where phenomenological study is being conducted a review of the transcript, not interpretation, is advised (Peoples, 2020).

Disconfirming Evidence. The researcher further established credibility by disconfirming themes that were identified during the coding process by examining all of the data and looking intentionally for findings that do not support the theme. Creswell and Creswell Baez (2021) outlined the relevance of disconfirming evidence noting that a researcher is able to provide a more authentic reflection of their findings by showing the evidence which may suggest a different view of the theme.

Dependability

It was essential to examine the methods utilized throughout the research process in order to determine if the data is dependable. This was done by tracking processes and procedures used to collect, analyze, and interpret data in order to show stability and consistency (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019).

Audit Trail. Tracking of the data collection process was completed by the development of an audit trail which provides details regarding the data collection and analysis processes (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019). Audit trail information including field notes and transcripts will be maintained by the researcher and will be available for further review when requested.

Confirmability

The audit trail also provides evidence of the confirmability of the research and shows how the researcher came to conclusions and interpretations clearly traced to the data collection

and analysis (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019). The researcher addressed potential bias through journaling and memos focused on examining her own bias and how that bias may impact their analysis of data by being intentionally reflective (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019). Husserl's transcendental framework does this by focusing on the importance of bracketing,

So that the researcher becomes like a stranger in a strange land- kind of like an alien coming down to planet Earth for the first time. So the biases that this alien has are already suspended because the suspension is putting oneself into a position of being a stranger in a strange land. ...In this state of intentional suspension, one can get to the essence of something. (Peoples, 2020, pp. 30-31)

Reflexivity. The researcher was cognizant of how participants may have felt and consciously acknowledged the researcher's own background and how it may impact their interpretations. The researcher shared with each participant her appreciation for the gift of time and trust she had been given and committed to informing them of all publications and/or presentations stemming from the research. In addition the researcher is aware of how potential readers may respond to the research topic and findings (Creswell & Creswell Báez, 2021). Utilizing Husserl's transcendental framework through phenomenological reduction allowed the researcher to attend to the analysis of the data collected while cognizantly focusing on how the horizon, or present experience, impacts what the researcher thinks about and how this impacts the researcher's interpretation of the data (Peoples, 2020).

Transferability

Research is transferable if readers have a great enough understanding of the research methodology to identify whether it is appropriate to replicate the study in their own settings and communities based (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019). The researcher has provided a detailed overview of the research methodology and design which should allow for replication of the study.

Purposeful Sampling Strategy. The researcher has selected purposeful sampling through snowball selection as the means for identifying participants who are from a marginalized population in order to intentionally address concerns of mistrust and to ensure that potential participants have an understanding that the researcher is aware that there could be a natural distrust for the researcher as an outsider. For this reason gatekeepers were selected who already had a trusting relationship with the researcher; this enabled them to help to establish relationships between potential participants and the researcher (Creswell & Creswell Báez, 2021).

Thick Descriptions. Thick descriptions allow the readers to have a shared experience by understanding the phenomenon vicariously through the interpretations of the lived experiences of others (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019). The researcher recorded notes and memos throughout the analysis process and provided a detailed description of the setting, participants and themes. In addition, the researcher provided explicit descriptions regarding the use of transcendental theoretical framework by detailing the processes of suspending judgment during bracketing/epoche, discussion of the researcher's horizon, implications for future research, and by intentionally expounding on careful data analysis processes as the means through which the

continued focus on the lived experience of Black public school administrators was ensured (Peoples, 2020).

Chapter 4. Analysis of the Data

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to examine how the employment decisions of Black public school administrators in Virginia are impacted by the behaviors of their supervisors. I utilized a qualitative design and conducted interviews with 12 Black administrators from across the Commonwealth of Virginia who volunteered to participate in response to an invitation from a trusted gatekeeper. The participants shared accounts of their personal experiences by responding to questions which examined their perception of how their decision making had been impacted by the behaviors of their supervisors. The collective responses of the 12 participants were analyzed so that emergent themes could be identified and potentially utilized to develop supervisory practices that will increase the hiring and retention of Black educators in Virginia.

The research questions were developed to frame data collection that could be used to establish practices which could potentially impact the hiring and retention of Black educators in Virginia. In order to understand the lived experiences of the participants and the impact supervisors had on their employment decisions the following questions were used to guide the research:

Participant Profiles

Black administrators from Virginia districts and schools of different sizes with varying populations of Black students who indicated that the behaviors of their supervisor(s) were a component of their decision making regarding employment are represented in Table 1.

Table 1*Participant and School Division Demographic Information*

Gender	Female	5
	Male	7
Division Size*	Less than 5,000	4
	Between 5,000 and 15,000	7
	More than 15,000	1
% of Black Students in School Division*	0-25%	5
	25-50%	3
	50-75%	3
	75-100%	2
Ethnicity of Supervisor(s) whose behaviors impacted decision making regarding employment**	Black	8
	Hispanic	1
	Multiple Races	1
	White	7

Note- The table displays the demographic information collected on the initial interest survey found in Appendix B.

* 1 Participant provided demographic information for more than one division

** Participants provided information regarding the ethnicity of supervisors whose behaviors impacted their decision making regarding employment on the initial online interest survey. The number reflected in the table is the number provided through the online survey and may not be indicative of all supervisors who were discussed during the one-to-one interviews.

Researcher Notes

As the intent of phenomenological inquiry is to understand the lived experiences of a group of people free from any researcher bias, I utilized journaling as a means to explore and bracket my own experiences. This allowed me to acknowledge and set aside my personal feelings so that they would not impact my findings and instead provided an opportunity for me to examine the experiences of the twelve participants and identify the emergent themes which are most likely to impact the hiring and retention of Black administrators. Journaling also provided an avenue through which I could record my perceptions of the investigative process beginning with the identification of potential gatekeepers and continuing throughout the research and writing processes.

Phenomenological reduction is the process through which the researcher brackets the data so that it can be examined without extraneous information impacting the analysis of the phenomena (Patton, 2015). Epoche, the first step in phenomenological analysis, requires that the researcher examine the problem from a fresh view unfettered by preconceived notions or experiences. To accomplish this it was necessary for me to examine my own experiences through journaling. Throughout the course of the research I created memos which provided an avenue through which I could explore and examine my bias as relates to the study. Recording and focusing on my own preconceptions throughout the research process has allowed me to examine the lived experiences of the participants by dissecting and identifying essential structures or themes which were consistent across the narratives shared with me.

Each person brings to their daily interactions with others the culmination of their own experiences in each decision making process. While I have not experienced prejudice due to race it was important for me to note and record other experiences with discrimination which may impact my ability to see the phenomena clearly without these experiences tainting my understanding of the lived experiences of the research participants. I worked to focus on being mindful so that I could listen fully to the responses of the participants and so that I did not project my emotions onto the participants or miss an opportunity to dig deeper for meaning when learning about the participants' lived experiences.

External Factors

Recent tension across the country driven by politics, media, and individual behaviors have brought to the foreground for me the importance of the education system's role in shifting paradigms in order to ensure that all students are truly provided the equal opportunity to which they have a right. In the settings section of Chapter 3 I provided an overview of the timeline of changes from the Virginia Department of Education regarding concepts integral to the conceptual framework of this research. I cannot attempt to give insight on how the Governor's Executive Order, which resulted in the documents being rescinded and removed from the website, has impacted the participants. Interviews were conducted prior to the February 23, 2022 report from the state which formalized the materials being removed from the Virginia Department of Education website, however it was common knowledge that a review of materials had been ordered by EO1. Participant three spoke to his feelings on the review,

when this whole push you know came out about equity and so forth a lot of folks still knew... like yeah everybody's beating the drum per se because that's kind of what's coming out from the powers that be, but you just wait when it looks like things are going to change. And you're kind of seeing that now. Snap of a finger. It validates those conversations that people have with me.

In addition to the review and removal of materials related to Equity within the Virginia Department of Education, the Governor issued Executive Order 10 Focusing Virginia's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Office and Designating a Commonwealth Chief Diversity, Opportunity, & Inclusion Officer. As a result within the Governor's cabinet the role of Chief Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Officer was removed and the role of Chief Diversity, Opportunity, and Inclusion Officer was added. One participant shared their view on this change and the impact it has at the local level, however I was unable to provide quotes from the source while being able to ensure I could protect the identity of the participant.

It was important to include this information in the researcher notes as the shift of focus on the equity at the executive level are likely to have impacted both the participants and researcher in ways that cannot be examined at this time. While it has been painful and difficult throughout the process to listen to contemporary stories fellow educators experience on a regular basis, I am deftly cognizant of the license with which I was able to engage in research aimed at understanding how the employment decisions of Black administrators have been influenced by the behaviors of their supervisors. While the research intentionally did not focus on the race of the supervisor as a focus of study, I understand that my race may have provided me with an

opportunity to explore this topic without receiving the same pushback that may have been experienced had the research been conducted by someone of another race.

Interview Analysis

Interview analysis was completed utilizing the bracketing process. First the interviews were transcribed, identifiable information removed, uploaded to ATLAS.ti qualitative software and read multiple times so that I could locate phrases and statements that would help create a better understanding of the lived experiences of the participants by inspecting what they revealed as essential and recurring features of the phenomenon (Patton, 2015). The phrases and statements identified in step one were then coded and organized into thematic clusters. Imaginative variation, a process through which I examined the participants' experiences from multiple perspectives with the purpose of identifying extraneous factors which could account for the consistent features or essences amongst the experiences of the participants was conducted (Patton, 2015). Lastly I synthesized and interpreted the data in order to understand the essence of the phenomena.

Data Results

Through examination of the commonalities between the experiences of the 12 Black administrators interviewed essential themes emerged within two distinct categories: (a) behaviors which result in the Black administrator feeling they have administrative support, and (b) behaviors which elicit a negative response and result in the Black administrators feeling that they do not have administrative support. Within each of these categories specific behaviors of supervisors were identified for the impact they had on the Black administrator decision making

as related to employment. As shown in Table 2, supportive administrative behaviors include providing clear expectations and meaningful feedback, providing opportunities to grow and showcase talents, creating opportunities for peer networking, and providing appropriate mentoring; unsupportive administrative behaviors include creating an unsupportive organizational context, displaying or not addressing microaggressions, and promoting a racialized school climate.

Table 2

Administrative Behaviors Which Impact Black administrator Employment Decisions

Category	Supportive administrative behaviors	Unsupportive administrative behaviors
Theme	Providing Clear Expectations and Meaningful Feedback	Allowing a Racialized School Climate
Theme	Providing Opportunities to Grow and Showcase Talents	Creating an Unsupportive Organizational Context
Theme	Creating Opportunities for Peer Networking	
	Providing Appropriate Mentoring	

Note: Table 2 is a representation of the categories and themes identified as administrative behaviors that Black administrators decision making regarding employment.

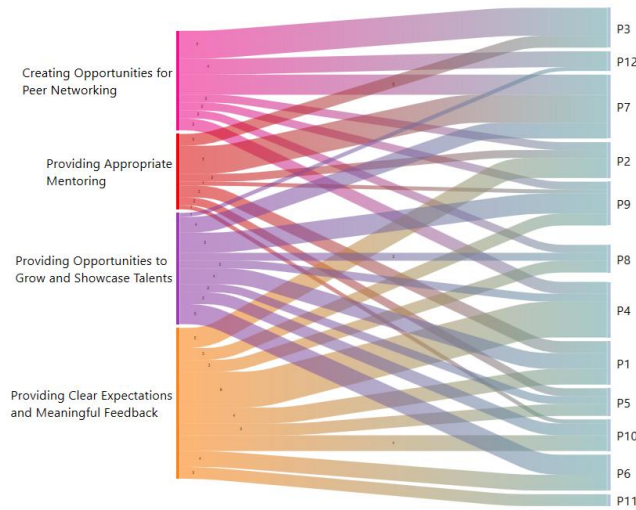
Supportive Administrative Behaviors

During the one hour interview participants responded to open ended questions developed to provide opportunity to share personal experiences meaningful to exploration of the phenomena. Throughout their narratives common themes emerged which highlighted the significance of supervisor behaviors that result in Black administrators feeling supported and

subsequently impacting their decision making regarding employment. A visual representation of the types of supportive administrative behaviors which impacted individual participant decision making is provided in Figure 1.

Figure 1

Supportive Administrative Behaviors Which Impacted Individual Participant Decision Making



Note: The Sankey diagram in Figure 1 provides an illustration of the impact of supportive supervisor behaviors on participant decision making. The width of the line represents the number of times the participant referred to a supportive supervisor behavior.

Providing Clear Expectations and Meaningful Feedback. Nine of the twelve participants consistently spoke to experiences in which their supervisor(s) ensured understanding of expectations and provided meaningful feedback intended to help the participant hone their practice. Commonalities across their experiences provided a focus on the participants desire to

receive explicit expectations, ongoing and meaningful feedback, and provided examples of how the absence or presence impacted their decision making.

Participant 11 (P11) detailed the significance of meeting expectations set for her by sharing about the way that she was raised,

I will tell you growing up... in my family it was drilled on you. You know my mom would tell me all the time when you're African American you have to do better than the next person, just to be noticed. And she would tell me that all time, 'you cannot be average or cannot be status quo.' I would love to get a place where I could just kind of relax, but that's ingrained in me so it's like I can't just do the status quo, you know I can't just sit.

Participants one, two, four, and six provided accounts of specific supervisors and their experiences with understanding their explicit expectations. Participant 1 (P1) reflected upon the importance of being able to align with and meet supervisor expectations and having a growth mindset so that the expectations of your supervisor become your expectations of self. Participant 2 (P2) discussed supervisor expectations as both a gift and a curse noting that a supervisor who does not give detailed criteria for success may be providing free reign for project completion which could potentially end in not meeting the supervisor's expectations and instead highlighted experiences in which the supervisor helps to outline processes. P2 described wanting to know the expectations whether he personally liked a supervisor or not, reflecting that he both desired to model excellence to ensure a supervisor did not fail in their work as well as being able to use clear expectations as a way of ensuring he was compliant with a supervisor he did not like as

much. Participant 4 (P4) provided insight into the power of conversations and how receiving explicit expectations and authentic genuine feedback improved his ability to meet his supervisor's expectations,

He doesn't put off conversations for later on so that I can continue to do the same thing that he doesn't want me to do, and he doesn't put off the conversation with me about something that he'd like to see only for me to not realize his vision. He's going to be explicit about telling me what it is. He isn't going to hope that I get it all, he is going to implicitly tell me. It is going to be straightforward and direct, and I appreciate and respect it.

Participant 6 (P6) echoed the importance of understanding what is wanted from her direct supervisor and provided examples of supervisors who had ensured she was aware of their expectations and a supervisor who did not ensure she knew what was expected. While the expectations placed on her by the supervisors who made sure she was aware of what they wanted were high and required professional growth, P6 communicated that she felt supported and wanted to stay in the division because they took time to explain what they wanted in detail, and provided ongoing support to ensure she had the skills to meet their expectations.

Ongoing informal and formal feedback was noted by multiple participants as key to feeling supported by your supervisor. While P4 reflected upon the impact of informal feedback during regular building visit walkthroughs which afforded the opportunity to share about his day to day work and provided his supervisor a glimpse of his leadership in action, Participant 9 (P9)

shared that the most valuable informal feedback she received was being asked to mentor and train other building level leaders in the division who had been identified as needing to develop in specific leadership areas as this was evidence that her performance had been noted as exemplary. Participant 10 (P10) highlighted her desire to receive constructive feedback so that she could continually grow and be better for her students and noted how much easier her work was when she didn't have to guess at what was expected and instead focus on making progress towards achieving the goals set for her,

We know her expectations, and I think that's probably the biggest thing about her is that you don't have to guess at what she expects. It makes my job a lot easier, and it makes me know that I can go and do what is expected of me, I can do my job to the best of my ability and work up to those expectations, and I don't feel like I have to hold back.... She knows we're not perfect, we're going to make mistakes.

While some participant provided examples of positive experiences regarding explicit expectations and meaningful feedback, three individuals shared experiences in which they had not been provided with the support and detailed the impact it had. Participant 8 (P8) discussed how the lack of meaningful feedback resulted in him feeling like all he could do was make sure he stayed under the radar because he did not have an explicit understanding of what was being expected. While the formal feedback he was provided was not negative, he hated the experience because it did not provide him opportunity for growth and development. P4 and Participant 5 (P5) had similar experiences in which they were not provided clear expectations or ongoing feedback and both were surprised to learn of supervisor dissatisfaction with their work

performance at an end of year evaluation meeting when they were notified of position reassignment. P4 explained that he hadn't received any evaluations that year and had never been told that there were concerns with his performance prior to being reassigned. "They may not have made that decision had they shared with me that discontent with my job performance along the way." He went on to explain how the lack of communication regarding expectations made him feel,

It was tough, I felt isolated. I felt, you know, wronged, and to some extent, in my experience, people have avoided conversations with me about things like that. They need to transpire. I think they avoid those conversations with me and then when it comes time to really have that conversation it comes out of left field because we could have been having little conversations along the way.

P5 discussed the lack of ongoing feedback that resulted in an unwanted job change had on his own leadership practices:

"From that point that gave me the feeling of, you know, when I'm over someone, supervising someone, and there's a need for them to improve I'm going to help. By me being under the microscope, I was expected to improve without much assistance. That gave me kind of like the motivation to do whatever I can to help those teachers that are struggling. To assist them in any kind of way. To help them to improve what they do, because unfortunately I know how it feels to not have that done the right way.

Creating Opportunities for Peer Networking. Opportunities for networking with other Black administrators was an emergent theme as seven of the twelve participants shared their personal experiences with supervisors and the role the supervisors' behaviors played in decision making regarding employment. Participants noted a variety of formal networking opportunities implemented intentionally by division supervisors as well as informal networks created organically and provided insight as to why they felt peer networking was important and how it impacted their decision making. P2 discussed formal peer networking established by supervisors which included social events such as happy hour or yoga and meetings with and without supervisors present, "there's been opportunities for you know staff... just to create an outlet, also provide opportunities for camaraderie and also have them share, you know how the pandemic is affecting their household." P7 shared her experience in a division cohort, "I learned everything there because we could talk about things that were happening in the news. We would talk about the division way of solving issues, but then we also learned tenets from our textbook."

In places where no formal networking opportunities had been provided some participants engaged in less formal networks usually conducted via phone where one Black administrator calls another to get feedback and support.

Participants described why they felt providing Black administrators opportunities to network with other Black administrators is an important behavior for supervisors and the impact these networks had on their own decision making regarding employment. Participant 12 (P12) discussed his experience networking with other Black administrators noting that it allows him to drop his guard because he is able to talk with other individuals who have experienced some of

the same types of struggles and utilize them as sounding boards without feeling like he will be judged.

Participant 3 (P3) and P8 provided insight on the importance of peer networks when you are a Black administrator in a division with few other minority leaders. P3 stated, “I often ask, do you know what it’s like being the only person in the room and every time someone talks about the data you’re the at-risk group?” He further delved into the aloneness that can be experienced by Black administrators who don’t have a local peer network and ultimately shared how a lack of networking was a key factor in deciding to leave a specific division,

At the end of the day you have to realize when you’re dealing with folks in different situations and positions. You have to address the elephant in the room, like they’re the only one- that’s got to be doing something. It’s amazing because when you think of most things people will acknowledge, unless it comes to race. You know if somebody comes in and is in a wheelchair all eyes are going to be on them and say, ‘what provisions and accommodations do we need to do, like what do I need to do to make that person more comfortable?’

P8 also detailed his personal experience working in a predominantly White community and school,

I think sometimes you’re on an island because of that setting. Your decisions tend to have a little more spotlight shined on them, right or wrong. And just to support the idea and acknowledge that sometimes it may be more difficult because you are a minority making

the important decisions right now. It's like differentiation for kids right? You have to provide them maybe with a different level of support, or their support looks different than just the normal administrative team.”

While participants discussed experiences with supervisors of varying ethnicities, P12 provided specific insight as to why his experiences with supervisors who did not look like him but supported peer networking and collaboration between Black administrators was meaningful,

When you have individuals who don't look like you, but yet they still try to understand what you're going through or being empathetic ... just checking in and seeing how things are going, that transcends ... that doesn't matter what color you are, but it does come back to color as well because their understanding of what's going on and they have a broader view of not just the world of education but what's going on in the world.

P3 highlighted the different types of support he received after moving to an area where he was able to regularly network with other Black administrators, noting that the opportunities in that division provided him with a better understanding of the importance of networking as a means to ensure his own professional growth and career trajectory. P 4 shared that divisions who retain well respected administrators from the Black community aid in the recruitment and retention of other administrators because a supportive network has been established and evidenced by the longevity of the respected administrators in that division.

Providing Appropriate Mentoring. For seven of twelve of the twelve participants mentoring emerged as a supervisor behavior which impacted decision making regarding

employment. P9 discussed the significance of mentoring on decision making and identified a need for, “the leadership to realize if you really want to keep educators of color we’ve got to mentor them.”

While not all mentors are technical supervisors with the ability to make evaluative decisions, most mentors to school administrators are in supervisory positions and/or have more authority over decision making than the participant. Both informal and formal mentoring relationships were discussed as behaviors with a positive impact on decision making. For the purpose of this study informal mentoring is defined as any mentoring relationship which is not established through appointment or supervision; formal mentoring is defined as any mentoring relationship established through either appointment or supervision.

Participant 5 (P5) and Participant 7 (P7) discussed informal mentors who had impacted their decision making to move from teachers to administrators and reflected upon the significance of the relationships with these mentors as they moved into administrative roles. P5 described how the mentor was always available for questions and that he felt comfortable asking them because the mentor had continuously shown that P5’s best interests were at heart. P7 shared a years-long mentoring relationship which began during her time as a classroom teacher and continued through the encouragement and prodding to become an administrator and subsequent assistant and then principal roles.

I am 85% sure I would still be in the classroom happy teaching my group of kids you know, but that push was really what I needed because he kept saying you can impact a greater number of kids by being a leader, because you can teach other people how to

impact their students. He was like you're sitting on your gift, you're diminishing what God gave you, and that's something that you shouldn't do. And that really spoke to me.

P10 shared her experience with a White mentor who supported her,

I think that he was very delicate because of ethnicity and race and that things happen in the world. ... It was in a very professional way. We did have some conversations about certain things, depending on what happened in the world. We would have some conversations, and sometimes he would ask me questions because he would be very honest about it.

P 1 explained why a mentoring relationship established organically had been meaningful to him personally because he could tell the person's willingness and true desire to help him grow. He also believed that formal mentoring was more impactful when approached with a growth mindset as it resulted in the mentor noting the desire to grow and wanting to help.

Other informal mentoring relationships had developed organically between administrators in same or similar roles who had reached out for support personally. P3 described the benefit of informal mentoring relationships when he discovered that other teachers (his peers) had been receiving coaching that resulted in career growth when he had not. He described the content of the informal mentoring established after that realization, "it was just conversations, it was that hidden knowledge. It was people taking the time to break it down and explain it... that's the piece that stuck with me." He went on to describe how this realization impacted his decision

making regarding employment, “It was kind of like wait ... what ... No one’s been having these conversations with me, like I didn’t know this was possible.”

Formal mentoring experiences established through either appointment or supervision included mentoring relationships between principals and assistant principals, experienced administrators and novice administrators in the same role, and central office administrator to building level administrator. Interactions between formal mentors vary from discussing predetermined topics to as needed one-to-one phone calls for brainstorming and advice. Multiple participants noted the role real-time support played in the development of their skills. P1 succinctly summarized the impact of two mentors on his decision making regarding employment, “everything that I learned from them in those strategies probably helped me to survive and stay in this division as long as I have.” P2 discussed the impact having a Black mentor had on him because it provided him the opportunity to watch how he approached specific situations and gave him a model to look up to and exemplify.

Providing Opportunities to Grow and Showcase Talents. Ten of the twelve participants shared experiences which brought to the foreground the importance of ensuring that both professional growth and opportunities to showcase talents are intentional focuses for supervisors.

Communicating belief in the participant was noted as a foundational inspiration for professional growth for several participants. P7 shared her experience with moving from teaching to administration and reflected upon the role a supportive mentor provided. She discussed his ongoing support and encouragement while she was a teacher and that he had often

told her that he believed she could make a bigger impact on students by becoming an administrator and supporting students through a leadership capacity. P7 was inspired to work towards that accomplishment and was able to participate in a division lead professional development series for administrators which provided her both the opportunity to learn state law and administrative requirements as well as expanded her understanding of division practices while building relationships with other administrators and aspiring administrators from across her division. Upon obtaining her first principalship the mentor visited her school on the first day with other central office supervisors, as was the division practice, but took time to quietly tell her, ““You were made to do this, this is what I’ve been trying to get you to do’ ... It just confirmed for me that everything I’ve been working for- like someone sees me and notices me.”

P6 detailed her experience in an especially challenging school with a division administrative team who worked to build her belief in self while also providing relevant and meaningful growth opportunities,

In placing me in roles outside my comfort zone saying- you need to be the lead. Go to this professional development ... in their mind they're always grooming me to lead. So that was very helpful. ‘You're going to be over this team.’ That helps you grow ... you can really become complacent, so it was nice to have people pushing. It's like a plant- if you put it in a bigger pot it will grow. They’d say, ‘We want you to grow. Like we want you to be phenomenal. You’re pretty good right now, but we want you top notch,’ and that made me feel good. So they focused on everything and were like, ‘okay we want you

to grow in that area' and they focused on me. And anything I needed for support, they were right there supportive. It was a wonderful environment.

P5 and P7 echoed this experience and provided narratives about supervisors who had encouraged them to present skills and knowledge acquired either at professional learning conferences or through collaborative division level work; this resulted in each feeling affirmed and supported. Participants whose supervisors had provided opportunities for them to reflect upon what resources or training they needed to be successful and then ensured they were available felt supported in their work environment. C12 shared his surprise at being asked what he needed to be successful when taking on a new leadership role, "I was like in awe. ... I'm just sitting there and I'm like wait. What? You mean I can have this. And they asked me if I needed anymore. I felt like I was dreaming."

As with participant reflections regarding their supervisors providing opportunities to grow, the discussions about showcasing their talents often centered on the way participants felt when a supervisor singled them out in a positive way. For some participants their skill showcase took place through informal opportunities like building walks, presenting in principal meetings, being asked to mentor, or being asked to work on special projects while others shared experiences where they were asked to lead or develop projects on a division scale. Common among both types of showcasing was discussion of some form of recognition of participant skill or dedication. P1 discussed an opportunity he was given, "sometimes we were asked to share things that were working in our school, and I felt like one of the things that was working were our ... (school specific) procedures. And the fact that we went about it the right way, we got buy

in from our staff and then implemented it in a fashion that anyone else in the division, you know could too.”

P4 shared multiple examples of informal opportunities he was given to showcase his talents for his supervisor when touring campus or attending division meetings,

I’m truly respected as a professional, and I’m truly respected as being the expert (at my level). At the end of the day I know I am in a position to both give and take orders and don’t have any quarrels about that, but I know I am respected for my experience.

P9 shared about a meaningful experience in which her superintendent selected her to lead an initiative specifically for her leadership skills rooted in strong relationships, “He just knew he could call on me ... he said, I need you to use your ability to pull people together.” She shared the outcome of the project, and it had yielded exceptional results aligned with the goal of supporting minority educators.

P5 was provided the opportunity to showcase his skills at an annual institute outside and then duplicate the training in his own division,

The facilitators felt that I was, you know, sharing things that were outstanding things that came to my head ... so the following year they asked me to come back, not as a participant, but as a facilitator. And so I came back the following year as a facilitator and was able to have my co-facilitators do the same thing that we did at the university for some of the administrators here. And again, I was still just a teacher, but that sure gave

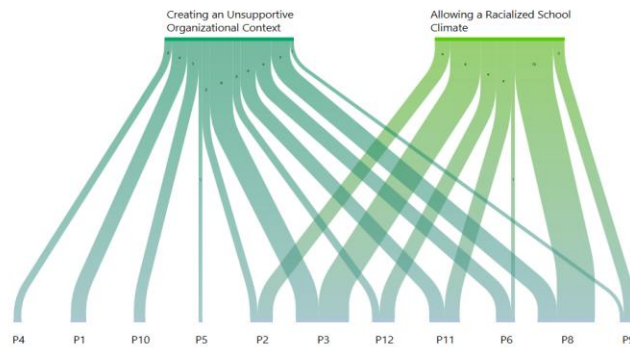
me the experience that when you have something that's worthwhile and that can be beneficial to others let's go forward with it.

Unsupportive Administrative Behaviors

Participants shared experiences which resulted in the identification of supervisor behaviors which impact decision making due to the administrator feeling unsupported. Figure 2 provides a visual representation of the two categories of unsupportive administrative behaviors that emerged due to their impact on individual participant decision making.

Figure 2

Unsupportive Administrative Behaviors Which Impacted Individual Participant Decision Making



Note: The Sankey diagram in Figure 1 provides an illustration of the impact of unsupportive supervisor behaviors on participant decision making. The width of the line represents the number of times the participant referred to an unsupportive supervisor behavior.

Allowing a Racialized School Climate. Supervisor behaviors which reflected that the supervisor allowed, whether intentionally or unintentionally, a racialized school climate to exist were identified by seven of twelve participants through examination of the personal narratives of

the lived experiences of the participants. Supervisors' belief about students, microaggressions, and historical and contemporary treatment of Black administrators impacted the actions and decision making of participants.

P8 and P12 reflected upon experiences which placed a spotlight on the impact beliefs about students can have on school climate. P12 shared a traumatic experience in which a division level leader had visited his building shortly after he began his first principalship. He summarized the history of the leadership challenges the school had faced and noted that he had been working to build shared vision during his brief time in the building. However, during the visit the leaders made it clear that his performance was not acceptable as the division leader berated and belittled him in hallways in front of his staff. While he shared that this behavior was common from this supervisor he quickly moved past his own treatment and focused on the way the supervisor spoke about his students,

And then to talk down about the kids in the building like that infuriated me the most.

Because kids have nothing to do they're trying the best they can to move along. But you don't talk about the other kids, on the other side ... but you're always talking down about my kids, and I just didn't like that.

P8 shared about an unsupportive school climate in which lower expectations for Black students were evidenced by less support for the students. He shared an experience in which he was working with a student who worked nights and weekends to provide food and electricity for his mother and siblings and had performed poorly on an assessment. P8 felt that while teachers

in the school felt sorry for the student they didn't expect better performance from him and weren't willing to provide the type of support he needed such as after school makeup or retaking an assessment due to his race. He discussed the impact the racialized school climate had on him and detailed how it inhibited his ability to feel safe taking chances or making decisions.

Beliefs about the division's treatment of Black administrators, whether gained from firsthand accounts or through observation, caused some participants to believe that racialized school climates were not implicitly addressed. Divisions with no minority leaders at the central office level or where Black administrators were only placed in schools with high Black student populations caused participants to question whether the division would be able to provide the long term career opportunities the individual was seeking. In another case a participant was discouraged from applying in a division by a colleague who worked there and shared about the lack of support for Black administrators.

Three participants shared experiences which they described as micro-aggressions. In one situation the participant shared about a time she had applied for and received a promotion and then a colleague stated that she had gotten the job because she was Black. In another instance a participant was being addressed by a supervisor in front of a group of people. In order to show respect she did not defend herself or engage in a public discussion on the topic, "I just folded my shoulders and listened and let them say what they needed to say. So in front of everybody she reprimanded me ... she questioned my body language." The participant went on to explain her response to the situation and why she didn't engage in the interaction by defending herself, "so me shutting down was disrespectful for her, but for me it was a sign of respect." A third

participant shared an experience in which he had been accused of speaking aggressively and using aggressive language with a white person and lamented on the way he was treated. Instead of investigating the report by utilizing video footage available, his supervisor accepted the complaint which he felt was racially rooted and corrected him for the behavior without evidence.

Other participants detailed experiences in which they felt they were pigeon holed or treated differently due to their race. P2 and P3 each shared personal experiences in which they were either placed or not placed in a certain role solely because of their race. P2 discussed his feelings,

I'm seen as like the protector of the school. Like in the hallways I wasn't known for my academic prowess ... Black males in leadership normally get relegated to disciplinary roles ... and they want you to mentor students who are deemed hard to reach just because of the lack of rapport they have.

P3 had a different experience in which he had been told that he would be perfect for a role he was seeking but had been told that he was going to be placed in another building because he was Black, and they felt he was needed at that school. He shared how baffled he was that someone would blatantly explain that as the reason for not getting a position he had been told he was a perfect candidate for. His supervisor's behavior caused him to reflect and look at the division in a different way.

P2 echoed his concerns regarding his own career trajectory sharing that he worked to meet expectations, follow division protocols and do everything the right way but ended up

feeling like he was, “always hitting the wall and it's like dang I’ve done everything in school, everything the right way... and yet there’s still this barrier because of my complexion that stopped me from getting over the hump ... because of human fallibility ... you know were going to have these issues, but I think that raising awareness will create some conversations.” He also reflected on his feeling that Black administrators must be more humble and subservient in their roles.

Creating an Unsupportive Organizational Context. Supervisors display a variety of behaviors which caused eleven of the twelve participants to reflect upon the school division or organization as a whole if they believed the issues were more systemic concerns displayed by a variety of supervisors across time. This organizational view includes how the School Board and division leadership are perceived, who the division as a whole places in positions of leadership, general treatment of employees, and intentional support for Black administrators.

P3 shared how interactions at board meetings are observed by employees and impact their actions,

I have a career, and I have a family so I'm very cognizant of the fact that I can only speak up so much. Because I go to board meetings as well, and I see how people act and I watch the news, and I see interactions. One thing I think that people lose sight of is just because people aren't outspoken don't mean they're not talking And, I tell people that all the time- that just because you don't hear people yelling and screaming don't mean they're not talking and don't mean they're not talking about you, maybe they have made up their assumptions.

P12 discussed the role division level leadership plays in the view of the organization and noted the meaningfulness of these leaders working to support Black administrators in an intentional way as well as the impact of leadership who only appears to be in support of intentionally supporting Black administrators,

Full transparency, I think sometimes it's just lip service which is your doing this activity or doing this initiative, just because we need to, and there's not really buy in from the top, so that makes a big difference... but when you have a person, that is a superior, that shows that interest in that and is real and genuine about it. There's a saying and we would talk amongst ourselves. We can tell who's being real, who's being fake.

He went on to describe how sometimes the supports provided may be well intentioned but that what is really needed is a platform that is open and safe for Black administrators to have real conversations,

It's not about what's in a book, it's about the life experience you have ... have a one to one conversation saying, hey help me understand what you're going through, your culture, What do you need from me... We just need to be able to let our guard down and say this is real, this is what's going on.

P12 also spoke to the need for an organization climate to be established in which leaders work together when developing activities which center on equity,

Just because we do this activity, when you go back to your office, when you go back to your house, back to your own little world feeling good- not thinking about anything ... so

I can't go back to my office, I can't go back to my house and not think about it or feel it or experience it... When you have a committee or when you have an activity that needs to be done, ask for volunteers, as opposed to saying Okay, this is about a minority thing, so you two are you three need to lead this like and even having. A white person leading with a minority person that activity like that's huge. And also having a leader that is able to stand up, and say hey I don't know what it's like to be you in front of everybody, but this is what we can do on our end to help you. That is huge as well.

Four participants spoke about the perception that can be sent out from the organization based upon who is and who is not hired. The participants shared their perceptions of what P1 described as, "poor organizational management and lack of accountability" when division leadership keeps individuals in higher leadership positions when others can see that they are not capable of and are not doing the work. P3 discussed not getting a position after being celebrated for his work and being placed in a different position, "Because you fit the mold." The notion of the "good ole boy" network in which a person is promoted or kept in a position due to historical relationships instead of based upon performance and merit was referenced as a reason to either not share concerns or to look elsewhere for employment. P10 shared, "I'm just going to say it, White school division right? It's a good ole boys club. So if you rock the boat, it's not good." P8 shared his experience, "after a tenure of so many years as a Principal you think, hey I might get promoted or at least have a chance to be promoted.... And I quickly realized after...(x years) that probably wasn't going to happen."

Other personal experiences shared by participants which were reflective of an unsupportive organizational context include one participant being told during the initial job offer that they had two years to get it right without the appropriate coaching and support. This resulted in the participant feeling they were always under examination and made on the spot decision making difficult. P11 shared her experience being placed in an unsupportive organizational context in which her supervisor was new to their position and did not know how to appropriate and effectively lead others, “And I don't think she really understood what to do with me. ...So she treated more like a personal assistant, rather than assistant principal”

Several participants discussed specific events in which they were disciplined in front of others with their supervisor cursing, finger-pointing, and yelling.

- She didn't mind cursing at you yelling, at you intimidating you. She would quickly accuse you of something, then find out, she was wrong, but would not apologize. P11
- She was horrible. I mean horrible. Talks to you ... and is pointing her finger at you. P6
- I'll never forget that entire time. ... that's all I heard was, you know I'm not a good leader, and if I don't straighten this thing out...then I shouldn't be at the school. P12

P11 shared how the unpredictable behavior of a supervisor resulted in the leadership team not knowing what to expect, “You know, and then to praise you one day and a few days later blast you so you just never knew, who you were going to get.”

Experiences which centered on a lack of trust seemed to be consistent markers of unsupportive organizational climates with multiple participants sharing personal accounts.

P1 detailed an experience in which his staff had shared with him that his supervisor had been asking staff how he was doing, what he was not doing, and other evaluative type comments,

I didn't appreciate him going through other channels and other people to find out something about me when you can simply ask me. ... If you want to know about me...I say you can ask me. I'm not going to be dishonest with you. You know I'll tell you everything that you want to know, everything you need to know, but that I think it puts employees in an uncomfortable difficult situation by asking them things about me that they don't feel comfortable divulging you know.

Other organizational concerns related to evaluation that participants shared were not receiving required evaluations, not being provided with ongoing feedback and support, and being surprised by being reassigned to a new position without having been told of concerns prior to the end of year evaluation. P5 shared about learning of reassignment when he was handed a new contract and the impact it had on how he works to ensure he provides clear and honest feedback coupled with administrative support for teachers who he supervises that need to improve.

P10 shared an experience in which her integrity was challenged by supervisors and a decision overturned without proof, “pretty much my integrity was questioned. My character was questioned, my staff’s character was questioned and that just I literally sat in my office and I was like this is not happening right now.”

P6 detailed an experience in which a central office leader asked her to back-date documents so that the division would be in compliance, “I was told to take one for the team... that made me want to leave the school division.” And she did.

Research Question One

What are Black administrator perspectives of supervisor behaviors? Black administrator perspectives of supervisor behaviors identified during analysis fell into supportive and unsupportive. Throughout the interviews participants consistently spoke about supervisors they had who either had or hadn’t made them feel supported as demonstrated by their behaviors. Supervisors who are seen as being poor leaders exhibit unsupportive characteristics that show a lack of care and concern for the participants while supportive leaders ensure that the individual has what they need to be successful and knows that they are respected and valued.

Statements from Participants narratives indicated that the perception is that unsupportive behaviors show a lack of care and concern:

- I haven't received feedback ... we didn't do a mid-year goal, he just put information in there and didn't even talk to me about it. I had it, I went in there and read it, but we didn't meet and discuss or debrief. P2

- They always say we need minority staff. And some of my supervisors who are really, really trusted I'm very transparent with them. And I'm like you actually don't want minorities. How do I know that? Because you could bring people in, but what type of support system do you put in place? And I often ask them- do you know what it's like being the only person in a room? P3
- Am I going to be that token black person in this situation? Because I know that yeah that perception I kind of am the token...but now I'm positioning myself for a better opportunity. P3
- I felt there wasn't a great deal of communication, I felt like this administrator, this Supervisor held everything in. It was tough, I felt set isolated. I felt like you know wronged. P4
- There's room for powerful conversations even small conversations ...but it's about truthfulness about being truthful. It doesn't have to be you know, cut you at your core and tear you down, it can be constructive. P4
- It was very rude and unprofessional... She just barked demands. P6
- She did not value any of our time. P6
- You just cannot bulldoze your way in, and I do think that administrators when they come into a school division they need to be really mindful of how they approach everyone because you can have a situation where this staff turns off. P6
- You really don't know what I believe. And you really don't care to ask who I am. P8

- His evaluations for me were extremely judgmental and unfair...Before he came aboard, she actually did our evaluation... I always had an exemplary before he came on board. I don't know who was communicating with her, but I think his actions changed her views on me because before he came things were great and after he left things changed. P11
- Full transparency, I think sometimes it's just lip service which is your doing this activity or you're doing this, the initiative, just because this is what we need to do, and there's not really buy in from the top about that um so that that makes a big difference. P12

Participants frequently described situations in which they perceived their supervisor was supportive by ensuring that they had what they needed to be successful and making sure they knew that they were respected and valued. P12 shared a personal experience that helped to form his perception of his supervisor during a tumultuous time:

Like I was trying to wrap my brain around what's going on and then working with my son because he's like you know why did that cop kill George Floyd and whatnot. I had not my direct supervisor, but a supervisor that I work with, send an email just saying, 'Hey just checking in just seeing how things are going,' and that meant the world to me. And I knew that person really understood, stepped outside of themselves and said okay there's probably a group of employees that are hurting right now.

Just because we're in leadership roles doesn't mean that you know we're perfect and we're made of steel, but that went a long way. I was telling my siblings that, I was telling every

other you know African American leader that I know. I was like you won't believe I just got an email asking how are we doing, and if there's anything we need, let us know.

I mean that right there was like... that will forever change my life, and I know that that person really truly cares about us. And I understand that was a difficult time for everybody, but especially for me, looking at as a black male saying that and also having mixed emotions, because I have two brothers that are cops... For me, I have to be very careful about what we talk about with them and I shared with my son that not all cops are bad. You know you have uncles in law enforcement. They're cops so they're good and try to have him relate that way.

But I'll never forget that email that was sent, and I felt like it was genuine and it was true and that right there like- wherever that person's going I'm going to go with that person because they truly understand what's going on.

Other participants also shared experiences with supervisors which resulted in the individual feeling that their supervisor was supportive:

- I felt proud and happy and excited for our staff and our school to be recognized in those areas because it just showed that the hard work that we're doing paid off. P1
- He's not intimidated by me in the least bit. He talks to me. I'm truly respected as an individual. P4
- And anything that I needed support they were very supportive and it was a wonderful environment I would be there, right now, still if I hadn't moved to a different location in the state. P6

- She's just as invested in my success, as I am so I found it really helpful. P7
- Yeah so and I felt the trust factor because he trusted me, so I've trusted him to say hey I'm just letting you know this is what's going on, and I want to be upfront and honest with them so. P9
- Seeing somebody see things in you that you don't see ... giving you that opportunity that many people don't get has been great for me in my career. P9
- I mean in opportunity, I want to pursue or anything I want to do, I get supported. P9
- And one thing that I really appreciated was when he said- I want to understand, but I can never fully understand. P10
- And I knew that person really understood, stepped outside of themselves and said okay there's probably a group of employees that are hurting right now. P12

Research Question Two

Why do certain behaviors of supervisors influence Black administrators decisions regarding employment? Analysis of the data for research question two required that I attempt to determine why the individual participants were influenced by their supervisors while also drawing larger connections across the lived experiences of all twelve participants. It is important to note that I was fully cognizant that I am an outside observer attempting to make meaning of experiences I can never fully understand and worked to eliminate bias I may bring so that the participants experiences and impact on their decision making were examined clearly. To determine *why* behaviors influence decision making it was necessary to examine the behavior

and what explicitly the behavior *does* that impacts the participant. Table 3 provides an overview of each of the administrative behaviors identified through theme analysis.

Table 3

RQ2 Why Do Certain Behaviors of Supervisors Influence Black Administrator Decisions

Regarding Employment

Administrative behaviors	What does the supervisor's behavior do that impacts the participant?	Why did the behavior influence participant decisions regarding employment
Supportive administrative behaviors		
Providing Clear Expectations and Meaningful Feedback	Helps the participant understand what is expected of them and what it will take to be successful.	Results in increased confidence and/or skill improvement
Providing Opportunities to Grow and Showcase Talents	Ensures the participant has the skills or resources to acquire the skill needed to be successful.	Results in participant being provided with recognition and reinforcement.
Creating Opportunities for Peer Networking	Provides safe opportunities to enhance skills; builds peer relationships; and	Results in increased confidence, feelings of belongingness; and
Providing Appropriate Mentoring	When focused on concerns specific to Black administrators provides intentional acknowledgement that the participant may have a different experience which requires different support.	When focused on concerns specific to Black administrators results in the participant feeling valued, safe, and more able to be their true selves.
Unsupportive administrative behaviors		
Allowing a Racialized School Climate	Ignores, whether intentionally or not, the true issues being faced	Results in the participant not feeling safe.

	<p>by school stakeholders.</p> <p>Reinforces existing inequities.</p> <p>Has different values or beliefs</p>	<p>Makes you feel like you can't be yourself.</p> <p>Makes you physically feel bad.</p> <p>Results in less personal and professional growth.</p>
<p>Creating an Unsupportive Organizational Context</p>	<p>Publicly chastises the employee-sometimes includes yelling and cursing</p> <p>Promoting or allowing ineffective employees to stay in high level positions</p> <p>Making assumptions and not providing opportunity for participant input</p> <p>Not providing clear expectations and feedback or by lack of encouraging advancement</p>	<p>Humiliates the participant</p> <p>Discourages risk taking</p> <p>Creates a belief that career advancement is not based on performance or aptitude.</p> <p>Creates a lack of trust in supervisors and/or division</p> <p>Impacts career advancement opportunities particularly when demotions are instituted without ongoing evaluative processes which provide the participant the opportunity to improve.</p>

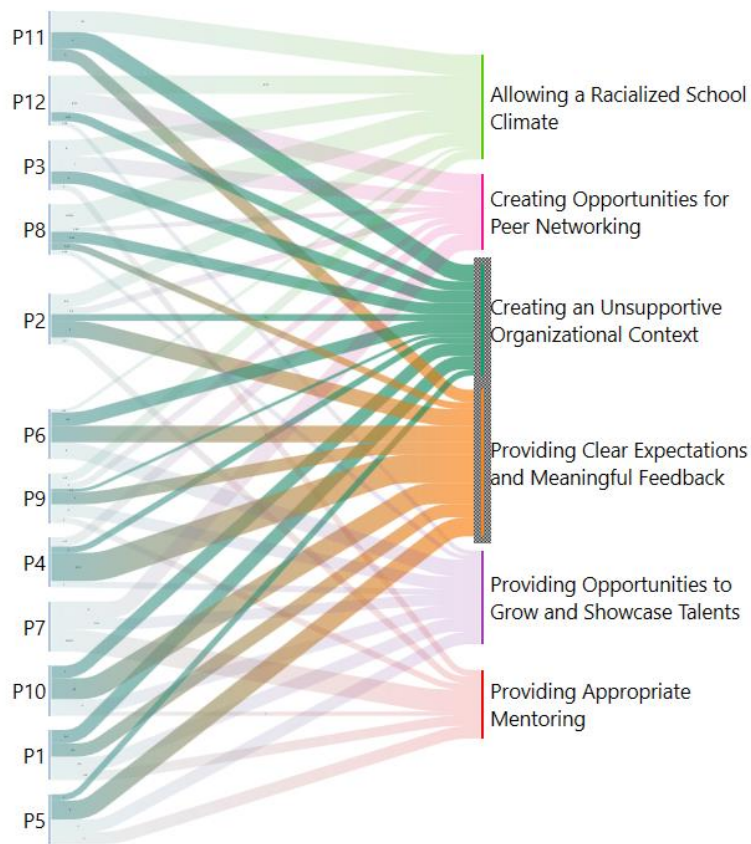
Certain behaviors of supervisors influenced the participants' decisions regarding employment because they resulted in outcomes that were perceived and experienced as either positively or negatively affecting the participant. Positive outcomes included increased confidence or skill improvement, recognition, feelings of belongingness and safety, and being valued as an individual. Negative outcomes resulted in the participants experiencing many feelings such as humiliation, fear, and a lack of trust and resulted in participants being discouraged to take risks or apply for positions, moving to a different school division, and feeling physically ill at times.

Research Question Three

Which behaviors of supervisors most influence Black administrators' employment decisions? The participants shared their experiences and perceptions of supervisors from the School Board to school level and reflected upon their role in decision making through. While both supportive and unsupportive administrative behaviors influenced decision making, the administrative behavior identified as having the largest overall influence on participant decision making was providing clear expectations and meaningful feedback. The ability to have clear directives and ongoing opportunities to reflect on performance allowed participants to meet the expectations of their employer while laying the foundation for personal growth and career advancement. Within the category of unsupportive administrative behaviors creating an unsupportive organizational context had the largest influence on participant decision making. Unsupportive work contexts created by unfair hiring and evaluation practices and mistreatment of employees created a lack of trust and resulted in participants either wanting to or actually leaving an employer. Figure 3 shows a visual representation of the influence each of the behaviors had on decision making.

Figure 3

RQ 1: Administrative Behaviors with the Most Influence on Participant Decision Making



Note: The Sankey diagram in Figure 3 provides an illustration of the impact of unsupportive supervisor behaviors on participant decision making. The thickness of the line from each behavior to the participant is reflective on the influence that theme had on participant decision making.

Summary of Data Analysis

The purpose of this study was to aid in the understanding of how the employment decisions of Black administrators are impacted by the behaviors of their supervisors. Interviews were conducted with twelve Black public school administrators in Virginia to find commonalities among their lived experiences in order to identify practices which influence their decision making. The interviews were transcribed, identifiable information removed, and entered into ATLAS.ti 22 qualitative software and read multiple times. Notes were recorded as themes consistent amongst their experiences emerged and were identified as supervisory behaviors which impacted participant decision making. The interview transcripts were analyzed and coded. Table - provide an overview of the coding system utilized. The codes were then grouped into those that show administrative support and those that do not. Individual participant experiences were then analyzed to identify how the supervisor's behavior influenced decision making and to record what outcome it had.

Chapter 5. Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Introduction

The central research question addressed by this study is how the employment decisions of Black public school administrators in Virginia are influenced by the behaviors of their supervisors. Chapter 1 provided an introduction to the problem and outlined the research framework and questions. Chapter 2 provided an overview of the essential literature and body of research preceding this study. In Chapter 3 the research methodology and design were described. In Chapter 4 participants' experiences were shared and analysis of their experiences were conducted so that commonalities could be identified and the research questions addressed.

The phenomenological study yielded specific supervisory behaviors and practices that could be examined and evaluated for their effectiveness when intentionally implemented with fidelity or conversely intentionally identified and retrained.

Discussion

While prior research has examined the recruitment and retention of minority administrators, there has been a gap in the research which provides a focus on the lived experience of Black public school administrators with the goal of identifying how the behaviors of supervisors influence their decision making. By participating in the interviews the participants provided a glimpse into their experiences and aided in enhancing the body of knowledge intended to support the hiring and retention of Black educators and ultimately the educational experience of all students. Examination of commonalities across their experiences resulted in the identification of supervisory behaviors which impacted their decision making. The

supervisor behaviors fell into two categories, those that resulted in the participant feeling supported and those that had the opposite effect; both impacted Black administrator's decisions regarding employment. Supportive supervisor behaviors which had a positive impact on decision making were: providing clear expectations and meaningful feedback, opportunities to grow and showcase talents, mentoring, and creating opportunities for peer networking. Unsupportive supervisor behaviors such as ineffective organizational management of ineffective employees, and lack of consistent expectations and communication had negative impacts on participant decision making.

Conclusions

The employment decisions of Black public school administrators are impacted by the behaviors of supervisors in both positive and negative ways. Participants who had supervisors that work intentionally to provide them with the supports needed for their success reported wanting to stay with a school division while participants whose supervisors did not intentionally provide supports but instead created unsupportive work environments either thought about leaving or left the school division to pursue opportunities in divisions where they felt they would be better supported.

Research Question One

What are black administrator perspectives of supervisor behaviors? Identification of Black administrator perspectives of supervisor behaviors began as the participants shared their personal experiences and feelings. Through their experiences the participants detailed real situations that had taken place and provided information about how it made them feel and how

they responded. Supervisors who displayed unsupportive behaviors were perceived as being uncaring and uninvested in the growth of the Black administrator. Supervisors who were perceived to be supportive displayed behaviors which made the participant feel trusted and cared for.

Research Question Two

Why do certain behaviors of supervisors influence Black administrators decisions regarding employment? Certain behaviors influence Black administrators decisions regarding employment because they elicit emotions and physical responses. The participants utilized their experiences with and understanding of the supervisor to determine how they should interact with the supervisor and to determine whether a division was a supportive place to work. Behaviors which helped the participant better understand expectations, provided needed resources, and intentionally provided safe opportunities for peer networking and skill building positively impacted decision making while those which negatively impacted the participant resulted in their decisions regarding employment being negatively impacted.

Research Question Three

Which behaviors of supervisors most influence Black administrators? Behaviors which result in an unsupportive organizational context where unfair hiring and evaluation practices are in place, unprofessional treatment of employees such as yelling and public correction are allowed, and Black administrators are left feeling discouraged and untrusted were noted to have the greatest impact on decision making. However, amongst those practices identified as showing

support, providing clear expectations and meaningful feedback had the most influence on the participants' decision making regarding employment.

Recommendations for Practice

Division Recommendations

The behaviors of supervisors play a significant role in an employee's job satisfaction and are continually under the microscope of those they lead. For this reason, if the goal for a division is to truly focus on the retention of Black administrators, it is recommended that focus on the behaviors of supervisors begins at the top level of leadership.

School Board members are either elected or appointed in the Commonwealth of Virginia and are not employees of the school division; however they are the top level of leadership as they hold the responsibility of hiring and evaluating the Superintendent. It is here that an examination of behaviors should begin and continue through all levels of leadership within the division.

School Boards should ensure that they hire a Superintendent whose beliefs and expectations align with theirs and should provide clear directives regarding their expectations related to the goal. To develop a shared vision regarding the hiring and retention of Black administrators, School Board members should speak openly and publicly about their goals and provide ongoing feedback regarding initiatives related to the goal. The School Board should task the Superintendent with developing a plan to ensure supervisors are exhibiting behaviors which result in administrators feeling supported.

In order to implement the plan the Superintendent should determine an appropriate framework for systems change and utilize the change process to create shared vision. The

Superintendent should facilitate a division stakeholder team in the development of a process which will:

1. Educate supervisors on the supportive and unsupportive behaviors and ensure that the expectations regarding supervisor behaviors are clearly understood,
2. Provide opportunities for the supervisors to develop skills and receive feedback,
3. Ensure supervisors have the resources necessary to support administrators;
4. Ensure that expectations regarding the goal are inspected consistently and that supervisors showing unsupportive behaviors are addressed.

Recommendations for Individual Supervisors

While addressing the recruitment and retention of Black administrators is best approached from the division level, individual supervisors who are focused on ensuring that their behaviors impact the decision making of Black administrators in a positive instead of negative manner are recommended to:

1. Ensure they are aware of the supportive and unsupportive behaviors and their impact on Black administrator decision making,
2. Conduct a self-analysis of their actions in regards to the supportive and unsupportive behaviors by creating a chart which they would utilize to identify specific situations with Black administrators and what their own behaviors were;
3. Develop trusting relationships with Black administrators by implementing supportive administrative behaviors with intentionality and owning behaviors which are unsupportive by addressing and correcting future behavior.

Specific Relationship Building Strategies. Individuals can work to build strong relationships with Black administrators by implementing some of the below strategies:

- Be intentional.
 - Invite Black administrators to intentional conversations regarding their perception of the work environment. The supervisor should be honest and straightforward with their goals and provide space for individuals to share with them about their own experiences if the Black administrators feel comfortable but should not use their position of power to mandate participation.
 - Develop organizational structures that are specifically aligned with supporting Black administrators
 - Develop and implement systemic procedures which ensure the consistent implementation of evaluative practices to include goal setting, alignment of professional development and resources to meet goals, ongoing feedback, and opportunities to address concerns directly and celebrate accomplishments openly.
 - Celebrate accomplishments and provide opportunities to showcase talents both formally through experiences such as presentations for the School Board, leading division initiative, nomination for awards, and informally through activities such as identifying the Black administrator as a division mentor, providing specific praise and feedback during one-to-one

conversations, recognition of personal accomplishments such as graduations or the purchase of a new home.

- Implement formal peer networking opportunities and support informal networking. Ensure Black administrators are aware of your support for networking by providing time and space without making it feel like a work requirement. Ask the group to identify one contact person who you can check in with to assess the needs of the group.
- Assign mentors with intentionality to ensure the Black administrator has a mentor who is a model supervisor that consistently evidences implementation of division expectations, who exhibits the characteristics of a supportive administrator, communicates effectively, and is able to support their professional growth.
- Engage in conversations intentionally. Don't let the fear of saying the wrong thing cause you to say nothing.
- Take ownership for your own behaviors and how they may impact others.
- Communicate openly about goals related to the recruitment and retention of Black administrators with other stakeholders.
- Ensure other supervisors under your direction are aware of your expectations and monitor frequently.

- Be aware of what you don't know. Don't pretend to understand experiences that you have not had, but instead acknowledge that you may not be able to understand the experiences of the other person.
- Be mindful. Remain aware of the larger climate by staying in tune with national and/or local happenings and what their potential impact could have on Black administrators. Reach out with words of support and encouragement during difficult times.
- Ensure fair hiring practices.
 - Ensure that position postings reflect the desired skills and experience required for the position.
 - Screen all applicants using the same standard. Interview all qualified applicants and do not interview unqualified applicants.
 - Ensure consistent interview protocols are implemented which ensure all interview panel members understand the job, desired skills, and qualifications and processes for conducting interviews and maintaining confidentiality.
 - Do not promote or advance employees who are not meeting expectations in their current position.
- Implement evaluation models with fidelity.
 - Ensure supervisors have the appropriate training and resources to effectively evaluate employees.
 - Ensure employees are provided with explicit expectations and ongoing feedback.

- Hold all employees accountable consistently. Do not shy away from your responsibility to set expectations, monitor and follow up.
- Treat others the way you would like to be treated. Ensure that your actions do not create an unsupportive environment.
 - Do not yell at employees.
 - Do not address employee issues in front of others.
 - Do not show favoritism
 - Do not speak about employees in front of one another.
- Be a model.
 - Remember that you set the standard and others are watching your lead.
 - Do not expect something of others that you are unwilling to do.
 - Address issues that occur that may result in an unsupportive environment.
 - Hold yourself accountable.

Recommendations for Further Research

This study was limited to the examination of the lived experiences of twelve administrators from the Commonwealth of Virginia and focused exclusively on the behaviors of supervisors which impact Black administrator decision making regarding employment.

Recommendations to extend this future research include:

- Replicating the study with a larger sample;
- Extending the research to other groups of administrators to determine if the findings regarding supervisory practices that impact decision making are replicable;

- Examining the emotional and physical effects of racialized school climates on school personnel inclusive of all ethnicities;
- Examine the emotional and physical effects of unsupportive organizational contexts on school personnel inclusive of all ethnicities;
- Study the correlations between a)the impact of supervisor behaviors on Black administrators decision making, b) Black teacher retention rates, and c) student performance by ethnicity; and
- Analyze the impact of the implementation of leadership training which focuses on developing supportive supervisory behaviors

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Gatekeeper Invitation Email to Participants

Hello,

I hope you are well. I am reaching out today to invite you to participate in research being conducted by Annie Wilson Whitaker, a doctoral candidate at East Tennessee State University (ETSU). She is conducting research to aid in understanding how Black public school administrator employment decisions are impacted by the behaviors of supervisors in Virginia. She has asked me to participate in the research by serving as a gatekeeper. This means I am identifying and contacting Black public school administrators who I believe may be interested in participating in the study. Ms. Whitaker, a White, public school administrator, asked me to serve as a gatekeeper because she believes it is important for those who choose to participate in the study to feel comfortable discussing information which could be sensitive and is utilizing introductory gatekeepers who are trusted by potential participants to serve as the method through which individuals are invited to participate and are able to vet the researcher.

If you choose to participate you would sign a consent form and complete an initial online survey which should take about five minutes and is intended to help Ms. Whitaker identify participants who are representative of the diverse school populations in Virginia by selecting individuals who are from both urban and rural areas, work in schools with large and small populations of Black students, are supervised by administrators from varying ethnicities, and have indicated that they have weighed the behaviors of supervisors when making decisions about employment.

Those selected to participate in the one hour long, one-to-one interviews will be asked to respond to questions in an online secure Zoom meeting regarding employment decisions they have made which were impacted by the behavior(s) of their supervisor(s).

It is important that you know the following information:

- Participation is voluntary
- Your name will not be included on any published materials.
- You will be provided a copy of the transcript interview to review.
- You will need to complete the initial five minute survey.
- The one hour one-to-one interview will take place online in a secure Zoom meeting room.

Please think about participating. Participation is voluntary. If you have any questions regarding the research please contact Annie Wilson Whitaker at XXX or by emailing her at XXX.

Thank you so much for taking the time to read this.

If you would like to participate please [click here to complete the survey](#) by Thursday, January 20th.

I wish you all the best.

Sincerely,

Appendix B: Online Survey
Initial Online Questionnaire

Introduction

Thank you for taking the time to complete this initial online questionnaire. The purpose of this study is to aid in understanding how Black public school administrator employment decisions are impacted by the behaviors of supervisors in Virginia. This initial questionnaire will help the researcher identify 12 individuals to participate in a one hour one-to-one interview in a secure online Zoom meeting during a time slot provided by the researcher and selected by you.

The researcher will select participants for the one hour interview by utilizing the following brief questions to identify 12 individuals from across the state of Virginia who represent both urban and rural areas, work in schools with large and small populations of Black students, are supervised by administrators from varying ethnicities, and have indicated that the behaviors of their supervisor(s) were a component of their decision making regarding employment.

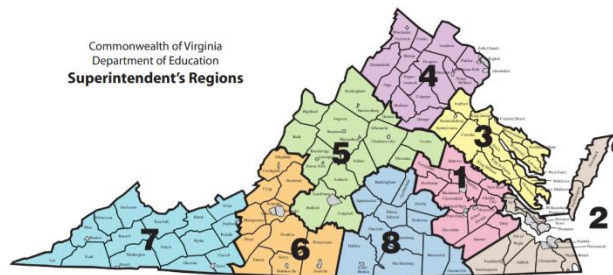
Your email address will be collected so that the researcher can communicate with you to let you know whether you will be asked to participate in the one hour survey. Your email address will be removed from all materials and will only be utilized to provide follow up communication. A summary of the number of individuals who responded for each question will be included in the final research, however this information will be statistical only and will not include any information that could in any way allow for those who responded to be identified.

Those individuals who are chosen to participate in the one hour interview will receive a follow up email providing dates and times to choose from. If you have questions prior to completing this brief survey please contact the researcher, Annie Wilson Whitaker at xxx or by emailing her at xxx. Your participation is voluntary.

Questions:

1. Are you a Black public school administrator who is either currently serving in a Virginia public school or who has retired from employment within the last two years?
2. During your time as a public school administrator did the behavior(s) of your supervisor(s) ever impact your decision making regarding employment in any way?
3. Please indicate which Region(s) you were employed in when you made decisions regarding employment which were impacted by the behavior(s) of your supervisor(s).

Check all that apply. Please note that you will never be asked to identify a specific school division. The intent of this question is to identify participants from across the state and will not be used to narrow location any further than by region.



4. Approximately how many students attended school in the division(s) you worked in when you made decisions regarding employment which were impacted by the behavior(s) of

your supervisor(s)? Check all that apply: Note: This information can be found by going to <https://schoolquality.virginia.gov/>. Select *division full report* and click *enrollment*.

- a. Less than 5,000
- b. Between 5,000 and 15,000
- c. More than 15,000

5. Approximately what percentage of students in the employing school divisions are Black?

Note: This information can be found by going to <https://schoolquality.virginia.gov/>.

Select *division full report* and click *enrollment*.

- a. 0-25%
- b. 25-50%
- c. 50-75%
- d. 75-100%

6. What was the ethnicity of the supervisor(s) whose behaviors impacted your decision making regarding employment?

- e. Asian
- f. American Indian
- g. Black
- h. Hispanic
- i. Native Hawaiian
- j. Multiple Races
- k. White

7. Are you available during the month of January to participate in a one hour interview?

Note: Participants will be given a variety of interview times within these to choose from.

a. Yes

b. No

8. Will you be physically in the United States during the interview date and time you select?

Note: This is a required criteria for participation due to IRB requirements.

9. What is your email address? This information will be used to contact you for follow up regarding selection for the one-to-one interviews.

Appendix C: Interview Protocol

Overview

Twelve, Black public school administrators in Virginia will participate in a one hour interview during the month of January, 2022. The goal of these interviews is to aid in understanding how Black public school administrator employment decisions are impacted by the behaviors of supervisors in Virginia. The researcher will examine commonalities among their experiences in order to identify behaviors which impact the employment decisions of Black administrators. The identified behaviors could later be used to develop leadership practices which will positively impact the retention of Black administrators in school divisions.

Interview Procedures

Due to restrictions from the coronavirus interviews will be conducted utilizing Zoom meetings through use of a secured license to ensure privacy for participants. The interview will be recorded and transcribed and provided to the participants for review. Open-ended interviewing is essential to this phenomenological study as this helps to ensure the participant is able to communicate their experience and point of view. To allow for the fluid interview format necessary in order for the researcher to understand the lived experiences an outline of general questions geared towards answering the overarching questions have been developed. Utilizing initial questions to guide the focus of research through a qualitative design process will result in detailed questions developed throughout the process that are aligned with better understanding the essence of the phenomena

Interview Script

Researcher: Hello, thanks so much for being here today and for choosing to participate in this research study. I'd like to remind you that this interview is being recorded and would like to verify that you have signed the consent form and have provided that to me via email and that you are currently physically present in the United States.

The participant will verify completion of consent form orally.

Researcher: The purpose of this study is to aid in understanding how Black public school administrator employment decisions are impacted by the behaviors of supervisors in Virginia. I am interviewing 12 individuals and will examine commonalities among their experiences in order to identify behaviors which impact the employment decisions of Black administrators. The identified behaviors could later be used to develop leadership practices which will positively impact the retention of Black administrators in school divisions.

Today I will be asking you open ended questions. This will allow you to share as much or as little information about the question as you would like. While I do have ten questions prepared today we may not get to every question and that is okay. I also want to remind you that your name and identifying information will be removed from printed materials

Interview Questions

1. Talk with me about your interactions with your supervisor. How do you perceive them? How do they make you feel?
2. Can you point to any specific situations with your supervisor that created an emotional response for you?
3. How did your supervisor's behavior change the way you thought or felt about your job?
4. Did your supervisor exhibit any behaviors that made you consider leaving your position?
5. What did your supervisor do to encourage and support you?
6. How did you feel about the job related feedback you received from your supervisor?

7. What practices did your supervisor engage in that resulted in you wanting to stay with the organization?
8. What practices did your supervisor engage in that resulted in you wanting to leave the organization?
9. If I observed a meeting led by your supervisor that you and coworkers attended, what would I see?
10. If I were to be a part of a conversation on equity led by your supervisor what would I hear and see?
11. Is there any information that you want to share with me that I haven't asked about which may have impacted your employment decisions?

Conclusion:

Thank you so much for participating. I will be providing you with a transcript of the interview for your review in the next two weeks. Please confirm that you have received and reviewed the transcript within one week of receiving the transcript. I can be contacted by email or phone at the numbers I have provided to you should you have any questions.

Thank you again for giving your time and for talking with me today.

VITA

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