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Workplace Climate and Culture Experiences of Black LGBTQ Public School K-12 Educators

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This is to certify that the doctoral dissertation by

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Walden University
2024

Abstract

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MS, Walden University, 2018

MS, Walden University, 2014

BS, Kent State University, 2000

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Industrial and Organizational Psychology

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Abstract

Recruiting and retaining Black educators is a problem in the United States. Research into specific subgroups within this population, such as Black LBGTQ educators, can help identify ways to address this problem. In this qualitative study, five individuals were recruited who self-identified as Black or African American, LGBTQ, hold a current teaching certificate, have taught more than three years, and were 30 years or older. Data were collected from participants through semistructured interviews, and those data were analyzed. Interpretative phenomenological analysis was used to allow for their voices, perspectives, and experiences to be heard directly. Findings revealed 11 themes associated with how participants experienced climate and culture, and factors attributed to their experience of organizational climate and culture: (a) sweep it under the rug, (b) supportive atmosphere, (c) exclusionary experiences, (d) being overlooked, (e) silenced and ignored, (f) positive environment, (g) consistent contradictions, (h) covert communication, (i) bigoted remarks, (j) deficiencies in leadership, and (k) hush, hush vibe are the resulting themes. The findings exemplify the dynamic nature of climate and culture in organizations seen in supportive relationships, deficits in leadership, being unheard, and unspoken or covert communications within the workplace. A proliferation of diversity in organizations calls for practitioners of industrial and organizational psychology to be intentional in the application of a cross cultural framework for practice. The findings of this study could have implications for positive social change through helping devise a cross-cultural framework to develop policies and procedures, outline advocacy actions, and promote social justice.

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Dedication

I dedicate this to my son, Jamil, you have no idea how much this all has been for you. May you forever be determined to go for what you know is right, advocate for yourself and others, and live a life worthy of the amazing being you are. For my parents, family and friends who are here only in spirit, thank you for being my Council of Elders when I needed you most. For the Black LGBTQIA+ community, I dedicate this study in the hopes that your voices are intentionally sought out, heard, considered, and included because you belong.

Acknowledgments

"To have faith like water means to believe continuously without ever regressing" (WND-1, 899)

Belief in completing this journey came from determination, overcoming challenges, building confidence, and encouragement. Thank you to my Committee Chair, Dr. Jane Coddington, for your patience, encouragement, insight, and being a voice of reason. Dr. Cynthia Loubier-Ricca, my Committee Member, I appreciate your insights, attention to details I would have never thought of, your directness in feedback, and keeping me focused on the objectives while always being encouraging. I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge the generosity of time given to this study by the expert raters, Bernice Patterson, PhD, LLP, and Kenyata M. Fletcher, Ph.D., LPC, CRADC. You did not have to do it, but I thank you from the bottom of my heart that you took the time to support my study and used your knowledge to assist my path – I am forever grateful. There are no words to acknowledge the five participants who let me into their world by trusting me with their thoughts, concerns, triumphs, and time. You are appreciated beyond words, acknowledged, and important in this world. Your voice has been heard.

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Jamila, who you are and have been someone to laugh and cry with and look up to - thank you. Ticey, when I finished the Master of Science in Mental Health Counseling you commented, "I felt like I graduated, too." You have walked this path with me through many challenges, triumphs, twists, and turns so, you can now feel like you graduated, too. I love you and am grateful for your sisterhood and friendship. Mark Albert, Sr., this journey started together, we never expected the road ahead, but I thank you for the crucial suggestion you made that changed the trajectory of my study. It may have seemed small, but it opened a new avenue for me and has filled a gap. I love you. Phil, Carol, Cristal, Pamela, Teresa, Cheryl, and my cousin, Morris, the check-ins and nudges did not go unnoticed – thank you.

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way, please consider yourself acknowledged it is from my heart to yours I am grateful. It

is PhinisheD.

Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Introduction

A decline in Black educators has been an issue in the United States, beginning with *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*, 347 US 483 (1954), desegregating schools across the country (Milner & Howard, 2004). The decline of their presence means an absence of their culture-specific knowledge, existence as role models, and their ability to engage in culture-based methodologies inaccessible to White educators (Cole, 1986; Irvine, 2003; Milner & Howard, 2004; Villegas & Clewell, 1998). The U.S. Department of Education (2016) stated that when these educators are missing, non-Black students are not afforded the opportunity to be exposed to counternarratives of Black individuals, learn to interact with a person of a different culture and race and interact with them in roles of leadership and authority.

The declines have been attributed to the lack of preparedness in teacher education programs, testing biases, pay rates, placement, cultural understanding, insufficient support, microaggressions, and school climate (Achinstein et al., 2010; Dingus, 2008; Kohli, 2016; Quiñones, 2018; Simon & Johnson, 2015). Microaggressions are dubious, inconspicuous patterns of discrimination that communicate messages of an unfavorable and disparaging nature to or about an individual or group (Nadal et al., 2015). The previously mentioned are considerations while a complete understanding of the factors related to organizational characteristics that exist for Black educators that influence retention justified researching subsets of the population such as Black LGBTQ educators (Achinstein et al., 2010; Ingersoll et al, 2017). Black LGBTQ educators have a unique

perspective and sit at an intersection, unlike the perspective of a heterosexual Black educator or a non-Black LGBTQ educator. How Black LGBTQ educators experience organizational climate and culture due to their intersectional identities differs from that of other educators.

The field of industrial and organizational psychology (IOP) seeks to study how humans behave in organizations and workplace settings (American Psychological Association [APA], 2008). Using IOP to explore the challenge of retaining employees in aspects of education organizations and workplaces such as leadership, recruitment, training, motivation and rewards, race and gender, sexual orientation, intersectionality, and organizational climate and culture present a novel perspective and lens through which to explore the unique experience of this subgroup. The lens of IOP provides a look into factors such as climate and culture in the retention of employees. Kohli (2016) stated that two factors in the retention of Black educators are organizational climate and culture. Wright and Smith (2015) analyzed LGBT perceptions specific to school climate and the impact of school leaders on climate. The respondents reported having rumors spread about them, feeling unsafe due to the surrounding community, perceiving and hearing homophobic remarks, being fearful of job loss, and experiencing increased stress (Wright & Smith, 2015). While the research is comprehensive, it omits organizational culture, and the respondents were overwhelmingly White LGBT educators.

Another study was conducted to examine the experiences of out lesbian and gay educators in California. The researcher, DeJean (2007), sought to study the experiences of gay and lesbian K–12 educators in California who consider themselves to be out in the

classroom. Participants were recruited through local, state, and national requests with no responses from educators of color, leaving no choice but to focus on the experiences of White lesbian and gay educators. As a result of this lack of participation in the study, the author questioned how the experiences of Black lesbian and gay educators are similar or different from that of White gay and lesbian educators. Bearing this in mind, research exclusive to the experiences of Black LGBTQ educators is essential because their absence has proved the need for "education to address the troubling intersections of race and sexuality" (Kumashiro, 2001, pp.20, as cited in DeJean, 2007) and contributes to further understanding retention of Black educators. Bristol (2020) suggested that increasing the numbers of and retaining Black educators will not be solved by campaigns for diversity alone. To advance the understanding of the climate and culture experience of Black LGBTQ educators, add to the knowledge of issues in the retention of Black educators, and inform advocacy, policymaking, and social change all Black educators must be deliberately involved. Framed in interpretative phenomenological analysis while using an IOP lens, an understanding of human behavior, and workplace dynamics, the organization can be analyzed providing an alternative perspective outside education to understand retention.

This chapter contains a discussion of the background of Black educators in the United States and how that history intertwines with LGBTQ educators and federal laws. The need for the retention of Black educators and inclusion of the voices of Black LGBTQ educators to understand retention is discussed in the problem statement. The purpose of the research is explained, and research questions used to guide the research

are presented. A three-pronged theoretical framework, the nature of the study, and definitions of terms are included. Research assumptions, scope and delimitations, limitations, and significance of the study are discussed. The chapter concludes with a summary.

Background

The study was conducted to explore Black LGBTQ educators' experiences of climate and culture within a K-12 education context. The context for this study included but is not limited to the relevant history of the field of education, LGBTQ and Black educators, Black issues, theory, and climate and culture. Articles related to LGBTQ, LGBT, Black, and workplace climate and culture were researched with the available library databases.

Historical and cultural background is necessary to understand Black educators and their intersection within education and the LGBTQ community over time. In the United States, the histories of LGBTQ and Black educators are intertwined. Milner and Howard (2004) provided a historical perspective stating that shifts in the employment of African American educators resulted from the Supreme Court decision on *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*, 347 US 483 (1954), desegregating schools. Before the *Brown* decision, Black educators were revered in the community, held positions as principals, and were an integral part of the community and students' lives. At the beginning of the 20th century, the number of Black educators was close to 70,000 in the field. The *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*, 347 US 483 (1954), court decision significantly changed the climate and culture of schools in the United States for Black educators.

Desegregation had an iatrogenic effect on the educators. According to Milner and Howard (2004), between 1954 and 1965, 38,000 Black educators and administrators across 17 states lost their positions, which was approximately one third of the Black educator workforce. Postsegregation, Black educators experienced demotions, loss of voice in the schooling of Black children, and discrimination in hiring and school assignments (Michigan Law Review, 1966; Milner & Howard, 2004). The benefits of their presence have remained a need for all students and stakeholders in educational organizations (Branch, 2001; Milner & Howard, 2004). The U.S. Department of Education (2016) stated that the presence of Black educators benefits White students because they contradict stereotypes, are seen in leadership roles, and are a vital source of preparation for functioning in a multicultural society. These educators bring cultural knowledge, community, and cultural wealth; introduce culture-based approaches to education not available to their White counterparts; and are role models (Burciaga & Kohli, 2018; Cole, 1986; Irvine, 2003; Milner & Howard, 2004; Villegas & Clewell, 1998).

An intersectional history involving Black educators, LGBTQ, and the field of education is required. A study including Black people would be incomplete without addressing civil rights and its impact on the intersectional existence of Black LGBTQ educators. Discrimination based upon sexual orientation with educators followed the end of World War II, with schools promoting conformity to societal norms in educators. Braukman (2001) reported that after World War II, the charge to search for subversives, including civil rights activists, leftist intellectuals, and homosexuals, was led by the

Florida Legislative Investigation Committee (FLIC), also referred to as the Johns Committee. The committee was active between 1959 and 1963 and deemed homosexuality a problem and pathological, leading to searches for homosexual educators, questioning of individuals, and pressure for educators to leave their positions (Braukman, 2001; Kahn & Gorski, 2016). It was not until the passage of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission [EEOC], n.d.a) that the United States of America prohibited employment discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, and national origin. It was not until June 15, 2020, that the Supreme Court ruled workplace discrimination based on sexual orientation and transgender status as unlawful (EEOC, n.d.b). This history of Black LGBTQ educators intertwines with that of marginalized LGBTQ and nonconforming educators at the intersection of career, sexuality, and race in the form of implicit and explicit school climate and culture.

School climate and culture influence the retention of educators as an indicator of an effective school (Aldridge & Fraser, 2016). There is a tendency to separate climate and culture in research. Schneider et al. (2013) found that integration, or rapprochement, of climate and culture in research is recommended when both are clearly defined, providing building blocks to describe and analyze organizations because the concepts have become more similar to each other. Organizational climate is defined as the fundamental beliefs and values that inform interventions and behaviors within the organization. Organizational culture is summarized as having components visible to outsiders, values by those in authority, and assumptions that are the foundation of the organization (Schneider et al., 2013). These foundations are taught to new hires in the

organization about how things are done and how the organization has developed to what it is. Schneider et al. (2013) advocated for the integration of culture and climate in research to best grasp what happens in an organization and why it happens, the way it does what it does utilizing related concepts. These concepts are a source for analyzing how Black LGBTQ educators navigate relationships with administrators, climate and culture, and microaggressions. The toll navigating relationships can take on Black educators and the need for substantial structural changes to encourage a diverse and inclusive workforce is significant (Gist, 2018).

Diversity climate is one aspect of organizational climate positively related to performance outcomes for organizations when it is positive (Schneider et al., 2013). Diversity climates allow organizations to gain knowledge from a vast pool affecting effectiveness. Trust and openness are related to climate as a component of creating a safe environment for all employees. A lack of safe school climates for LGBTQ educators stems from policies that contribute to increased stress and ineffective workplace culture for LGBTQ educators (Wright, 2010; Wright & Smith, 2013, 2015). Stress from feeling unsafe within the school environment as well as the surrounding community is a common factor for LGBTQ individuals, and Black educators as a result of the *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*, 347 US 483 (1954; Michigan Law Review, 1966; Wright & Smith, 2015). Manley et al. (2011) stated that effective workplace cultures consist of five attributes and 10 core values, including psychosocial well-being. These attributes and values are instrumental in creating an effective workplace culture when supported by

individual and organizational enabling factors. Once an effective workplace culture is established, the consequences spread to stakeholders and other workplace cultures.

The culture and climate of schools are a factor in the retention of Black educators, contributing to the shortages (Kohli, 2018). Statistics between 1987 and 2017 for Black, Hispanic, Asian, American Indian/Alaska Native, and Pacific Islander educators over 29 years in such categories as years of experience indicate a decline in the employment of ALANA (Asian, Latino, Africana, Native American) as compared to their White counterparts (Ingersoll & May, 2011; National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 2017). Shifts in numbers of Black educators who move or leave the profession where they were employed, rates of turnover, sources of turnover, and staffing problems present a case for further investigation beyond successful recruitment or previous retention efforts (Ingersoll et al., 2017).

The argument exists that recruitment and retention of Black educators is grounded in factors associated with organizational characteristics and conditions of schools that warrant further research within subgroups (Achinstein et al., 2010; Ingersoll et al., 2017). Previous efforts sought solutions in changing training programs and lifting barriers such as testing while retention focused on factors such as pay, racism, and differences in culture. Ingersoll and May (2011) suggested that the field of education cannot explain turnover for Black educators without analyzing the organization drawing from an organizational theoretical perspective.

The subject of this study required the combination of an organizational theoretical perspective, intersectional framework, and theory applied to education: equity theory,

critical race theory (CRT), and intersectionality. Equity theory spawned organizational justice theory and assumes that the contributions one makes to the workplace result in fair and equitable returns. Equity theory assumes that comparisons are made between the interactions individuals experience with the employer, managers, and supervisors to those of others and that the perception of equal treatment relative to that of others motivates their actions (Pinder, 2008). According to Taylor and Moghaddam (1994), equity theory questions what people think is fair and examines how they respond when they perceive they are getting more or less than they believe they deserve in the relationship. Educational institutions are often analyzed using a CRT framework to detail how schools operate in ways that uphold the racial status quo (Kohli, 2016). CRT acknowledges the intersectionality of race and class and reveals the persistence of adverse racial climates immersed in interpersonal and institutional inequities (Kohli, 2016).

Intersectionality theory recognizes that the experiences of people are framed through identities that include race, sexual orientation, gender, and social class that are inseparable (Whitfield et al., 2014). The intersectionality aspect of CRT suggests the use of a theory that recognizes that racialized individuals have intersectional experiences that are greater than just race or sexuality while allowing the exploration of hostile racial climates for Black people as well as their underrepresentation in education (Cho et al., 2013; Crenshaw, 1989; DeCuir-Gunby & Gunby, 2016; Kohli, 2016; Solórzano, 1997).

Analyzing experiences of Black LGBTQ without taking intersections such as race, gender, sexuality, and sex into account exposes the constraints inherent in a myopic framework such as solely utilizing equity theory or CRT (Crenshaw, 1989).

Intersectionality has been explored in multiple disciplines but is yet to be embraced in the study of workplaces to examine the framework of discrimination and networks of power and inequality (Rodriguez et al., 2016). The intersectional nature of the lives of Black LGBTQ educators requires a theory that recognizes the need for their voices to be heard.

Problem Statement

Not enough is known about the climate and culture experiences of LGBTQ educators who identify as African American or Black in the workplace and how these intersectional experiences might contribute to their lack of presence in the field of education. Even though they are a needed and are a valuable asset to the field of education, despite continued extensive efforts to recruit, train, and retain Black educators, shortages and high turnover rates continue (Carver-Thomas, 2018; Gist, 2018; Villegas & Irvine, 2010). Black educators have a 21.1% turnover rate, 60% higher than non-Black educators (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017). These turnover rates are attributed to such things as pay-to-debt ratios, overrepresentation in schools with high turnover rates, cultural differences, hostile racial climates, racial microaggressions, lack of administrative and collegial support, and school climate (Achinstein et al., 2010; Dingus, 2008; Kohli, 2016; Quiñones, 2018; Simon & Johnson, 2015). While research has been conducted on climate in schools for LGBTQ educators, few studies focus on the climate and culture experiences of Black LGBTQ educators to examine the workplace.

LGBTQ educators have reported stress due to school climate, feeling their jobs are at risk, feeling unsafe in the community, and hearing demeaning language about their identities (Wright & Smith, 2015). While LGBTQ educators report this, the

aforementioned research indicates that Black educators who are LGBTQ bring to the workplace group membership at the intersection of sexual orientation, gender, and race where a safe and accepting space may not be provided because of one or more of their identities (Crenshaw, 1989; Kumashiro, 2001; Wright & Smith, 2015). The intersectional nature of their identities makes them more vulnerable to discrimination and violent occurrences in the workplace than their White counterparts (Galupo & Resnick, 2016) because of climate and culture. Research focused on school climate for LGBT educators has been done; it does not focus on the voices of Black LGBTQ educators, nor does it provide information distinctive to their experiences of organizational climate.

Organizational climate is the perception and interrelated experiences, beliefs, and values of people in the workplace, while the underlying assumptions, worldview, and values that control the organization create its culture (Schneider et al., 2013). Black LGBTQ educators are in a profession that assumes heteronormative school climates and Whitestream norms and values that often silence LGBTQ educators (Burciaga, & Kohli, 2018; Shelton & Barnes, 2016). The organizational climate supports these assumptions, worldviews, and values upheld in the culture where they work (Schneider et al., 2013). LGBTQ educators have reported hearing homophobic comments from other educational professionals, including administrators and students (Smith et al., 2008), contributing to their perception of climate and culture. They have also reported a lack of intervention by administrators when teachers and students use homophobic language in addition to hearing racist and transphobic comments from administrators (Smith et al., 2008; Wright & Smith, 2015) who are responsible for the climate and culture of the school. The

presence of homophobic, racist, and transphobic language puts Black LGBTQ educators in a peculiar intersectional position in the workplace. As previously mentioned, research has concentrated on the climate in schools where LGBTQ educators work with minimal information from Black LGBTQ educators. A broad understanding of factors that contribute to a lack of Black educators requires understanding organizational culture, a component missing in research, and a facet of this study.

Black LGBTQ educators have intersectional identities as a part of marginalized communities that can expose them to bias that contributes to their experiences (Crenshaw, 1989; Gillborn, 2015) within the workplace because of the organizational climate and culture. Schools often have policies that address racist language, discrimination, and harassment. They do not always have policies against homophobic language, specific policies against harassment or discrimination due to sexual orientation that result in feeling at risk or unsafe in the workplace based on identity (Wright & Smith, 2015). The existence or lack of policies addressing heterogeneity in the workforce contributes to the climate and culture of the workplace and how employees interpret the equitable application of policies by leadership.

Whether intentionally or unwittingly, the procedures and policies have perpetuated a traditional culture and structure, disadvantaging some groups to the advantage of others based on identity creating inequity influencing teacher effectiveness (Agocs & Burr, 1996; Polat et al., 2017). Race, gender identity, sexual orientation, microaggressions, and color blindness in the workplace culture and climate have been shown to erode the desire for professional advancement, communicate hostility, and

reduce the retention of Black educators (Galupo & Resnick, 2016; Kohli, 2016; Nadal et al., 2016). Black LGBTQ educators need a climate and culture in the schools to allow them to feel safe and provide the best education to students, resulting in reasons to stay in the field.

Historically LGBTQ educators have reported feeling unsafe in school environments due to sexual orientation and gender (Markow & Fein, 2005). A qualitative study referred to as pivotal (Jackson, 2007) reported factors that influence the outness of LGBTQ educators in the workplace, with not one respondent being African American or Black. In a two-survey quantitative study conducted over 8 years, Wright and Smith (2015) analyzed LGBTQ perceptions of school climate and the impact of school leaders on climate. The respondents reported having rumors spread about them, feeling unsafe due to the surrounding community, perceiving homophobia, and being fearful of job loss. These respondents overwhelmingly identified as White or European in 2008 (85.4%) and 2011 (89%). Without the voices of Black LGBTQ educators, the lack of understanding about facets of the environment and the landscape of organizational climate and culture for LGBTQ educators remains incomplete. The inclusion of Black LGBTQ educators provides a unique perspective of school climate and culture at the intersection of sexual orientation and race and uncovers reasons for the lack of their representation in the profession.

The research results inform the field of education in how to best develop welcoming climates and cultures for Black LGBTQ educators. It is positioned to provide the field of education crucial information about the retention of a critical group of

educators in the field. The research addresses the need for policies that create safe places for all staff. Additionally, it incorporates the fields of IOP and education to explore the experience of workplace climate and culture for Black LGBTQ educators. Testing, pay rates, culture clashes, candidate traits, and reducing barriers have been studied to investigate retention with no significant change in retention. There must be an analysis of the organization in which they work using an organizational perspective if there is to be greater comprehension of turnover for Black educators (Ingersoll & May, 2011). Conducting research through the lens of IOP brings a new and distinctive approach to explore school climate and culture and the intersection of sexuality, gender, and race in education through the voices of Black LGBTQ educators (Casey et al., 2015; DeJean, 2007).

Purpose

This study explored workplace climate and culture through the experience of Black LGBTQ educators within a primary and secondary school context. The purpose was to increase understanding of their organizational climate and culture experiences and identify the facets of the climate and culture that contribute to their experiences. Additionally, the purpose extended to increasing knowledge about their experiences, understanding the social and organizational impact of climate and culture in schools, providing recommendations to stakeholders to improve climate and culture in schools for Black LGBTQ educators, and adding to the body of knowledge concerning organizational climate and culture. This study seeks to use an interpretative phenomenological approach to explore and interpret the experience of workplace climate

and culture of Black LGBTQ educators in public K-12schools that may contribute to low

representation of this population in the field of education. The approach will support an

in-depth and detailed investigation allowing for an understanding of the lived experiences

and perceptions of the participants.

Research Questions

RQ1: How do Black LGBTQ educators experience organizational climate?

RQ2: How do Black LGBTQ educators experience organizational culture?

RQ3: What factors do Black LGBTQ educators attribute to their experiences of

organizational climate and culture?

Theoretical Framework

Intersectionality, CRT, and organizational justice theory derived from equity

theory framed this study. Equity theory relates to the perception of equitable treatment,

work motivation, and thoughts of fairness and responses to what is thought to be

deserved (Pinder, 2008; Taylor, & Moghaddam, 1994). Equity theory presumes that

people will invest in work (input) if they feel there is an equitable return (outcome) in

comparison to others. When the ratio of input to outcome is perceived to be higher than

others, inequity exists, causing tension resulting in action. Equity theory produced

organizational justice theory because of its focus on equity and inequity. The four major

components of organizational justice—distributive, procedural, interpersonal, and

informational justice—are the frames from which outcomes are interpreted (Griffin &

Moorhead, 2012). These components are interrelated, form the foundation of managerial

decisions, and establish fairness in the organizational system (Yean & Yusof, 2016). The

organizational system functions optimally when each component is present, creating equity and increasing trust and justice (Hoy & Tarter, 2004; Yean & Yusof, 2016).

CRT is an outgrowth of critical legal studies (CLS) and based on the work of Derrick Bell, an African American civil rights lawyer, and Allan Freeman (Ladson-Billings, 2004). The theory points to institutionalized racism as a barrier to racial progress in the United States, concedes the intersectionality of race and class oppression, and intertwines other factors such as sexism (Kohli, 2016). CRT indicates that racism sits under the façade of normality where overt and obscene patterns are seen as problematic while challenging the ahistoric understanding of racism in the social, economic, and historical context (Gillborn, 2015; Matsuda et al., 2018). CRT scholars challenge the prevailing assumption of meritocratic and unbiased disguise for the interests of the dominant group (Tate, 1997) and underscore the experiential knowledge of people of color. In this study, CRT was used to analyze the climate and culture of schools and examine the experiences of Black LGBTQ educators at the institutional and interpersonal levels, as well as provide counter stories. Combining CRT and intersectionality in research involving race and sex provides a structure through which to view racial, gender, and sexual contexts in the workplace from Black LGBTQ while giving them a voice.

An intersectional approach targets harm that is often unrecognized. Intersectionality theory is an aspect of CRT developed by Crenshaw (1989), a legal scholar in civil rights, to examine the junction of race and sex. Intersectionality addresses the multiple inequalities and identities interrelated in different contexts over time, silencing the single-axis analysis of social justice perspectives (Gillborn, 2015). The

African American Policy Forum (AAPF, n.d.) suggested that an intersectional approach targets damage suffered that is often unrecognized. Intersectionality moves beyond conventional perspectives of group membership by perceiving group membership as multidimensional, crucial to shaping advocacy, policies, and social justice. As it relates to Black LGBTQ, using an intersectional perspective recognizes that perceived group membership could make people vulnerable to various forms and experiences of bias that the simultaneity of these identities can forge. The use of an intersectional approach provides the ability to analyze the problem multidimensionally, shape and improve effective interventions, and promote increased inclusive advocacy.

Nature of the Study

The study was conducted using a qualitative phenomenological approach. A purposive random sampling strategy was appropriate due to having a target population. The target population was Black educators, 30–50 years of age, with at least 3 years of experience teaching in primary and secondary schools across the United States of America. The sample was taken from Black LGBTQ educators. Participants were sought through online groups, professional associations and organizations specific to Black and LGBTQ educators such as, but not limited to, National Alliance of Black School Educators (NABSE); Gay, Lesbian & Straight Education Network (GLSEN); and GALA. The approach chosen supports an in-depth and detailed investigation and allowed for descriptions and interpretation of the phenomenon, to find the meaning of the specific phenomenon (Davidsen, 2013; Patton, 2014), and aligns with the research questions and intent to explore their lived experiences.

Definitions of Key Terms

These definitions of terms explain the terms used in this research study. Defining these terms furnishes logical, credible, and plausible grounds for the use of each term while supplying contextual information about how the terms and concepts will be used (Statistics Solutions, n.d.). Additionally, these terms include operational definitions and theoretical constructs (Harvard Extension School, n.d.).

Accompliceship: A willingness to risk one's privilege and comfort, welcoming personal threats, serving and forwarding the agenda of the marginalized group, and taking an irrefutable position that communicates their endorsement of and complicity with marginalized groups (Harden-Moore, 2020; Jackson et al., 2020; Meyerhoff & Thompsett, 2017). The term has become the preferred term over *allyship* or *solidarity*. These terms have found disfavor because those who claim these designations can do so without being involved, engaging in self-reflection, or acting in any significant way and center causes of marginalized groups on the person claiming the title in the form of saviorism (Edwards, 2020).

Computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS): Using computer technology to analyze and structure various types of non-numeric data allowing for interpretation and evaluation through efficient management of data (MAXDAS, n.d.).

Field testing: An effort to employ the knowledge and skills of individuals to enhance questionnaire design about a specific subject (Esposito, 2010).

Interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA): IPA is a qualitative analysis design with the focus of probing how individuals explain, interpret, and make sense of

experiences through hermeneutics, idiography, and phenomenology (Pietkiewicz, & Smith, 2014).

   Intersectionality: The convergence of class, age, race, sex, gender, and other identity categories that result in the construction of interrelated and interdependent fluid group membership (Collins, 2015; Hammack, 2018). Intersectionality is a viewpoint from which power dynamics influence the identity categories that can be examined (Columbia Law School, 2017, June 8).

   LGBTQ: Lesbian and Gay Community Services Center, Inc. (2020) defined this term as describing gender identity or sexual orientation, specifically lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer or questioning.

   Microaggression: Behaviors, verbal or nonverbal exchanges, and images that disparage an individual or group based on race, religion, sex, gender, ability, or sexual orientation (Sue, 2010).

   Organizational climate: The collective attitudes or perceptions of and the interpretation associated with policies, practices, and procedures employees experience and the behaviors they observe being rewarded that are supported and expected as described by employees pertaining to their workplace environment (Peterson et al., 2011; Schneider et al., 2013)

   Organizational culture: The common long-standing prevailing values, assumptions, and beliefs associated with past organizational behaviors; conscious efforts of organizational leaders to enforce or establish shared norms for thoughts, feelings, and behavior; and the learned knowledge structures of all organizational members pertaining

to problem solving related to external adaptation and internal assimilation (Peterson et al., 2011; Schneider et al., 2013).

Phenomenon: What research is designed "to understand, predict, explain, or describe" (Rappaport, 1987, p. 129)

School leadership: Consists of principals and assistant principals of elementary and secondary schools responsible for multiple facets of the school environment and operations. According to Cornel Law School (n.d.), school leaders are associated with making and enforcing policies and procedures and operational management within the school building. School leadership is responsible for the pedagogical achievement and well-being of students and staff. *Leadership*, as they are referred to throughout this dissertation, are defined as individuals responsible for the creation, establishment, and maintenance of school climate, culture, and vision and nurturing sustainable relationships with the surrounding community (Khanare & Marina, 2023).

Theme: Represents a meaningful pattern found or response in a set of data (Clarke, & Braun, 2006).

Zoom: An online platform that provides secure video, voice, and content sharing and options for recording and transcription of meetings (Zoom, n.d.).

Assumptions

In this research, I assumed that participants would respond to interview questions with honesty and candor and convey their experience. I assumed that the criteria for inclusion in the sample were appropriate and that, with reasonable certainty, the participants each had a similar experience with the phenomenon of the study. A genuine

and earnest interest in participating in the research was assumed to be the motive for each participant. I assumed that the use of a qualitative phenomenological design was appropriate for conducting this research. Framing the research using organizational justice, critical race, and intersectionality as theories was assumed to be appropriate.

Scope and Delimitations

The scope of this research involved licensed Black LGBTQ K-12 educators, 30-50 years of age, with at least 3 years of experience teaching in primary and/or secondary schools in the United States. The population of educators was chosen due to the turnover rates of Black educators with an interest in the experience of the subgroup. The emphasis was on understanding the climate and culture experiences of Black LGBTQ educators in K-12, essential components to a positive workplace climate and culture, and understanding how participants create an accepting workplace climate and culture. This study used voluntary research participants. The findings of this study are transferable to the extent that the sample is a relevant representation of the population in a similar context and environment. High school administrators, counselors, librarians, custodians, and others without a teaching license were not included as their professional responsibilities differ from that of educators as defined in this study.

Limitations of the Study

There are acknowledged limitations to this study. Obtaining the participation of multiple Black educators representing more than one identity for interviews who may be reluctant to identify themselves as LGBTQ was an identified limitation. Of those interested in participating, there may be a reluctance to participate due to concerns for

anonymity within the research process. Once in the research process, the participants' awareness that they were in a study presented a possible limitation. Additionally, gaining the trust of a marginalized sample population to overcome skepticism about the purpose and use of the data was another associated limitation. Attaining a quality sample from the identified population was recognized as a limitation. Limited transferability due to the uniqueness of the study, such as age range, sample size, location, general demographic information, cultural differences, and socioeconomic status of the participants was acknowledged. Last, bias exists in all research, with choices being the culmination of researcher values and assumptions, yet it is incumbent upon the researcher to examine their own (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). I acknowledged a common sociohistorical background with Black participants, accompliceship with the LGBTQ community, and having experience in the field of education.

Significance

The research is significant because I investigated organizational climate and culture through the experiences of Black LGBTQ educators using the field of IOP with the potential to lead to positive social change. IOP applies science to explore relevant issues faced by individuals, teams, and organizations in the workplace (SIOP, 2019). The turnover rate of Black educators is an issue that faces individuals and teams within educational organizations. Multiple studies have investigated the retention of Black educators, and others have focused on climate in schools for LGBTQ educators. Still, with multiple studies having been conducted, none have highlighted the voices of Black

LGBTQ educators examining organizational climate and organizational culture in the workplace.

The importance placed on the experiences and voices of Black LGBTQ educators in investigating climate and culture in schools makes this study vital. In using the constructs of organizational climate and organizational culture, this study took the opportunity to inform the field of education in how to best develop organizational climates and organizational cultures that are welcoming for Black LGBTQ educators, provide the field of education crucial information about aspects of the workplace that challenge retention of Black educators, advocate for and address the need for policies that create safe places for all staff, highlight successful leadership influences in climate and culture, and incorporate the fields of IOP and education to explore the experiences of organizational climate and culture of Black LGBTQ educators. The crossroad of sexuality, race, the field of education, and workplace climate and culture are relevant at this time when there are few Black educators and multiple issues of race and sexuality in the workplace.

Social change seeks to disrupt how society addresses issues that have been overlooked. Within education, Black educator retention has been largely absent of the perspective, views, and voices of Black LBGTQ educators. Research focused on school climate for LGBTQ educators overwhelmingly represents White LGBTQ educators. Results of this research can inform individuals, groups, organizations, policies, and advocacy initiatives in addition to multiple fields of academia. These outcomes can produce an increase in Black educator retention and an improved workplace environment.

Summary

The issue of retaining Black educators has continued across the United States. Questions about how to retain this population have focused on topics from pay to overrepresentation and cultural differences to administrative and collegial support and school culture (Achinstein et al., 2010; Dingus, 2008; Kohli, 2016; Quiñones, 2018; Simon & Johnson, 2015). Multiple researchers have found that further examination of organizational characteristics through the lens of subgroups is needed to obtain complete information about what contributes to their absence (Achinstein et al., 2010; Ingersoll, May & Collins, 2017). The call to examine organizations through the lens of subgroups is necessary to best understand Black educators' perceptions of climate and culture. There is an absence of research focused on the climate and culture experiences of Black LGBTQ educators to inform the research about Black educator retention. To fill this gap analyzing the climate and culture of the organization using an organizational theoretical perspective will provide data leading to detailed understanding (Ingersoll, & May, 2011).

This chapter addressed the background of Black educators, LBGTQ educators, their intertwined history, and their association with federal laws. The problem of the study was presented in addition to the purpose and nature. The questions meant to guide the research process were provided followed by a multipronged theoretical framework. The nature of the study, key definitions, and assumptions were supplied. Scope and delimitations, as well as limitations, were provided. Last, the significance of the research and its contribution to scholarly work in addition to implications for social change was indicated.

In Chapter 2, there is an exploration of the literature that supports this study. In Chapter 3, the methodology for this study is discussed. In Chapter 4, the results of this study are explained, and Chapter 5 contains a discussion of the key findings from the results of the study, limitations, implications of the findings, and recommendations for future research.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

This study addresses the organizational climate and organizational culture experiences of Black LGBTQ educators relative to the crisis reported of the lack of Black educators in the United States. This study allowed for the voices of Black LGBTQ educators to be the focus of a climate and culture study as an opportunity to uncover barriers, challenges, pitfalls, successes, and gaps in an educational organization. These findings have the potential to fill gaps where the voices of Black LGBTQ educators are absent or obscured in the discourse of climate and culture in education concerning Black educators and educators who are LGBTQ. Organizational climate and culture are the lens through which employees relate to and interpret an organization (Schneider et al., 2013). These practices impact such factors as safety, trust, job satisfaction, and retention (Aldridge & Fraser, 2016; Elma, 2013; Hoy & Tarter, 2004).

This chapter begins with relevant sociohistorical information to provide a brief historical background for educators, Black educators, and LGBT educators in the United States. I define organizational climate and culture while examining the literature significant to safe organizational climates and cultures in schools, creating effective workplace cultures, challenges in workplace climate and cultures, and gaps in the literature. These serve to provide insight into the development of organizational climate and culture in education over time and its influence in an organization. Some outcomes of peer-reviewed studies concerning aspects of organizational climate and culture are included. Additionally, a three-pronged theoretical foundation is established to root the

study in essential and appropriate approaches addressing the dynamic nature of the study. This research is dedicated to (a) utilizing sociohistorical information to interpret current circumstances, (b) collaborating with previous studies focused on organizational climate and culture, (c) broadening the knowledge of the organizational climate and culture experiences of Black LGBTQ K-12 educators in the United States, and (d) informing policies, practices, and interactions influencing retention of Black educators.

The subsections in this chapter are literature search strategy, history, organizational climate and culture, theoretical foundation, and summary. The literature strategy includes some of the sources used to inform the study. A brief history of education presents an understanding of the public education system in the United States relative to changes in laws and the influences in hiring practices associated with Black educators and LGBTQ individuals. Organizational climate and culture are presented to define the terms while providing a detailed framework for how it is used in the study. There is a three-pronged approach being applied to this study that is discussed in the theoretical foundation section. Last, a summary of the chapter is provided.

Literature Search Strategy

The literature review utilized a search of the accessible databases through the Walden University Library, including EBSCOHost, PsychINFO, PsychArticles, Google Scholar, Google Books, ProQuest, and ERIC databases. The searches included concepts and subject matter associated with the topic, including *intersectionality, LGBTQ educators, Black educators, retention, climate and culture, organizational justice*, and

articles tangentially connected such as *LGBTQ laws, history of education, turnover*, and *diversity*.

<div align="center">

Literature Review

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Historical Origins of Organizational Climate and Culture in U.S. Public Schools

Research of the experience of Black LGBTQ educators within U.S. public schools is incomplete without a historical perspective associated with its climate and culture. A sociohistorical context that includes civil rights, education, race, and sexuality is necessary. Milner and Howard (2004) conducted a historical examination of the impact of desegregation on Black students, teachers, and communities in the context of *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*, 347 US 483 (1954). Prior to desegregation, there were approximately 70,000 Black educators in the United States. The *Brown v. Board of Education Topeka* decision was the beginning of the decrease of Black educators in schools due to 38,000 educators and administrators no longer being employed, enduring demotions, having a lack of voice and power, and experiencing discrimination in hiring (Milner & Howard, 2004). Milner and Howard (2004), Oakley et al. (2009), Orfield (1969), and White et al. (2020) supported this assertion contending that mandated desegregation constructed broader institutional conditions where Black educators and other educators of color were subjected to hostility, disrespect, discrimination, and covert and overt assaults. These assaults were found to come from administration, coworkers, parents, and students, resulting in them leaving their jobs, which has perpetuated the trend of underrepresentation in the field.

While Milner and Howard (2004) highlighted the continued call for the increased presence of Black teachers, the research centers itself in the historical perspective that contributes to the need for Black educators. The research does not directly address the organizational climate and culture these educators and administrators worked in. Thompson (2019) indicated that following desegregation orders, there exist accounts of policies devised to expedite the exit of Black teachers. Overt and covert acts such as not hiring Black teachers, demoting qualified educators to be a substitute or co-teacher, and giving an elementary school teaching assignment to a high school. These acts resulted in resignations; some were followed by protests causing educators to be released due to insubordination. These instances serve as examples of the climate and culture in some integrated schools following desegregation. Poor treatment, disconnection, and imbalance exist in the Black community. Black students need to have significant Black educators and administrators with whom they identify. At the same time, there is no mention of organizational climate or culture within the schools and organizations, justice factors, or the intersection of race and sexuality. Over 30 years, desegregation has affected the trends and racial composition of the U.S. teaching force especially results with mandated desegregation and neighborhood data (Oakley et al., 2009).

Because of court-mandated desegregation, implicit and explicit impediments to educator diversity exist in primary and secondary education. The identified barriers are noted as testing that favors White educators continued to pose challenges to Black people and other people of color in addition to broad policies that do not address local conditions that influence these policies. Neither Milner and Howard (2004) nor Oakley et al. (2009)

address or recommend further inquiry into organizational climate and culture in the local

or broader institution of education as a possible issue for Black educators as a factor in

their decreasing numbers. Neither do they inquire about the intersection of sexuality and

race as a factor in their decreased presence. While overt racial discrimination purported to

cover the rights of Black individuals through Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, it

did not cover overt discrimination based on sexual orientation until a recent court ruling.

Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 was only applied to discrimination based

on race, color, religion, sex, and national origin until *Bostock v. Clayton County*, Georgia,

No. 17-1618 (S. Ct. June 15, 2020; EEOC, n.d.b). The ruling holds that firing individuals

based on sexual orientation or transgender status violates discrimination because of sex.

Prior to this decision, there were no federal protections for sexual orientation.

Discrimination based on sexual orientation within educational organizations began

formally with the end of World War II. Social conformity following World War II

contributed to the use of in loco parentis.

In loco parentis asserts that educators stand in place of parents when children are

in school; because of this, educators are expected to reflect religious and moral values of

society, observe a wholesome lifestyle, and exhibit high standards of conduct (Fleming et

al.,2009; Harbeck, 1997). For educators, this meant that any behaviors perceived by

employers or others as threatening to traditional values precipitated local statutes,

harassment, investigations, and repercussions in employment in all aspects of life. After

World War II, and between 1959 and 1963, the FLIC was formed to search for

subversives, including civil rights activists, leftist intellectuals, and homosexuals (Braukman, 2001).

These investigations were not specific to White educators alone but included Black educators suspected of being homosexual. They were questioned and pressured to leave their profession. No known data exist about the numbers of Black educators who were expurgated from the educational organizations in Florida due to this homophobia. Although Braukman (2001) focused on the state of Florida, the climate and culture of the United States, as well as the field of education, is made evident with the characterization of the term "homosexual menace" (p. 555), the energy spent on removing suspected gay and lesbian individuals from positions as educators, and inadvertently intersecting race, sexuality, and politics. Remnants of these actions and policies continue in legal cases with lesbian and gay educators suing due to first amendment rights, the right to come out at school, the right of educators to participate in the political process, and the right to associate.

Considering this organizational climate and culture, Black LGBTQ educators sit at the intersection of race and sexuality in the workplace. Discrimination in the workplace based on the categories covered in Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 now provides recourse for Black LGBTQ employees because of *Bostock v. Clayton County, Georgia*, No. 17-1618 (S. Ct. June 15, 2020). Prior to this decision, the Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA) was proposed as a remedy to bridge this gap in protections for all LGBTQ individuals. ENDA would have prohibited discrimination in the workplace in almost all terms and conditions of employment, including hiring,

termination, promotion, and compensation based on sexual orientation or gender identity by all employers except religious organizations (American Civil Liberties Union [ACLU], 2020; U.S. Congress, n.d.).

Whether inadvertently or not, ENDA spoke to organizational climate and culture by proposing to protect the rights of and shield from retaliation individuals who object to anti-gay discrimination and those discriminated against because of their association with a coworker who is LGBTQ or perceived to be (ACLU, 2020). Since 1974, similar bills have been introduced in every U.S. Congress, except the 109th, without passage (National Gay and Lesbian Task Force Foundation [NGLTFF], n.d.; Pizer et al., 2012). Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 provides federal protection for Black LGBTQ educators on the federal level and paves the way for changes in policies in organizations to address climate and culture to match federal protections.

The workplace for Black educators has become a precarious place since desegregation and coincides with the sociohistorical factors associated with gay and lesbian rights. Research established that a decrease in Black educators began with desegregation, causing institutional conditions associated with their presence (Milner, & Howard, 2004; Oakley et al., 2009; Orfield, 1969). These institutional conditions are the grounds for organizational climate and culture in a workplace. FLIC actions contributed to the climate and culture in schools intersecting with lesbian and gay rights in education and Black educators and the decrease in their presence due to actively seeking suspected lesbian and gay educators (Braukman, 2001). These actions follow on the heels of the decision in *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*, 347 US 483 (1954), expanding the

results of educators leaving the field. The ruling in *Bostock v. Clayton County, Georgia*, No. 17-1618 (S. Ct. June 15, 2020) broadened protections to LGBTQ individuals. Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 now protects Black LGBTQ educators, but it does not automatically change organizational climate and culture or policies in the organizations where they work.

The history of the field of education lacks research devoted to Black educators and Black LGBTQ educators. Focusing on their experiences of organizational climate and culture could provide themes, data, and insights about what contributes to the decreased numbers of Black educators and what environments support their success. The voices of Black LGBTQ educators are enmeshed with that of other nonconforming educators at the intersection of career, sexuality, and race in the form of implicit and explicit organizational climate and culture in schools.

Organizational Climate and Culture

Organizational climate and organizational culture are two ways we conceptualize how people describe and experience their workplace (Schneider et al., 2013). Climate and culture are separate in research as distinctive concepts. According to Schneider and Barbera (2014) organizational climate and organizational culture are converging constructs that assist in understanding how employees experience their workplace environment. Each has marked attributes from which employees extract meaning. These attributes represent the concluded meaning or gestalt of the organization in their perception.

Organizational climate involves the ways in which employees assess varied aspects of their work conditions and environment (Magill et al., 2020), These facets include but are not limited to functions organized by the organization and the policies. Organizational climate research acknowledges there is meaning derived from policies, procedures, practices, and behaviors that are rewarded, supported, and expected (Schneider & Barbera, 2014; Schneider et al., 2013; Schneider & Reichers, 1983; Schneider, et al., 1998). Organizational climate theory indicates that gesalt messages are constructed related to climate facets in reference to subjects of concern and their perceived worth to the organization (Ehrhart et al., 2014). Organizational climate can be seen as the interpretation of policies, procedures, and behaviors while organizational culture diverges to represent a different aspect of organizations.

Organizational culture researchers have indicated that culture develops over time as people interact (Schneider & Barbera, 2014). It represents presumptions, beliefs, and values that are communicated to employees, especially those that are newly hired. Other employees communicate the things that policies and procedures do not speak about. Other employees communicate the accepted ways to feel and think, transmit stories and myths about the organization, and discuss how the organization has handled problems internally and externally (Schneider et al., 2013). Since organizational culture develops over time, it is inextricably linked to history, people, and events requiring a historical understanding to appropriately comprehend and interpret organizational culture (Schneider & Barbera. 2014). As a result of these connections, organizational culture is a "necessarily stable" with an insecurity and fragility rooted in the dependence of the

system on individual knowledge, perceptions, and action (Denison, 1996; Schneider & Barbera, 2014).

While organizational climate and organizational culture are often referred to separately integrating the two concepts when they are clearly defined to provide a foundation for examining organizations and providing definitions of the constructs (Schneider et al., 2013). Scholars have suggested an integrative approach to examine organizational meaning from the perspective of the people who work in the organizations (Schneider, & Barbera, 2014). Organizational climate is the common approach and interpretation that employees give to organizational policies and procedure. Whereas culture represents the assumptions, beliefs, and values that inform interventions applied by leaders in situations, it is communicated to new employees overtly and covertly and reinforced by organizational practices. These elements of climate frame employee perceptions, behaviors and are the context for all things that happen in the organization. Organizational climate and culture are the social contexts that persuade people to behave in ways that are expected and accepted as social norms in organizations. They provide an opportunity to make sense of the occurrences and behaviors in an organization and the reason it occurs in the manner it does by applying the concepts simultaneously (Schneider et al., 2013).

Organizational climate and culture form the basis of interactions in organizations at all levels. In a school setting, educators expect to feel safe physically, emotionally, and psychologically. Physical, emotional, and psychological safety are aspects of climate and culture established by leadership in the school for students and employees. Schools that

provide safe and affirming environments are places where all students and staff have beneficial and constructive interactions without threat, promote positive relationships and personal growth, and protect everyone from harm (Bucher & Manning, 2005; Edmondson & Lei, 2014). Workplaces with essential core values and attributes produce a sense of well-being for everyone, are effective, and are sustained by leadership who are the barometer for the climate and culture (Manley et al., 2011; Wright, 2010). The leadership is entrusted with aligning the climate and culture, allowing for a safe school environment for all.

Administration, educators, and students take the cue about climate and culture from the principal. In a school, the principal is the leader who articulates and solidifies the climate and culture, making the values visible to staff and students (Manley et al., 2011). The articulation of culture and values is evidenced by the amount of attention a principal gives to incidents with staff and students. Culture is communicated by how a principal models acceptable language and behaviors for staff and students. When rewards are given to whom and for what they are given provides covert communication to staff and students. Principals can allocate resources where and to whom they deem the resources are needed. The way resources are allocated conveys a message to students and staff. Who is recruited to be a part of the educational team and those who are excommunicated are a result of the actions and behavior of the principal.

The principal develops the in- and out-group dynamics through inclusion and exclusion within the workplace setting while dictating interactions between staff members. Principals are leaders who are essential allies for students and educators in the

workplace with the ability to confront subtle workplace mistreatment. Leaders in the workplace have the ability to impact climate and culture as an ally or coconspirator by making inclusion a priority (Schneider et al., 2017). By making inclusion a priority, leaders promote a climate and culture where marginalized group members incur less psychological harm due to fear or mistreatment, feel supported and included, and are less marginalized due to their identity.

Across the United States, there are schools with leaders who have embraced programs for students to feel safe yet there exists a lack of programs to address LGBT educator safety. Research has exposed concerns for safety, including physical, emotional, and psychological safety in the school setting for LGBT educators. A two-survey study conducted by Smith et al. (2008) and Wright and Smith (2015) used the 2007 National Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) K-12 Educators Workplace Survey (Smith et al., 2006) to compare results from 2007 and 2011 to understand workplace climate for LGBT educators. The two-survey study was conducted over eight years, with most educators who participated in the study reporting not feeling safe in their workplace.

Participation for the 2007 study included 514 respondents and 317 in the 2011 survey. According to Smith et al. (2008) and Wright and Smith (2015), difficult climates exist for LGBT educators due to mistrust, fear, and feeling unsafe with no support. Others reported a supportive, comfortable environment in the school setting, including having school policies that address homophobic language. Homophobia, job safety, personal safety, outness, policies of human rights, policies of bullying language, and principal support are leading facets of the climate and culture of the school that caused

educators to report feeling unsafe. Of these facets of climate and culture, policies of bullying language and principal support are reported as common occurrences in schools, with educators hearing administrators making racist and transphobic comments.

The findings from Smith et al. (2008) about school climate for LGBT educators are from quantitative data analysis. They fell into three categories: troubling, unsafe, or unsupportive school climate. In 2007, troubling school climate findings indicated that 86% ($N = 434$) of the educators in the study heard comments in the workplace they consider homophobic. Additionally, homophobic comments were reported by every respondent who identified as African American or Black, Hispanic or Latino/Latina, Asian or Pacific Islander, Middle Eastern, Native American, or Multiracial. There is no reported result comparison for the 2011 survey associated with homophobic comments for this group.

A comparison of results for the two surveys provides further information about changes to school climate as perceived by LGBT educators. In 2007, 447 (96%) respondents reported having heard homophobic comments from students compared to 319 (99.4%) in the 2011 survey. Homophobic comments were heard coming from other professionals in the workplace were reported by 58% ($N = 438$, $p < .01$) of the respondents in 2007. In the same year, 20% of those who responded indicated hearing homophobic comments from administrator ($N = 418$). LGBT educators, in 2007, also indicated hearing what they regard as sexist (80%, $N = 459$), transphobic (74%), and racist (80%, $N = 486$, $p < .01$). These responses only reflect what educators found troubling. There was no equivalent data response for the 2011 survey.

In the 2007 study, LGBT educators indicated feeling unsafe and unsupported. Of significance, respondents indicated feeling unsafe because of their sexual orientation (35%, $N = 185$). In 2007, 235 (43.8%) reported having had rumors spread about them in the workplace which went up in the 2011 report ($N = 110$, 73.6%). Experiences of harassment during the 2006-2007 school year were reported by 395 (27.1%) participants as compared to 293 (20.8%) reported in 2011. In 2007, over half of the participants who reported experiencing harassment did not report it (59%, $N = 86$), and of those who did report, 66% indicate a level of satisfaction with the outcome. According to the 2011 results, three fifths of those who experienced harassment did not report it (Wright & Smith, 2015).

As indicated previously, principal support is a facet of climate and culture in public school organizations. The 2007 study results show an unsupportive school climate was reported by LGBT educators due to infrequent interventions by fellow educators and administrators when homophobic remarks were heard and witnessing minimal numbers of educators interrupted when students were making homophobic remarks (88%, $N = 427$, $p < .01$). There are no specific equivalent results for 2011 about these responses. A lack of intervention by colleagues and administrators when homophobic language was heard was reported in 2007 and 2011 (Wright, & Smith, 2015). Specific to the behaviors of administrators, in 2007, the results indicated: (a) 31% heard homophobic comments made in the presence of administrators ($N = 442$); (b) 60% reported never or rarely having an administrator intervene; and (c) 40% indicated an administrator frequently or sometimes intervened.

Organizational climate and culture in schools are established, shaped, and solidified through the daily leadership of the principal who can support or combat toxic environments (Deal & Peterson, 1998; Deal & Peterson, 2016). The effective functioning of a school relies on multiple factors, one of which is the behavior of the principal who needs to be aware of the school culture because they are essential in shaping it (Çelikten, 2006; Karadag & Oztekin-Bayir, 2018; Schein, 1992, 2004).

To best address the issue of school climate and culture, every segment of the population needs to be heard. The National Survey of Educators' Perceptions of School Climate (Smith et al., 2008) filled a gap in the literature for LGBT educators. As a national study reporting to represent LGBT educators, safety, and providing recommendations for researchers and policymakers, it underrepresents the voices of Black LGBTQ educators. Of the 514 participants surveyed in 2007, 268 (52%) reported racial or ethnic identities, while in 2011, 219 (100%) reported identities. In 2007 and 2011, the majority of participants reported being European-American (85.4%, 89%), the remaining participants (14.6%) included nine who identified as African American (3.4%) in 2007 and 10 (4.6%) in 2011, indicating the same. The research represents the voices, experiences, and perceptions of a majority White LGBT population.

Research indicates that White LGBTQ are less vulnerable to experiencing discrimination and violence in the workplace than Black LGBTQ (Galupo & Resnick, 2016). The research concludes with a critique of the field and a series of recommendations for school climate researchers and policymakers. Still, it is absent of significant input from Black LGBTQ educators. Wright and Smith (2015) are devoid of

results previously reported associated with LGBT educators hearing sexist, transphobic, and racist comments. The recommendations fall short of addressing advocacy, policy, retention, and climate and culture for Black LGBTQ educators because it lacks their unique intersectional perspective and voices.

Diversity Climate

Organizations desire to function optimally with peak performance from employees. Those that foster diversity climate have positive performance outcomes (Hofhuis et al., 2016; Schneider et al., 2013). In organizations where there are in- and out-groups present due to differences, employees naturally gravitate towards specific cultural groups. In the organizations that allow for this dynamic to exist, organizational commitment amongst employees is eroded. A perception of exclusion grows in its place, presenting further obstacles for a climate and culture that is supportive of a person who is perceived as other. Diversity climate and diverse outcomes can be resolved by trust and openness in the workplace if encouraged to grow (Hofhuis et al., 2016). Their research found that diversity climate and diversity outcomes such as exchange of knowledge, adaptability, and innovation are mediated by trust and openness, resulting in better performance. Trust increases in organizations where diversity climate is endorsed. Specifically, job satisfaction, inclusion, and workgroup identification positively affect trust.

Diversity climate is usually discussed in relation to policies and structure to further specific groups through career programs or affirmative action. Hofhuis et al. (2016) explain diversity climate as the degree of openness to and welcoming of

dissimilarity in the climate of an organization. The perceptions of employees about cultural differences have become the newest perspective added to the conversation and research about climate and specifically diversity climate. With this new perspective comes two characteristics specific to a stable diversity climate. First, teams and the organization's cultural differences are promoted and experienced as enhancing rather than constrictive, problematic, or weakening. This characteristic indicates that schools with a healthy diversity climate endorse differences as a strength, including LGBTQ. Second, employees have candid conversations about cultural heritage and are empowered to behave in ways that are specific to their culture without humiliation or concern. Black LGBTQ educators live in a body that represents multiple cultures, including LGBTQ. These various cultures include language, traditions, foods, knowledge, customs, morals, and habits that have shaped them, representing their belongingness. Incorporating the promotion of difference as strengths and encouraging conversations about as well as displaying of culture organizations begin to benefit. Organizations benefit from satisfaction, inclusion, retention, and improved performance (Boehm et al., 2014; Gonzalez & Denisi 2009; Hofhuis et al., 2012; McKay et al., 2007; Schachner et al., 2016). Diversity climate can only exist when trust and openness are available, creating a stable climate.

Microaggressions

Discriminatory, exclusionary, and degrading comments are often dismissed as jokes. These microaggressions target gender, sexual orientation, race, faith beliefs of a specific person or group. Microaggressions are brief commonplace interactions that are

verbal and nonverbal in nature, indignities in behavior and environment which communicate antagonistic, denigrating slights about race, gender, sexual orientation, or religion directed toward an individual or group with the intent to harm (Sue, 2010). CRT scholars have adopted the term microaggression focused on education as a means of exploring the covert forms of systemic racism existing in educational institutions (Allen & Solórzano, 2001; Kohli, 2016; Smith et al., 2007; Solórzano, 1997; Solórzano et al., 2002).

A Black LGBTQ educator is exposed to racial and sexual microaggression, whether intentional or unintentional, because of their multiple group membership. Subtle messages in the workplace about being Black are exemplified by a cold shoulder or snide inflection, comment, or gesture. Black educators may work in hostile racial climates where inequity, racism at interpersonal and organizational levels, colorblindness, and microaggressions exist and have been reported (Kohli, 2016). For Black LGBTQ educators, these microaggressions can be experienced intersectionally. Intertwining the experience of hearing homophobic, transphobic, and racist language, as well as microaggressions, place Black LGBTQ at the intersection of race and sex in the workplace.

Intersectional microaggressions converge where multiple marginalized identities are targeted. Black LGBTQ educators can be the target of these intersectional microaggressions based on gender, social status, race, ethnicity, or sexual orientation. Nadal et al. (2015) proposed seven themes of intersectional microaggressions that align with racial, gender, sexual orientation, and religious tones. Distinct to race is the

exoticizing of women of color, a presumption of criminality and inadequacy of men of color, inference of inferiority of women of color, women of color as the representative, and emasculation as well as ignoring of Asian men. Exoticization occurs when a person is dehumanized as an object of a sexual fetish. For example, an LGBTQ individual is the object of fantasy with a heterosexual couple, or individual based on their sexual orientation and a desire to explore what it would be like to be with them. Intersectional microaggressions involving a Black woman LGBTQ educator may involve assuming she got the job due to affirmative action while inferring that she has a "pretty face for a Black woman." Religious microaggressions are coupled with others, such as gender stereotypes of Muslims and within race/ethnicity or religious community criticism. Gay and lesbian stereo types appear when gender is targeted. It is important to state that Black LGBTQ distinctively reported experiencing gender stereotypes and judgment from other Black people and their religious communities due to their race, sexual orientation, and gender.

When microaggressions are unaddressed, they contribute to a hostile workplace. The overt aggressive actions that might otherwise occur with Black LGBTQ educators based on race, physical ability, color, religion, familial status, sex, or national origin are illegal because they are protected characteristics (Jones et al., 2017) can be subtly communicated with microaggressions. Climate and culture set the context for interactions and what is normal in a workplace; these nuances are obscured in language. They appear as subtle discriminatory interactions that are legal yet contribute to the climate and culture of the workplace.

Blatant forms of discrimination may have declined due to federal protections but are replaced with ambiguous, subtle, and seemingly benign instances of aggression. Microaggressions are the subtle daily incidents that occur in conversations, interactions, and the work environment that are humiliating, embarrassing, and insulting intentionally or unintentionally (Sue et al., 2008; Sue et al., 2007; Torino et al., 2018). Multiple types of microaggressions exist, yet each of them affects the experience of LGBT in the workplace.

In their seminal work, Sue et al. (2007) categorize microaggressions as occurring in three categories: microassaults, microinsults, and microinvalidations. Due to the intersectional nature of their identities, Black LGBTQ educators encounter intersectional and multiple microaggressions towards several identities and group memberships. Black LGBTQ educators experience microassaults as verbal and nonverbal such as exclusion from workplace events or hearing comments such as "that's so gay" or using racial jokes followed by "just joking," which are subtly intended to cause harm. Microinsults occur automatically with harmless intent on an unconscious level (Sue et al., 2007). For a Black LGBTQ educator, these insults send a message of otherness about citizenship, intellect, or cultural values that use stereotypes. For example, a Black LGBTQ educator may hear "you speak so well," "you're too handsome/pretty to be gay," and while the speaker may not see it as an insult, the message is heard as such contributing negatively to the climate and culture of the workplace.

Colorblindness, another form of microaggression, presents as microinvalidation presented as a way to absolve the speaker such as saying, "I don't see color," "we are all

one race—the human race," or "don't be so sensitive." Similar comments purposely nullify the experiences of discrimination as being unfounded or a way to assert that a process has been unbiased or impartial while ignoring race, gender, sexual orientation differences (Kohli, 2016; Torino et al., 2018). In a workplace, this type of invalidation negates the reality that people sitting at the intersection of race and sexual orientation experience heterosexism and racism. These responses serve to set one group as a norm or standard while invalidating the lived experiences of those at the intersection of race and sexual orientation (Nadal et al., 2016). Reporting these incidents may not be comfortable for Black LGBTQ educators.

Incidents of microaggression are not always reported in the workplace. When these incidents of aggression and harassment are reported, they are met with resistance by leaders, perceptions the recipient brought it on, and no action is taken to intervene in the situation (Pizer et al., 2012; Wright & Smith, 2013). The resistance from leaders, dismissive responses, and lack of action to remedy the issues contribute to the climate and culture in the workplace. The way leaders handle incidents communicates the expectations in the workplace, further engraining the climate and culture while indicating their position about developing allyship with specific groups.

Microaggressions combine with climate, organizational structure, and workplace policy to either support or exclude LGBT employees. Hearing microaggressions causes some LGBT individuals to feel unsafe and, if not out, serves as a confirmation that disclosing their sexual orientation is not safe in work relationships and adds a concern for job security (Galupo & Resnick, 2016). Security within the workplace can come within

the structure of the organization depending on power dynamics and policies. Workplaces have some structure whether implicitly or explicitly stated and reveal the power disparities associated with employee leadership relationships. For Black LGBTQ educators, the power imbalance and microaggressions contribute to the feeling of being vulnerable with a lack of safety when leaders, or others in authority, apply job expectations unfairly giving or taking away responsibilities (Cain, 1993). Giving and taking away responsibilities fit into one of the three identified categories of microaggressions.

The inaction of leaders coupled with slights from coworkers leaves LGBTQ employees feeling unsafe and influences their frame of mind. Galupo and Resnick (2016) and Resnick and Galupo (2019) found that all microaggressions contribute to nine results. These microaggressions contribute to negative moods that extended throughout the day, decreased sense of well-being, feelings of offense, negative sense of well-being, questioning of the views colleagues have of them, relationships with coworkers being negatively impacted, loss in job satisfaction, a decline in productivity, and produced thoughts of leaving the current job. Resnick and Galupo's (2019) research was significant in assessing experiences with LGBT microaggressions in the workplace. Of the 644 participants, there are 528 White participants (82%) and 20 Black (3.1%), making the sample overwhelmingly White. It further underscores the need to focus on the voices of Black LGBTQ in the workplace to understand their experience of climate and culture, safety, and the impact these can have on their mental health and retention.

Microaggressions impact climate and culture, feelings of safety and mental health outcomes in the workplace. Results from recent studies suggest that there is a negative significant relationship between racial microaggressions and mental health. Those who perceive and experience microaggressions have been found to display depression, anxiety, negative affect, and decreased ability to control behaviors as expressions of adverse mental health (Nadal et al., 2014). These behaviors result in hurt feelings, powerlessness, rage, alienation, decreased job satisfaction, detached coping, and reduced job satisfaction for the target and bystanders (DeCuir-Gunby & Gunby, 2016; DeSouza et al., 2017; Jones et al., 2017).

Providing employees with a safe environment includes trust and openness. For LGBT educators, increased stress and inadequate work environment exist, and it originates within established policies that set the tone for safety in the school (Baker & Lucas, 2017; deLeon & Brunner, 2013; Galupo & Resnick, 2016; Holman et al., 2019; Pichler et al., 2016; Wright et al., 2019). Policies that address the way expectations for the climate and culture are communicated, including acceptable language and consequences. Policies must include clear information about technology usage, attendance, recruitment, pay and benefits, safety, diversity, and employee conduct and consequences in the contemporary workplace.

Effective policies are the foundation of climate and culture as well as psychological wellbeing (Manley et al., 2011). When specific wording addressing behavior and consequences is missing to cover situations, the policies allow for disassociation between state laws, existing diversity statements, and policies, and the

ability or inclination to impose the appropriate policy (Galupo & Resnick, 2016). Black

LGBTQ educators in the United States received protections at the federal level due to

Bostock v. Clayton County, Georgia, No. 17-1618 (S. Ct. June 15, 2020), making it

illegal to discriminate based on sexual orientation or transgender status. The

acknowledgment of this change necessitates changes in workplace policies.

The study of microaggressions in the workplace lacks an intersectional,

experiential focus on Black LGBTQ individuals. Of the 100 participants in the Galupo

and Resnick (2016), study 73 identified as Caucasian/White and four identified as Black.

Admittedly, the authors state that with most of the participants being White, the results

may reflect increased positive experiences. These same findings can be said of Resnick

and Galupo (2019), where of 644 participants, there were 20 (3.1%) Black/African

American participants and 528 (82%) White participants. Both reflect an

underrepresentation of Black LGBTQ individuals. This lack of Black participants is

significant because research indicates that Black LGBTQ is more vulnerable to

discrimination and violence than Caucasian/White LGBTQ (Galupo & Resnick, 2016).

Additionally, Black LGBTQ experience microaggressions intersectionally due to their

membership in multiple groups (Balsam et al., 2011; Vaccaro & Koob, 2019). The results

of these studies do present information about LGBT microaggression. Still, they cannot

be generalized to represent the experiences of Black LGBTQ in any workplace because

of their minimal numbers as participants.

Black educators who are also LGBTQ are at the intersection of safety, stress, race,

sexual orientation, and legal argument. These educators are protected by the Civil Rights

Act of 1964 but are not protected by federal law based on sexual orientation. The stress

of feeling unsafe in the school environment is a residual effect of *Brown v. Board of*

Education of Topeka, 347 U.S. 483 (1954), decision for school desegregation (Michigan

Law Review, 1966; Wright & Smith, 2015), such interventions as FLIC, recent federal

protections with a lack of protective school policies, and the current climate and culture

of school safety for LGBTQ educators. Understanding the intricacies involved in and

experiencing organizational climate and culture for Black LGBTQ educators can inform

advocacy, policymaking, social change, and research.

Theoretical Framework

Organizational Justice

Decisions are made in organizations daily that affect employees. Whether or not

these decisions are considered just is a matter of perception and policy. Justice is

determined by what is morally right concerning ethics, religion, fairness, equity, or the

law. The decisions within an organization are referred to as organizational justice.

According to Virtanen and Elovainio (2018), organizational justice is rooted in equity

theory. Equity theory, developed by John Stacy Adams, is considered the first significant

theory to influence organizational psychology in the United States. It takes substantial

motivation to achieve equity or balance because individuals desire equity, which is

sought by comparing their investments and rewards with others (Adams, 1965). Research

of equity theory has led to studies in justice at work and as a stress mechanism resulting

in organizational justice (Virtanen & Elovainio, 2018).

Understanding the experiences of Black LGBTQ educators through the lens of the three constructs of organizational justice is essential to further understanding their experiences. Organizational justice is made up of distributive justice (fairness in outcomes), procedural justice (fairness in processes), and interactional justice (interpersonal treatment) (Gilliland & Chan, 2002; Moliner et al., 2017). The experience of Black LGBTQ educators requires more than research into their personality traits or characteristics. It calls for an examination of the organizational characteristics that contribute to their experience of organizational climate and culture and absence using an organizational theoretical perspective (Ingersoll & May, 2011).

Interactions in the workplace dictate perceptions and behaviors. Employees look at their interactions with leaders, rewards, promotions, inclusion, or exclusion and contrast the experiences with those of coworkers resulting in their behaviors (Hemmelgarn, & Glisson, 2018; Pinder, 2008). The essential motivation in this theory is to achieve balance in all areas of life because the imbalance is psychological (Virtanen, & Elovainio, 2018). The theory would hold that Black LGBTQ educators seek to balance all places in their lives, including work. Applying it to Black LGBTQ educators allows for an exploration into their perceptions of what is fair in situations and the manner in which they respond to perceived inequities in a relationship in contrast to what they believe is deserved or earned. What is perceived as being deserved and earned depends on the worldview and experience of the person and what they are viewing (Virtanen, & Elovainio, 2018).

Organizational justice factors are integral to researching job satisfaction and employee perceptions of workplace justice. They describe the dimension of fairness in ethical standards concerning decision-making and actions taken (Al-Zu'bi, 2010) or not taken. Distributive justice relates to the perceptions of fairness in outcomes and is strongly associated with job satisfaction, trust of management, and turnover intention (Choi, 2011; Robbins et al., 2013).

Organizations seek to have employees that are motivated with positive attitudes. Organizational justice indicates feelings or perceptions of fair treatment in employees that can increase their motivation resulting in positive work behaviors and attitudes (Yean & Yusof, 2016). The perception of organizational justice of Black LGBTQ educators involves their attitude toward and perceptions of interactions and fair treatment from managers, superiors, and other authorities. Violations of justice within an organization make an impression on employee perceptions of interactions. These infringements result in skeptical views of the fairness of procedures, whether or not the information is shared completely, and fair treatment in the workplace (Virtanen & Elovainio, 2018). Organizational justice is an antecedent to job satisfaction (Saifi & Shahzad, 2017; Yaghoubi et al., 2012). The level of organizational justice perceived by an employee determines their level of job satisfaction. This perception often comes from interactions with leaders.

Just as leaders are an essential part of setting the climate and culture of an organization, they are integral to influencing the perceptions and cultivation of organizational justice. Job satisfaction, perceived work stress, and injustice have been

connected (Virtanen, & Elovainio, 2018). For this reason, the argument can be made that

propagation of organizational justice in the workplace is critical to reducing factors such

as absenteeism, intent to leave, and ultimately turnover (Alsalem & Alhaiani, 2007; Al-

Zu'bi, 2010). Solidifying an organizational climate and culture in schools cultivating

organizational justice for all employees is incumbent upon the leader, most often the

principal.

     Principals are appointed as the leaders of their school. How they administer

justice impacts relationships between colleagues and the perceptions of the workplace.

Fairness in outcomes and during the process affects trust and respect between colleagues

as a trickle-down effect (Nelson et al., 2019). Only when there is collective responsibility

and work communication is the effect mitigated. When issues involving procedural

justice remain unaddressed, organizations risk enduring adverse outcomes associated

with the decision that were made and noncompliance with procedures resulting in a

decline in job satisfaction (Al-Zu'bi, 2010). Procedural justice remains relevant to

employees' experience in a workplace because it addresses the processes involved in

carrying out justice in situations.

     Procedural justice has been cited as a vital component in the workplace because it

relates to the quality of the decision-making process, dignity and respect given, and

treatment of an individual by a person in power. In a workplace, the lack of procedural

justice can lead to challenges in climate and culture. When this justice component is

absent in the workplace employees, begin to question the motives of leaders, the

neutrality of decisions made, their ability to make their voice heard, dignity and respect

being shown equally, and trustworthiness of the decisions made by those in power (Al-Zu'bi, 2010). If these challenges are moderated, a sense of collective responsibility and communication emerges amongst employees. It is the practices of leaders within schools that influence camaraderie perceptions of trust and respect between colleagues (Nelson et al., 2019). Equitable distribution of rewards and recognition of all staff equally communicates to employees that their wellbeing was of concern to the organization.

Organizational justice has been applied to researching schools, focusing on job satisfaction and the ability of principals to foster a climate of trust and respect. Findings suggest that distributive justice (fairness outcomes) and interactional justice are significant predictors of job satisfaction, while procedural and informational justice perceptions had no impact on job satisfaction (Elma, 2013). Elma (2013) indicates a need for the use of organizational justice as a construct to study job satisfaction in the field of education from a qualitative perspective giving voice to educators garnering further data. Using organizational justice as a construct leads to a better understanding of job satisfaction, intention to leave, and turnover (Al-Zu'bi, 2010; Yaghoubi et al., 2012). Just as equitable and equal application of organizational justice corresponds with the feeling of concern for employees, fairness in distributing justice lays the groundwork for belongingness and the value placed on individuals in the organization that shapes their eagerness to be vulnerable in trusting the actions of others.

Organizations rely on employees trusting each other to function well. As referred to in discussing organizational culture and climate, trust is framed as an essential part of organizational justice in educational settings and must be continually nurtured (Hoy &

Tarter, 2004) with all employees and staff. It is presumed that with trust, it is improbable that the person who is trusted will mistreat the giver, only acting favorably intentionally (Brezicha & Fuller, 2019). It intrinsically calls for vulnerability because of the behaviors of another person. Black LGBTQ educators must trust that those around them have their best interests in mind. For this to occur, a trusting relationship must be built willfully in phases with ramifications for the relationship, especially between principals and teachers. A trusting relationship amongst staff can be cultivated when there is competence, acceptance, consistency, honesty, compassion, trustworthiness, and a willingness to take risks (Brezicha, & Fuller, 2019). The trust and respect between colleagues is dictated by the way that justice is meted out from authorities to subordinates

Trust and respect are two components essential to organizational justice, and other principles are fundamental to organizational justice. Ten principles that embody organizational justice include equity, interpersonal justice, perception, consistency, voice, egalitarianism, accuracy, representation, correction, and ethics (Hoy & Tarter, 2004). Each of these is predicated on trust. Trust is identified as an essential factor in the success of an organization, specifically faculty trust in the principal and faculty trust in colleagues. The six components identified as being associated with trust are key for organizational justice; these are vulnerability, benevolence, honesty, reliability, openness, and competence (Hoy & Tarter, 2004). An argument is made that for organizational justice and the just and fair treatment of faculty to exist, there are two fundamental questions to be answered: (a) What school characteristics are necessary for organizational justice? (b) What are the antecedents that promote these school characteristics?

Hoy and Tarter (2004) indicate trust and justice are correlated in that faculty trust in colleagues and faculty trust in the principal forecast organizational justice. It would follow that understanding factors that contribute to or take away trust a Black LGBTQ educator has in principals would inform organizational justice policies in schools.

These findings are relevant to the current proposed research of organizational justice perceptions of Black LGBTQ educators because it utilizes organizational justice as the foundation of the research in educational administration. It also points to ten principles and six keys for organizational justice to be fostered through trust in educational workplaces. The generation of a sense of fairness and justice among teachers and nurturing a culture of trust is guided by principals who adhere to these ten principles exemplifying the need for principals to set the climate and culture of schools. The challenge with Hoy and Tarter (2004) is that the sample closely reflects the population of middle schools in Ohio concerning average teacher salary and experience, student enrollment, and faculty size. There is no data provided about the racial or sexual orientation demographics of those completing the surveys, leaving a gap in the literature to question the results as they pertain to Black LGTBQ educators with reference to their experience of organizational justice and trust. Last, the use of an organizational justice framework revealed the previous results. Still, as indicated by Elma (2013), the research is quantitative, which does not allow for the individual voices of the participants to be heard, as this proposed research will provide.

The subject of organizational justice in education has not been extensively researched in the United States. A search using organizational justice in education

yielded research from Turkey (Yilmaz, 2010; Elma, 2013) and Ghana (Addai et al., 2018). A dissertation related to perceptions of organizational justice in education in the United States focused on organizational justice perceptions at Title I schools (McFee, 2016) with no focus on Black or LGBTQ voices, and no others were located. Using the phrase organizational justice LGBTQ educators to search returned articles with social justice topics for sexual minority teachers as activists-educators, LGBTQ student victimization, educators engaging in LGBTQ issues, LGBTQ inclusion, and gender diversity in primary school through higher education with no focus on organizational justice. None of these focused on the experience of Black LBGTQ educators.

The call to focus research into the issue of educator retention analyzing organizational factors has been made. This call proposes that for the issue of Black educator turnover to be understood, there must be an analysis of the organizations utilizing an organizational theoretical perspective is essential (Ingersoll & May, 2011). It has also been recommended that the subject of organizational justice and job satisfaction be explored through qualitative research techniques to understand how participants define the work environment and gain educators' perspectives (Elma, 2013). The argument has also been made that recruitment and retention of Blacks in education are grounded in factors associated with organizational characteristics and conditions of schools that warrant further research within subgroups (Achinstein et al., 2010; Ingersoll et al., 2017) and organizational justice as a concept is largely ignored in the field of educational administration (Hoy & Tarter, 2004). Yean and Yusof (2016) encourage future research

to identify productive and effective avenues for workplace injustice to be managed and eliminated.

These suggestions open the way for the use of organizational justice in the proposed context, filling a gap while considering the intersectional nature of the proposal and the implications its use can have on understanding the organization and perceptions of the Black LGBTQ educators in an educational institution.

Critical Race Theory

To study the unique intersection of Black LGBTQ educators, there is a need to understand interpersonal and institutional aspects of the experience through a lens that acknowledges their position as distinctive giving them a voice. CRT presents this acknowledgment. CRT is grounded in the study of law and has become interdisciplinary in its application (Cabrera, 2018; Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). It discloses the steadfastness of disadvantageous racial climate steeped in interpersonal and institutional inequities and accepts that race and class converge in schools daily (Kohli, 2016). From this point of view, CRT looks at institutionalized racism in the United States and concedes it is a barrier to progress that Black educators face at the intersection of race and class oppression intertwined with sexism (Kohli, 2016).

The voices of Black LGBTQ are distinctive, CRT holds fast to the belief that respect needs to be given to the insights of people of color as "truth, fairness, and justice reflect the mindset, status, and experience of the knower" (Taylor, 1998, p. 122). Research of Black LGBTQ utilizing CRT confronts the opinion that the experiences of White people are the standard or measure of what is normal while grounding itself in the

distinctive experiences of people of color as a framework. Additionally, its use resists the opportunity to paint the experiences of Black LGBTQ educators as homologous to those of other LGBTQ by providing their voice and experience as valid.

For Black LGBTQ educators, there is no way to conceal the construct of race in their daily life nor in the workplace. It is a construct that is inextricably linked as a part of their identity; any attempt to extricate race is to negate an aspect of their identity. Tenets of CRT hold that race is a social construct based on physical characteristics that have changed over time used to categorize people. These points are found in the specific tenets of CRT as outlined by Cabrera (2018), Dixson and Rousseau Anderson (2018), and Solórzano (1997). The tenets state that (a) race is a social construct based solely on physical characteristics used to categorize people; (b) race is a normal part of U.S. society; (c) advancement of people of color is only done when the interest of Whites can be advanced; (d) racial marginalization across groups has anomalous patterns; (e) an intersectional perspective of lived experiences of marginalized people is necessary; (f) a current and historical context is needed to analyze race and racism in education with interdisciplinary methods and perspectives; (g) voices of men and women of color are valid, pertinent, and crucial to understanding, analyze, and teaching about racial subordination; (h) educational institutions are not gender and color blind, gender and racially unbiased, impartial, meritocratic, and distribute opportunities equitably; and (i) is committed to social justice through documenting disparities while being used to advocate and campaign for significant and relevant end results that rectify racial inequities. Its use

in education challenges the construct of race and racism as it is presented in society and presents in the field of education.

This theory is essential to this research because it is specific to educational institutions as a tool of analysis to highlight ways in which schools function that perpetuate the racial status quo. Additionally, Black LGBTQ educators are not just LGBTQ, but they are also Black, and there is no separating those to identities to examine one because they are inextricably linked. Within the literature, there is no denying that CRT acknowledges that most racism is covert living under the façade of business as usual while overt acts that occur as ill-mannered or rude are viewed as troublesome, awkward, or controversial (Gillborn, 2015). Using CRT, the experiences of Black LGBTQ educators can be centered in their factual knowledge and confronts the standard of using the dominant group interests in the presumption of meritocracy and impartiality in the field of education (Gillborn, 2015; Solórzano, 1997). The centering of factual knowledge of Black LGBTQ educators provides further information about their experience in the field of education while informing CRT theory.

A singular view of Black LGBTQ educators does not provide a complete understanding of their experience. Due to the intersectional nature of their experience, the use of CRT will recognize and acknowledge the multiple dimensions of identity, layers of social structure affect, and demonstrate inequities that are constructed (Gillborn, 2015). CRT scholarship concedes that a person's identity and experience of and in the world are a function of multiple aspects of simultaneous group membership (Landry, 2007) such as racial identity, class, gender, national origin, sexual orientation, etc. Including CRT in

educational research has been urged by scholars with the caveat that the actual voices of people of color be heard using the theory to answer pivotal questions (Taylor, 1998). While questions about the experiences of Black educators have been explored the intersectional experiences of LGBTQ educators are obscured, providing an opportunity to apply CRT to a marginalized group in education using their voices.

Employees may argue that there are policies within organizations to address climate and culture, retention, and concerns brought to the administration. Where research attempts to explain racial inequalities, CRT provides a framework through which ideologies, policies, and practices within an organization can be confronted (Crenshaw, 1995; Kohli, 2016). Historically analysis and the use of marginalized voices is a hallmark of CRT that allows for an understanding of the policies, practices, and ideologies under which Black LGBTQ educators work. The voices of Black LGBTQ educators can be used to counter the narrative of organizations functioning under the guise of colorblindness, ability, race neutrality, and liberal policies proposing structural reasons for racial hierarchies (Crenshaw, 1995; Kohli, 2016; Roberts & Andrews, 2013). CRT offers the intersectional nature of their existence and experience a place to be heard as well as a lens from which to be understood.

CRT is not without its critics. Due to its confrontational nature, it is thought to be weak not because of the constructs but because of whites' disapproval (Taylor, 1998). Its rejection has been largely based on its focus on narratives refusing to be centered on Western inquiries (Posner, 1997). The argument that CRT has no testable hypotheses and relies on narratives points to the perception that Whiteness in social science is the

standard, further marginalizing the voices and experiences of people of color (Cabrera, 2018). Using CRT makes the narrative nature of experiences of Black LGBTQ educators the cornerstone rather than standardizing Whiteness as a means to validate their experiences.

There have been calls for CRT scholars to clarify specific components of the theory. A criticism of CRT has been that it has only base tenets and no definition of racism to identify what constitutes racism. The call for clarification comes from recent claims by Whites of being targets of reverse racism, believing these incidents to be greater than occurrences of discrimination against Black people (Norton & Sommers, 2011). By defining racism, it becomes distinguishable from prejudice. For CRT to be used with Black LGBTQ educators, this gap must be filled, providing a complete theoretical framework. Cabrera (2018) proposes that to fill the gap in CRT, when used in scholarship, the writings of Lorde (1992) and Marable (1992) have been recommended to construct a definition. The definition reads:

Racism is the belief in the inherent superiority of one race over all others, which lead to the belief in the right to dominance and the development of a system of willful ignorance, purposeful exploitation, and power to oppress African American, Latino, Hispanic, Asian, Pacific Islanders, and Native Americans and others based on ethnicity, culture, mannerisms, and color.

As a result of its use, CRT paves the way for the exploration of climate and culture in educational institutions for Black LBGTQ educators because it puts at the forefront the intersectional encounters in the lives of marginalized individuals,

appreciating and respecting that these experiences are more extensive than sexuality and race (Cho et al., 2013; Crenshaw, 1989; DeCuir-Gunby, & Gunby, 2016; Kohli, 2016; Solórzano, 1997). It becomes a framework and platform that provides common ground and is rooted in the historical oppression of a marginalized group, one of which they are already a member.

CRT has been used as a singular theory that has brought criticism that it needs support from other theoretical perspectives. Hegemonic Whiteness has been offered as a supplemental conceptual perspective to counter the absence of racial theory and the definition of racism in CRT. Implementing the definition recommended and introducing an intersectional framework, these two gaps are filled while aligning with CRT theory by centering the voices of marginalized groups rather than standardizing Whiteness in the experience of Black LGBTQ educators.

Intersectionality

The lives of Black LGBTQ educators are inherently intersectional and multidimensional. They identify as Black, LGBTQ, and are educators. In each of those identities, there are challenges. As of June 2020, Black LGBTQ educators have only recently received the same protections as Black educators due to the Supreme Court decision in Bostock v. Clayton County, Georgia, No. 17-1618 (S. Ct. June 15, 2020) (U.S. EEOC, n.d. b). The ruling specifies that Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, once applied only to discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, and national origin now extends to discrimination based on sexual orientation or transgender. The legal implications of the decision and the intersectionality involved with Black LGBTQ

educators make CRT well-positioned and indispensable as a theoretical perspective. CRT and intersectionality were spawned from critical legal studies that hold that law are unquestionably inseparable from social issues with ingrained biases (Legal Information Institute [LII], 2020; Crenshaw, 1989; Ladson-Billings, 2004). Incorporating an intersectional framework is imperative because a singular approach to understanding the experiences of Black people in general (Crenshaw, 1989) and Black LGBTQ has intrinsic limitations.

Intersectionality theory identifies the subtle juxtaposition of identities and social environments. It holds that people have multiple interconnected identities that frame lived experiences, including race, sexual orientation, gender, and social class (Whitfield et al., 2014). Black educators who are LGBTQ by nature have a multifaceted membership in these groups. The intersectional nature of their identity requires a framework that acknowledges each of these groups and their uninterrupted historical relationship with stigmatization and social justice. This framework allows for the specific social location and identities that come with power and privilege to be underscored.

Power and privilege are a facet of policymaking, advocacy, and justice. Examination of where policies are inadequate for Black LGBTQ educators can inform advocacy and social justice. An intersectional theoretical approach is, by definition, an unconventional multidimensional perspective to advocating, policymaking, and social justice (African American Policy Forum [AAPF], n.d.). The African American Policy Forum (AAPF) (n.d.) states that an intersectional approach targets damages suffered and often unrecognized. It moves beyond conventional perspectives of group membership by

perceiving group membership as multidimensional is crucial to shaping advocacy, policies, and social justice.

Intersectionality has been the subject of criticism. It has been criticized as being rigid, having an identitarian framework, being steeped in subjects, running its course, needing other theories for its application, and an exclusive focus on Black women, race, and gender (Carbado, 2013). Intersectionality has gradually been applied in multiple disciplines, circumstances, and countries (Carbado et al., 2013; Rodriguez et al., 2016). Its lack of dedication to subjects or identities and designating and charting their occurrence allows it to be used broadly. Intersectionality veers away from any attempts to develop an exhaustive list of intersectional identity configurations. By deviating from listing intersectional identities, it is flexible enough to be used in the study of Black LGBTQ educators. The criticism that it has run its course depends on who conceptualizes it and how its use.

While intersectionality theory is flexible and has been used in many applications, there are places it has yet to be applied. Various specialties have used intersectionality as a framework for research but exploring work environments using it as a framework for discrimination, power, and inequity examination has not been taken advantage of thus far (Rodriguez et al., 2016). Other theories such as cosynthesis, assemblages, interconnectivity, and multidimensionality have been presented as a substitute or alternative for intersectionality and, yet, intersectionality is no more or no less effective, compelling, influential, or strong as those theories in research (Carbado, 2013). Additionally, those theories are not derived from a legal theory that grew from a desire

for civil rights, specifically for marginalized people of color. The last criticism is that intersectionality centers on Black women, race, and gender. While the theory grew out of legal challenges faced by Black women, used race and gender because of the legal focus in which Crenshaw (1989) employed it, intersectionality does not inherently privilege or advantage any group. The lack of inherent privilege for any specific group supports the use of intersectionality in the research of Black LGBTQ educators.

The lived experiences of Black LGBTQ educators call for the inclusion of a theory that centers their voices and lives, incorporates legal nuances, and acknowledges their identities. Identity markers and the construct of race are inextricably linked, forming connections; the construct of race is moderated by and interconnect framing the lived experiences (Dixson & Rousseau Anderson, 2018) of Black LGBTQ educators. Without acknowledging gender, sexuality, and sex, or other identity markers when researching Black people, it reveals the intrinsic limitations in a rigid, fixed-focus framework (Crenshaw, 1989). Intersectionality theory lays a foundation of understanding and acknowledging that individuals can be susceptible to numerous types and experiences of bias constructed by the synchronism of multiple identities associated with group membership. As another framework in this research, the approach brings a multifaceted analysis to the study, can form and advance effective interventions, and justify increased advocacy and social change where indicated.

Summary

The field of education has inadequately researched the experience of organizational climate and culture for Black educators and Black LGBTQ educators. A

focus has been placed on testing, retention programs, and pay rates rather than experiences that will provide data, insights, and themes. A lack of research focused on Black LBGTQ educators using climate and culture, intersectionality, and an organizational justice framework is absent. An approach from the perspective of organizational psychology focused on the climate and culture experience of Black LGBTQ educators can provide insights about the factors that encourage them to remain or leave the field of education. Still, these perspectives are not currently available in their voice. With this information, those in the field of education concerned about the numbers of Black educators can hear directly from Black educators about what contributes to retention issues and the actual environments in which they work to improve retention.

This chapter addressed the historical origins of climate and culture of public schools in the United States specific to Black educators, LBGTQ educators, and their interconnected history as well as association with federal laws. Organizational climate and culture were presented and explained, while diversity climate and microaggressions were introduced and described. Last, the three-pronged approach of organizational justice, CRT, and intersectionality were proposed as the framework for the research. In Chapter 1, the purpose, problem, nature, key definitions, assumptions, and significance of the study were described. In Chapter 3, the methodology for this study is discussed. In Chapter 4, the results of this study are explained, and in Chapter 5 contains a discussion of the key findings from the results of the study, limitations of the study, implications of the findings, and recommendations for future research are presented.

Chapter 3: Research Method

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative interpretative phenomenological study was to explore Black LGBTQ teachers' experiences of climate and culture in the workplace. Exploring these experiences will inform policy and advocacy and increase understanding of factors that support their presence or contribute to their absence in the field. This qualitative phenomenological study design was grounded in a three-pronged theoretical framework. The chapter begins with restating the research questions that guided the study. Additionally, the chapter explains the qualitative methods used in the exploration. The discussion includes rationale and design for population selection, design, data gathering and analysis, and instrumentation. It concludes with a discussion of ethical considerations and procedures.

Research Questions

Three research questions were developed to guide this study and were the basis for the construction of the questions used in the interviews. These questions are as follows:

RQ1: How do Black LGBTQ educators experience organizational climate?

RQ2: How do Black LGBTQ educators experience organizational culture?

RQ3: What factors do Black LGBTQ educators attribute to their experience of organizational climate and culture?

Research Design and Rationale

This study explored the experiences of climate and culture of Black LGBTQ educators in the workplace. It was conducted using a qualitative phenomenological study approach. A qualitative approach was appropriate in the study of Black LGBTQ educators' experiences of climate and culture in the workplace due to the central focus of qualitative inquiry. Qualitative inquiry seeks to fill gaps, uncover, and shed light on unfamiliar viewpoints associated with specific phenomena especially where current theory is insufficient and lacking (Butler et al., 2021). Furthermore, the view of qualitative research from Ravitch and Carl (2016), this approach applied to Black LGBTQ educators provided a central focus through which to understand the individuals, groups, organization, and climate and culture in context by reflecting on the interpretation of their experiences in their words.

Seeking to understand the lived experiences of individuals requires open-ended questions that inquire about experiences and behaviors, opinions and values, feelings, knowledge, sensory observations, and background and demographics (Ravitch & Carl, 2019). Open-ended questions are used in qualitative inquiry. Ravitch and Carl (2019) indicate a quantitative approach is correlated with positivism and the numerical analysis of data using statistical means. Rubin and Rubin (2012) stated that the use of qualitative research provides a detailed exploration of experiences, motives, and opinions that can contribute to understanding their worldview. They also assert that a qualitative approach can gain insight and details and reconstruct events outside the experiences of the researcher. This research focused on the lived experience of Black LGBTQ educators

using a phenomenological study approach that calls for the use of a constructivist

qualitative method.

Applying an interpretative phenomenological approach (IPA) to exploring Black

LGBTQ educators' experiences of climate and culture in the workplace is grounded in

the ability of this approach to provide a framework for describing their experiences of the

phenomenon: organizational climate and culture. IPA is committed to comprehensive

analysis and investigation of what is happening to the participants and their thoughts

about it (Smith & Fieldsend, 2021). Unlike mainstream psychology, IPA employs a

detailed analysis of transcripts with an eye on understanding the conceptualization and

discernment of the group. For this reason, sample sizes can vary from one to 15 or more

participants to have an in-depth hermeneutical account. The use of smaller sample size

has become recognized as a way to achieve this depth (Smith & Fieldsend, 2021).

Exploring the experiences of organizational climate and culture for Black LGBTQ

educators is a present-day, real-life phenomenon that calls for a strategy to understand the

context and ambiguities between phenomena and context this approach provides (Yin,

2014). Using video, participants were interviewed and observed during the interactions

and then analyzed.

The three-pronged theoretical approach used for this study was in line with

guiding data collection and analysis through the lens of previous theoretical propositions

prescribed in this research approach (see Yin, 2014). The choice of an IPA approach fit

with the theories applied: intersectionality, CRT, and organizational justice. IPA allowed

for the lived experience of Black LGBTQ educators to be examined using a small sample

for detailed information gathering among a homogeneous group, using open-ended questions that allow for observation of the effect of the question on the participant. The participants were members of a marginalized group who have intersectional identities that must be acknowledged in a safe environment. Additionally, the use of intersectionality and CRT calls for a design that provides for the possibility of awkward and emotional interactions due to the subject matter (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014). Intersectionality and CRT do not shrink from race, sex, gender, and power dynamics; therefore, this called for a design where an interview supports open conversations about these things. Utilizing IPA for this research was appropriate because it is a comprehensive strategy that integrates diverse data sources such as artifacts, documents, observations, and interviews for detailed descriptions of real-life contexts (Morgan et al., 2016; Yin, 2014).

An interpretative qualitative phenomenological approach had the greatest potential to answer the research questions and address the purpose of the study. These findings are not meant to be definitive but rather to contribute to and add recommendations for social change and academic literature and provide a path for future research into the subject. The literature review revealed an overwhelming number of research inquiries into the subject have been conducted through quantitative inquiries using survey instrumentation. However, these inquiries are without significant participation of Black LGBTQ participants. Due to the nature of the method used, the words and interpretations of experiences of participants are unavailable for analysis to contribute to the problem statement and research questions for this study.

Role of the Researcher

According to Ravitch and Carl (2016), the identity, positionality, and social location of a researcher are prominent in qualitative research, and the research is the primary instrument. Maintaining empathic neutrality, awareness of biases, and a nonjudgmental perspective while holding a holistic viewpoint on the contexts of study is the responsibility of a researcher and can allow for unexpected results to be revealed (Moustakas, 1994; Ritchie et al., 2013). Successfully completing scholarly qualitative research requires a focus on competently using research methods. Conducting competent scholarly qualitative research involves evaluating population and sample size, site selection (organization and geographic location), participant interviews, data collection and analysis, mitigating biases, and presenting findings.

I acknowledged being of the same racial background as the participants as well as having worked in the field of education. Additionally, I have engaged in advocacy for LGBTQ and Black LGBTQ rights. Beals et al. (2020) discuss edgewalking and edgework in which research occupies a space that is at the edge of the etic or emic perspective. The edgewalking in this case can be considered an intersectional approach where there are aspects of culture and interaction that both researcher and participants possess that cannot be separated to create a completely insider or outsider position. However, it is of significance that if a researcher were invited to participate there would be no homogeneity with the participants and the researcher could not participate.

Three specific aspects of the role of the researcher must be addressed: subjectivity, objectivity, and research philosophy to clarify the position held. Subjectivity

was exemplified by using semistructured interviews with prepared questions as outlined in the interview protocol and modifying as needed during the interview. Maintaining objectivity was achieved using follow-up communication with participants to ensure accuracy as outlined in the methodology. Ratner (2002) suggested that to have objectivity, concepts must be clearly defined and not open to interpretation. The concepts have been defined in the definitions section. Additionally, a methodology was proposed to collect relevant information (see Ratner, 2002). Further information addressing subjectivity and objectivity are addressed in the issues of trustworthiness section. I committed to a focus on inquiry exploration and implemented triangulation as described in the methodology section.

Methodology

Population

The target population for this study began with Black LGBTQ public K-12 school educators. The criteria for inclusion was self-identification as Black and LGBTQ, holding a teaching license for at least 3 years, and employment as an elementary educator. According to Ravitch and Carl (2016), data add credibility to qualitative research by reducing bias. The strategy required that the study criteria were met and chosen from the population identified. For this study, the sample size was between one and 15 participants (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014; Smith & Fieldsend, 2021). It is suggested that students use five or six as a practical sample size to allow for in-depth engagement with participants and to reduce being inundated with extensive amounts of qualitative data (Smith & Fieldsend, 2020). IPA requires depth rather than breadth, resulting in a smaller sample

size to gather rich, detailed data about the experiences of the participants. These

participants were to constitute a group of Black LGBTQ public school K-6 educators

who were interviewed to understand their feelings and thoughts about their lived

experiences, incidents, and situations related to organizational climate and culture in the

workplace.

Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection

Following approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB), I began

recruitment through contact with professionals in the field of education, professional

associations, and organizations specific to Black and LGBTQ educators, such as state and

national branches of the NABSE, National Association of Black Male Educators

(NABME), GLSEN, and GALA. I sent previously identified contact persons and

organization contacts an email introducing the study inquiring about prospective

participants. Initial contact was made with Pinellas (Florida) Alliance of Black School

Educators (PABSE), Arizona Alliance of Black School Educators (AzABSE), NABME,

and Facebook group, Black educators. Each indicated interest in supporting the

recruitment of members upon receiving IRB approval of the study. Additionally, the

recruitment flyer and a link to the Google Form were provided on the page of multiple

Facebook groups.

Prospective participants were able to access information about the study via

Google Forms. The Google Forms link contained the informed consent form and

screening survey (Appendix D) requiring an electronic signature. Those who fit the

criteria were chosen and notified by email. Following notification, I sent a separate email

containing the pre-interview questionnaire and an inquiry for dates and times of their availability.

Following the initial approval, recruitment began and yielded one participant in the target group. Recruitment revealed willing participants who fit all criteria except being an elementary school educator. Following reevaluation of criteria, I addressed the issues of recruitment with the IRB and requested to change the criteria from elementary school to kindergarten through 12th grade. Approval to change the criteria to broaden the scope for recruitment was granted. After the approval was granted, the recruitment flyer was updated to reflect kindergarten through 12th grade. A second round of recruitment was done using the same process with the new recruitment criteria. The second round of recruitment yielded four additional participants.

Instrumentation and Materials

Semi-structured interviews were the primary data collection method utilizing an online video and audio recording platform from Zoom Video Communications, Inc. (Zoom). All participants were able to access the platform. If participants were unable to or uncomfortable using video recording, this feature could have disabled by the host or participant, or a Zoom-specific call-in number can be given. One participant requested the use of audio choosing only to appear at the beginning of the interview. Each participant received a meeting link for the interview time and date through email. Each interview meeting was locked once the researcher and participant joined using the Zoom security feature that does not allow new participants without permission.

Participants were requested to interview in a private and secure area where they were alone for confidentiality. Interviews were coordinated with the availability and convenience of the participant in mind. Each interview was conducted using the interview protocol (Appendix F). The researcher used open-ended questions with follow-up and probing questions being utilized as needed. The recording was provided by Zoom, Microsoft 365 was used for transcription, and the researcher listened to each recording to edit mistakes in text transcription. Transcription editing was done through listening to both audio and replaying video interviews where available. Research notes were taken during all interviews as deemed necessary. Each participant was debriefed following completion of the interview process.

The interview protocol was developed following the definitions of organizational climate and organizational culture to elicit detailed information about their unique experience with these concepts. Organizational climate questions were developed to draw out experiences about policies, procedures, behaviors, rewards, and support as indicated by the research of Ehrhart et al. (2014), Schneider and Reichers (1983), Schneider et al. (1998), Schneider et al. (2013), and Schneider and Barbera (2014). Organizational culture questions reflected research that indicates organizational climate is experienced through values and beliefs, presumptions, unwritten organizational expectations, telling of workplace stories, and current social events (Schneider & Barbera, 2014). Schneider and Barbera (2014) and Denison (1996) posit that organizational culture cannot be separated from events, history, and individuals. To include this there were questions formulated to address the racial and social climate in the United States and changes that were

experienced. Questions specific to LGBTQ and Black LBGTQ were grounded in Intersectionality, CRT, and the research rooted in climate experiences of LGBTQ with the combination of identities, addressing racial status quo being upheld, and racial climates (Cho et al., 2013; Crenshaw, 1989; Kohli, 2016).

Data Analysis Plan

When the processing of audio and video files of each interview was completed, the researcher downloaded each from the platform. These files were stored on a separate hard drive to protect the information. For accuracy, the researcher reviewed each transcript within 7 days of the interview. Completed transcripts of the participant's interview were sent for review and to assess the accuracy, explore conclusions, and inquire whether important information remained that needed to be included. Four participants indicated no changes were needed in their interview. One participant indicated needed edits to specific responses and added additional information pertaining to recent incidents via email. No further follow-up interviews were required or requested of participants.

Once all interviews were confirmed to contain complete information from each participant, the data analysis process proceeded. The researcher used the thematic coding process recommended by Braun and Clarke (2006) for qualitative phenomenological research with phases of analysis. Following listening to the audio recordings and transcribing each, these six steps were followed and included (a) reading and rereading interview transcripts for familiarity, (b) generating a first cycle of codes, (c) using the codes to search for significant and relevant themes, (d) review and modify preliminary

themes, (e) refine and define themes, and (f) concluded with writing the results allowing readers to follow the process. The computer-assisted data analysis software was used after the interviews were checked for accuracy to aid in the identification of codes, themes, and patterns in individual interviews and across interviews.

The data retrieved from the interviews was analyzed manually by the researcher and then by using computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS),, Dedoose. Dedoose (n.d.) states that it is a secure CAQDAS software program for qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods research developed by researchers. The software can analyze images, text, audio, and video data from multiple sources. Dedoose allowed for centralized organizing and coding of various types of data and notes throughout the research process. Zamawe (2015) suggests that CAQDAS are a significant part of qualitative analysis, reduce time in transcription, increase precision, and only assist the researcher in managing data in the analysis process. The procedures and processes chosen supported an in-depth and detailed investigation of Black LGBTQ educators, allowed for descriptions and interpretations of the climate and culture, found the meaning of the specific phenomenon being studied (Davidsen, 2013; Patton, 2014) and aligned with the research questions and intent to explore their lived experiences in detail.

The analysis was framed using an IPA process integrating thematic analysis. Pietkiewicz and Smith (2014) indicate that interpretive phenomenology seeks to understand how individuals make sense of their experiences and how things appear to individuals in their experience. Researchers using IPA have the primary goal of probing

how participants interpret their experiences, understanding what it is like to "stand in the shoes" of participants, and translate the meaning they have given to their experience (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014). As a result, IPA research allows the voices and experiences of participants to be interpreted through descriptive means using similar cases examining their unique contexts. Additionally, there is an expectation that there will be multiple readings during data analysis, recognition of emergent themes, seeking connections between experiences, and clustering of themes.

An IPA sample size was a fit for this study because the recommendation to gather detailed qualitative data requires samples between one to fifteen participants (Smith & Fieldsend, 2020). This enabled respect for each case, in-depth detail, discovering individual patterns and those across the sample as well as extensive analysis. The analysis was framed to extract answers to the research questions allowing the data collected to speak, knowing that data collection is unpredictable, and understanding that not all data may be useful due to the nature of qualitative research (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Moustakas, 1994). Themes identified through the process were analyzed with consideration given to a frequency. The review of transcripts was done with a attention given to repetitions of words, phrases, or terms in addition to comparing and contrasting of information across participants.

Issues of Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness articulates the quality and rigor of a qualitative study. Lincoln and Guba (1985) indicate there are four elements of constructivist trustworthiness: (a) credibility, (b) transferability, (c) dependability, and (d) confirmability. These elements

add rigor to the research and enhance descriptions of the study. These approaches to validity align with research questions, purpose, and contexts as recommended by Ravitch and Carl (2016).

Credibility

Credibility represents an inextricable link between methods and findings (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Credibility encompasses the nonlinear nature of qualitative research allowing the complexities to be addressed through the created structure of the study. In reference to the completed research, credibility questioned the extent to which the data collected from the Black LGBTQ educators is believable from their perspective. It is congruent with what was collected and described as the participants believe they have provided it. Validating the quality of this interview-based qualitative research was conducted through participant validation following interviews (Creswell & Creswell, 2019; Ravitch & Carl, 2016).

Strategies used to develop credibility were member checking and triangulation. Member checking is the process of allowing participants to review the data for feedback, conclusions, and interpretations (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). The member checking process has been found to be a reflective and therapeutic experience for participants because they can analyze their experience and those of others to see they are not alone in their situation (Doyle, 2003; Koelsch, 2013). Doyle (2003) found that member checking provided participants with a new perspective and understanding of self. Participants were sent their transcripts to clarify statements. They were also provided the purpose of the

study as a way to debrief, clarify misconceptions, explain findings, and provide the nature of the study.

Involving participants in a collaborative process to validate the data collected consisted of individual transcripts being provided to participants following their interview. Ravitch and Carl (2016) recommend follow-up question that seeks to discover such information as to whether or not (a) transcripts reflect their perspective, (b) transcripts resonate with the participant, (c) there is something not captured by the transcript, (d) there are areas needing clarification or further information added, (e) appropriateness and accuracy of descriptions, and (f) they detect underlying biases needing to be challenged. Additionally, findings were presented to participants for confirmation. This strategy reduces the opportunity for researcher bias and misinterpretation to occur in transcription as well as analysis.

Triangulation is another opportunity to address credibility and researcher bias. It seeks to strengthen research by using multiple approaches. This study used investigator triangulation involving various investigators as a part of the research team. Two additional post-doctoral researchers with qualitative research experience were used to analyze and process data specifically themes and codes identified. Expert raters were chosen to increase reliability and decrease researcher bias. The rater Bernice Patterson, PhD, LLP, completed a Doctor of Counseling Psychology at Western Michigan University and is the Chief Executive Officer of Infinity Consultation Group. She is a psychologist, counselor, and consultant who focuses on the needs of the people and organizations addressing oppressive systems that uphold division and hate. Additionally,

Kenyata M. Fletcher, Ph.D., LPC, CRADC, Assistant Clinical Director at Haymarket

Center, completed a Doctor of Human Services from Walden University and is the

second rater. Independently these individuals were sent a set of interview transcripts to

analyze. Dr. Patterson was sent all five interview transcripts and Dr. Fletcher was sent

three random interview transcripts. Each returned the transcripts with notations about

their perceptions of codes, themes, and possible further topics for research that emerged.

The results were compared and discussed, the most appropriate and representative

meaning of the data was chosen. Joslin and Müller (2016) assert a research team

approach decreases potential research bias, supporting consistency through auditing. This

process increased credibility due to independent confirmation, discussion of

interpretations, and leading to the best accurate representation of the meaning of the data

(Joslin & Müller, 2016; Korstjens & Moser, 2018).

Transferability

Transferability addresses the extent to which qualitative findings can be

generalized or applied to other populations (Patton, 2014). The responsibility of the

researcher is to provide a 'thick description' of participants and the process allowing for

audience assessment of transferability. An aspect of transferability is context which

includes historical, social, political and cultural factors that influence participants during

data collection. The historical context of the study was established with loss of 38,000

Black educators following Brown v. Board of Education Topeka, 347 US 483 (1954) and

searches for homosexual educators conducted by the FLIC. Law enforcement interactions

resulting in the death of Black individuals specifically the death of George Floyd,

COVID-19 pandemic, and the response of the President of the United States to those simultaneous events are necessary elements for a description of the social, political, and cultural climate for the five participants. The researcher included the demographic information for participants (Table 2), participant criteria (Appendix D), interview conventions used (Appendix G), and data analysis procedure in this study. Transferability judgment lies in the audience's determination of whether the study provides sufficient information about context, sample size, sampling strategy, demographics, inclusion and exclusion criteria, interview procedures, the interview guide, and analysis processes (Korstjens, & Moser, 2018). The researcher was aware that the nature and subject of the study required further aspects of transferability with 'thick descriptions' specific to the research and participants.

Employing a 'thick description' perspective required providing background information necessary for understanding the relevance, meaning, and intentions that underpin social interactions. These descriptions are meant to detail interactions, contexts, emotions, and social relationships leading to interpretations of their meanings (Denzin, 1989; Schwandt, 2001). Thick descriptions develop a precise picture of individuals and groups in a cultural context and setting with underlying meaning relevant to their life (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2018; Holloway, 1997). The population in this study was not atypical nor unusual for the study problem. All schools have a climate and culture, the phenomenon being studied is experienced by all educators including Black LGBTQ educators.

Dependability and Confirmability

The degree to which the research findings are consistent and reliable, procedures are documented, and whether others can follow, verify, and evaluate the process used defines dependability (Patton, 2014; Polit et al., 2006; Sandelowski, 1986; Streubert & Carpenter, 2007). There is no expectation that this study can be replicated precisely, but dependability provides the framework with a detailed structure of the study process, including coding procedures.

The degree to which assertions, findings, interpretations, and other results can be related in obvious ways refers to the confirmability of a study (Patton, 2014). Confirmability will be achieved through thorough documentation, checking, reviewing, and verifying throughout the study process. Attention will be given to outliers and flaws in the data collected, the subjectivity of codes and themes, and their influence on interpretation. In replication, there is no way to avoid the differences between researchers, yet an explanation for specific choices during the data analysis process will be provided. The focus remained on the research purpose to minimize researcher bias. Dependability in this study began with the outlining of the recruitment process, creation of a designated interview protocol, and details of the data analysis procedures.

Examples of the coding process presented using a table with descriptions of the rationale for codes becoming themes and clustering to establish a theme will be given in chapter 4. Detailing these elements of the study allows future researchers to use the same processes, procedures, and methods to conduct similar research to compare, confirm, or corroborate results or expand on the research presented.

Ethical Procedures

Permission to conduct the study was obtained from the Institutional Review

Board at Walden University (American Psychological Association [APA], 2017, Section

8, 8.01). To minimize conflict of interest and risks as well as protect the welfare of the

participants, the researcher followed the guidelines of research. The completion of

National Institutes of Health refresher training was completed before beginning data

collection.

Through social media advertisement and referrals, participants were invited to

participate in the study voluntarily. After accepting participation in the study, participants

were be provided with (a) informed consent detailing research purpose, (b) duration and

procedures, (c) right to decline or withdraw, (d) potential risk factors, (e) research

benefits, (f) limitations of confidentiality, (g) incentives offered, (h) video and audio

recording options, and (i) a research contact person to answer questions about the

research or their rights (APA, 2017). Participants were provided the forms via Google

Forms and required to provide electronic signature. Participation was not permitted

without a signed informed consent. The participants were provided with copies of call

documents through Google Forms. This process allowed prospective participants to ask

questions, receive answers, and build trust in the researcher and the process.

There were no inducements or incentives provided for participation as indicated

in the informed consent (APA, 2017). The informed consent included a thank-you gift

provided upon completion of the research project. As indicated, debriefing was done with

participants allowing them to obtain complete information about the nature of the study, findings, and conclusions and clarify any errors (APA, 2014).

The data was anonymous and confidential such that participants are not identifiable. Participant privacy and confidentiality has been maintained by assigning a pseudonym for each participant. In the study, participants are referred to with pseudonyms as assigned. The researcher removed all references to names or identify information including locations, other names, or place of employment in transcripts to maintain privacy and confidentiality. The researcher saved all data on an external hard drive. Five years from completing the study, all associated raw data, including but not limited to interview tapes, spreadsheets, and questionnaire results, will be destroyed, or erased as required.

Field Testing of Interview Protocol

A field test of the interview guide and process was conducted. According to Majid et al. (2017) and Hassan et al. (2006), the testing of a study was an important stage of the research process. This type of testing allowed the researcher to identify challenges in the selection and recruitment process, protocols, improve the interview guide, and to denote the feasibility of the study. Feedback from field testing participants helped to improve rephrasing, reframing, and sequencing of questions. Additionally, research has indicated that it is essential to engage in a test of questions to find potential issues to adjust the interview protocol to add value and trustworthiness to the research (Dikko, 2016; van Teijlingen, & Hundley, 2001; van Wijk, & Harrison, 2013; Watson et al., 2007).

The interview questions were tested following the interview protocol refinement (IPR) Method in four phases. IPR phases include (a) alignment of interview questions with research questions, (b) establishing an inquiry-based conversation, (c) gather feedback about the interview protocol, and (d) testing the questions (Castillo-Montoya, 2016). Alignment of the research questions and interview questions was completed by developing matrix (Table 1).

The matrix allowed the researcher to indicate the questions in the interview that may evoke information relevant to the research question indicated while identifying gaps (Neumann, 2008). The questions were developed to create an inquiry-based conversation using everyday language, excluding theoretical language or jargon (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015; Merriam, 2009; Patton, 2014). Feedback about the questions developed was obtained from volunteers: a Doctor of Philosophy in IOP, a Doctor of Philosophy in Higher Education Leadership, and a current doctoral candidate in IOP.

Table 1

Interview Matrix

	Background information	RQ1	RQ2	RQ3	Current events/ conclusion
Interview Q1	X				
Interview Q2	X				
Interview Q3		X			
Interview Q4				X	
Interview Q5			X		
Interview Q6				X	
Interview Q7				X	
Interview Q8			X		
Interview Q9		X			
Interview Q10					X
Interview Q11		X			
Interview Q12			X		
Interview Q13			X		
Interview Q14					X

Note. The interview matrix pairs interview questions that may elicit responses to research questions (see Castillo-Montoya, 2016; Neumann, 2008).

The experts were sent a feedback survey using Google Forms containing instructions for an open reading of the interview questions and 15 feedback questions with opportunities for open responses for feedback. Experts' recommendations were used to examine "structure, length, writing style, and comprehension" (Castillo-Montoya, 2016, p. 826). Recommendations were specific to how the current social and racial impacts the work experience, and the need to bring that aspect of the workplace into other parts of the interview were applied to refine the interview protocol. Specifically, one question was changed to detail the recommendation associated with the current social and racial climate experiences of each participant. Last, testing of the protocol was completed with the modifications suggested and the addition of transitional phrasing.

Field interviews were conducted with Black LGBTQ who were either currently an educator in a public school or had experience in education. The recommendations were specific to language used, additional details for clarity, and directly addressing current social and racial climate experiences were added to the protocol. Multiple respondents indicated the need to be "specific" and "direct" when asking about current racial and social climate issues rather than alluding to them. Questions specific to these topics were reworded to reflect those comments. It was indicated that the questions were largely straightforward, the interview flowed well, and the transitions helped develop clarity from one subject to another. Additionally, the recording was utilized with no technical difficulties.

Summary

Research of the climate and culture lived experiences of Black LGBTQ educators calls for a method that allows their voices to be centered. A qualitative interpretative phenomenological approach fits this need. Additionally, a marginalized community such as empathic neutrality is cognizant of biases, can held a nonjudgmental perspective, and maintain a perspective of the study context, which is the role, and responsibility of the research in a phenomenological study (Moustakas, 1994; Ritchie et al., 2013).

This chapter began by explaining the type of study that was conducted. It detailed the rationale for population selection, design, data collection and analysis, and instrumentation. Ethical considerations and threats to ethical procedures were presented and explained. This chapter concludes with demonstrating how trustworthiness was added to the study through utilizing the Interview Protocol Refinement Method that

requires alignment of the research questions with the written interview questions,

develops a conversation that is inquiry-based, uses experts to gain interview protocol

feedback, and pilots the questions to further refine the interview tool. Chapter 1 presented

and detailed the purpose, problem, nature, key definitions, assumptions, and significance

of the study. In Chapter 2, a survey of the literature that supports the research was

introduced. In Chapter 3, the methodology was explained and demonstrated. In Chapter

4, the results of this study will be explained, and Chapter 5 includes a discussion of the

key findings from the results of the study, limitations, implications of the findings, and

recommendations are presented.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

There is not enough known about the climate and culture experiences of LGBTQ educators who identify as African American or Black in the workplace and how these intersectional experiences might contribute to their lack of presence in the field of education. The purpose of this qualitative study was to (a) investigate workplace climate and culture through the voiced experiences of Black LGBTQ educators in a K-12 public schools, (b) increase understanding of their experience of organizational climate and culture, (c) discover the aspects of the climate and culture that contribute to their experiences, (d) provide improvement recommendations to stakeholders, and (e) expand the present knowledge base by introducing a novel perspective in organizational climate and culture. Three research questions were developed to guide this research study:

RQ1: How do Black LGBTQ educators experience organizational climate?

RQ2: How do Black LGBTQ educators experience organizational culture?

RQ3: What factors do Black LGBTQ educators attribute to their experience of organizational climate and culture?

The chapter begins with a discussion of the setting, demographics of the participants, data collection procedures, and a description of the process of data analysis. This chapter concludes with evidence of trustworthiness.

Setting

The spread of COVID-19 was declared a pandemic because it was an outbreak from one localized area that affected a great quantity of people through its spread

internationally (Oxford University Press, 2014). During the pandemic, the way that education in schools was conducted changed drastically. School districts shifted to online education, and some chose social distancing with children sitting six feet apart with masks. The U.S. Government Accountability Office (2022) stated that during the 2020–2021 school year the pandemic interrupted education for millions of students and educators. K-12 public school teachers were surveyed, and the following were found: (a) 60% of virtual learning teachers said their students had more difficulty understanding lessons than in a typical school year, (b) 61% of all teachers had more students who experienced emotional distress than in a typical year, (c) 85% of in-person teachers said live instruction, fully or partially in-person, helped students, and (d) fewer than 40% of all teachers thought asynchronous learning, in which students work independently, helped the majority of their students.

During the 2020-21 school year, teachers reported dealing with inadequate workspaces and support, conflicting time demands, absences, and disconnection (U.S. Government Accountability Office, 2022). These factors resulted in negative and positive effects experienced by teachers. Alertness, determination, and being inspired were reported as positive effects while distress, fear, and upset were negative effects most often indicated by teachers (University of Maryland, n.d.). The end of the federal mandates concerning COVID-19 came on May 11, 2023 (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC], 2023a). In November 2023, the CDC (2023b) reported COVID-19 hospitalizations as 6,484,329 and the number of deaths attributed to COVID-19 as 1,153,910.

In this environment, the study participants were teaching and engaging with colleagues and students. This global pandemic impacted individuals, families, neighborhoods, schools, organizations, and cities and rippled across the country. The study interviews were conducted between July 2022 and May 2023 after the declaration of the pandemic with the last being conducted eight days prior to federal mandates. All participants addressed an aspect of their experience in the workplace and with colleagues during this global pandemic.

Demographics

The initial goal was to recruit and interview up to 15 participants. After multiple inquiries from teachers outside of elementary school and recruitment challenges for exclusively elementary school teachers, I determined that broadening the parameters from elementary school only to kindergarten through high school was advisable. Additional permissions to make this change were sought and obtained from the IRB to reduce the number of participants to five to six and to broaden the parameters. The interpretative phenomenological approach posits that research can seek an in-depth exploration of individual experiences or have a broad description of a group but achieving both is scarcely done (see Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014), warranting a small number of participants. The use of five or six participants has been found to be appropriate (Smith & Fieldsend, 2020) and was deemed acceptable for this research. For this study, obtaining individual experiences was deemed most important rather than attempting to broadly apply the experiences to a group. A variety of demographic characteristics describe the participants who resided in five different states (Table 2).

Participants were required to hold a current teaching certificate or credentials in their state to participate—all verified this. The study includes three elementary teachers and two middle school teachers who have taught from three to nine or more years. Two elementary school teachers indicated teaching three to four years, and one has taught for nine years. The middle school teachers have taught for between seven and nine or more years. Participants' ages ranged from 30 to 45. They were not asked to give exact ages but rather were given age ranges to choose from. Each participant was asked to choose Black, African American, or African diaspora as identifiers. Four participants chose Black, and one chose African American. There were seven additional identifiers for sexuality they could choose from. There were three primary identifiers chosen among the participants: gay (3), lesbian (1), and queer (1). No participants identified as bisexual, transgender, or questioning. All participants indicated being out in their workplace.

Table 2

Participant Demographic Characteristics

	Grade level	Years in profession	Age group	Race/Ethnicity	LGBTQ identifier	Out at work
Participant 1	Elementary	3-4	30-35	Black	Lesbian	Yes
Participant 2	Elementary	9+	41-45	Black	Gay	Yes
Participant 3	Middle	9+	41-45	Black	Gay	Yes
Participant 4	Elementary	3-4	30-35	African American	Gay	Yes
Participant 5	Middle	7-8	30-35	Black	Queer	Yes

Data Collection

Following approval from the Walden University IRB (#02-02-22-0165017), all procedures were followed as outlined for data collection. Emails were sent to NABSE, NABME, GLSEN, and GALA with no responses. I sent a follow-up email (Appendix B)

to organization contacts who previously expressed a desire to promote the study. The email reintroduced the study information, contained the Google Forms link and the preapproved study flyer (Appendix C).

Previously identified contact persons and organizations were sent an email (Appendix B) introducing the study inquiring about prospective participants (Appendix A). Initial contact was made with PABSE, ABSE, NABME, and a group on Facebook, Black Educators. I used Facebook groups for education professionals, graduate students, and qualitative research to post the flyer, link to Google Forms, and quick response (QR) codes for recruitment. Additionally, the study was posted in the Walden University Participant Pool. The Participant Pool posts research studies seeking participants in such areas as education, military personnel or veterans, students or alumni, healthcare professionals, mental health providers, business leaders, and general population (Harris, n.d.).

Semistructured interviews were conducted with five participants. All participants were required to be in a place that provided them with privacy. Each participant used the secure Zoom link sent via email. In addition, participants were encouraged to meet in a private room with the door closed and to wear headphones. During each interview, participants ensured privacy and confidentiality by requesting others leave the room or by choosing a private room. No participants were significantly distracted in a way that prevented answering questions completely.

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using IPA, a qualitative thematic analysis method grounded in an idiographic philosophy. Through this philosophical lens the subjective lived experiences of the participants were heard. These subjective experiences and interpretations of the experiences are vital principles in phenomenology (Love et al., 2020). In the hermeneutics, or interpretation of language used, that a researcher strives to obtain a clear and complete idea of the participant while the participant is simultaneously doing the same with respect to their own experience (Love et al., 2020). Love et al. (2020) indicated that this occurrence of simultaneity is double hermeneutics with the researcher being integrated as a part of a conjoint creation with participants to develop interpretations.

The analysis was done through identifying common words, phrases, ideas, and concepts to expose patterns. An initial reading of each transcript for accuracy was performed, including removal of identifying information followed by the analysis process. In cases where the transcript required further clarification, I listened to the audio and where necessary watched the video to gather further information. Additional information was gathered through nonverbal communication cues. While listening to the audio recording of each participant interview, I simultaneously used the transcripts to note cues including facial gestures, pauses, and changes in voice tone and inflection that are imperceptible through reading text alone. Dedoose was used to complete the data analysis to identify codes and themes and to highlight significant quotations of participants. Codes and significant quotations associated with them were highlighted

together in association with each research question. As the themes emerged through

analysis, these themes were also categorized and associated with each research question

in a table.

Table 3

Themes and Associated Codes

Theme	Associated codes
Sweep it under the rug	Gaslight
	Stay comfortable
	Assume positive intent
	Sweep under the rug
	Uncomfortable
	Unheard
	Unprotected
	Insignificant
	It's just not followed
	We're the aggressor
Supportive atmosphere	Welcoming of families
	Community engaged
	Representation
	Colleagues as allies
	Services available
	Free self-expression
	Specific policies
Exclusionary experiences	Reprimanded
	Unequal discipline
	Unprotected and unsafe
	Discipline for standing up for self
	Psychologically unsafe
	Double standards
Being overlooked	Unsuccessful promotions
	Because I'm gay
	Not rewarded
	Black educators overlooked
Silenced and ignored	Sweep things under the rug
	Turning a blind eye
	Good intentions
	Ignoring policies for comfort
Positive environment	Adaptable
	Fit
Consistent contradictions	Inconsistent enforcement of policies/rules
	Students unpunished
	Internal–external contradictory messaging
	Comfort levels
Covert communications	It's not there
	Lack of value shown
	Intentional scheduling
	Lack of consideration
	People feeling free to say things
	Comfortable
	Cliques
	Microaggressions
	Social media influence
Bigoted remarks	Use of religion/proselytizing
	Outspoken homophobia
	Super fruity/obviously gay
	Unaware colleagues

Impact of Social Unrest and a Pandemic in the United States

It is important to address the impact of social unrest and Novel Coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19) in the United States in the workplace environment and relationships with colleagues. COVID-19 is a disease caused by a virus named SARS-CoV-2. It was on December 31, 2019, the first cases of COVID-19, were reported in Wuhan, China, in the Hubei province (LaFee, 2021). One month later, 21 countries reported 9976 cases. Holshue, et al. (2020) indicated that on January 19, 2020, the first case of a COVID-19 presented in the United States in Snohomish County, Washington. The patient reported having returned from a Wuhan, China four days previously, received information about the CDC health alert, and went to the urgent care clinic.

On March 13, 2020, the Trump administration declared COVID-19 a national emergency (Parker & Stern, 2022). Two days later states began to implement shutdown measures to stave off the spread of COVID-19 (CDC, 2023). Adding to the atmosphere in the United States, on May 23, 2020, George Floyd, a Black man, was killed while handcuffed in police custody, on the ground with the knee of Officer Derek Chauvin on his neck and head, following a call by a clerk at a convenience store in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Videos captured George Floyd saying, "I can't breathe" repeatedly and continually calling out, "please," "Mama," and "I'm about to die," were heard at different points. The police responded to the scene within seventeen minutes George Floyd was placed in handcuffs, unresponsive on the ground, and while being transported by ambulance to the Hennepin County Medical Center was pronounced dead (Forliti & Karnowski, 2020; Hill, Tiefenthäler et al., 2022; State of Minnesota District Court

County of Hennepin 4th Judicial District, 2020). The medical examiner listed the only

cause of death as "[c]ardiopulmonary arrest complicating law enforcement subdual,

restraint, and neck compression," with the manner of death being homicide (State of

Minnesota District Court County of Hennepin 4th Judicial District, 2020. Due to previous

deaths of Black individuals during encounters with law enforcement (Appendix H), this

incident sparked protests across the country (see Appendix H) and the world.

Results

Upon completion of data analysis, the researcher used research questions, themes,

and quotes to present the results and findings of this study. Throughout interviews

participants responses often converged organizational climate and organizational culture.

These being conflated is understandable because the two concepts are interrelated and

interconnected. The chosen data analysis process necessitates that the researcher

generates meaning of the participants' responses. For that reason, occasionally participant

responses that describe organizational climate may better speak to organizational culture

and the same in the inverse. The focus of IPA and the data analysis of this dissertation is

exploring, gaining insight, and understanding the common and unique experiences of the

participants.

The results and findings are reported as they align with each of the research

questions. Themes and participant quotes that emerged from the analysis are reported in

alignment with the associated research question. Additionally, reviews from expert raters

and themes associated with each research question are presented.

Expert Rater Feedback

Bernice Patterson, PhD, LLP was sent all transcripts with initial codes highlighted and themes indicated in columns. The transcripts were read, and this rater developed a columned chart for each interview. In the first column the themes were numbered, column two indicated the initial theme, and the last column indicated whether the rater would have chosen the same theme or additional themes identified. Additional themes that were identified by Dr. Patterson are as follows: supportive administration, keep parents quiet, instructed to change presentation, free to be self, feeling silenced, lack of follow through, and microaggression. Feedback specific to five themes were incorporated either as either a theme or descriptor within a theme.

Kenyata M. Fletcher, Ph.D., LPC, CRADC was sent three random transcripts with initial themes indicated from the researcher. The transcripts were read, and this rater used the Comment feature in Microsoft Word to provide feedback. Dr. Fletcher identified codes such as ministry, purpose, driving force, guilt, shame, genuine, real, professional, need, trauma, people in community parents, protecting self, firm boundaries, and blatant disrespect. Additional themes or codes were also suggested (Table 4). Seven suggested themes were integrated as a main theme or a descriptor within a theme as suggested by Dr. Fletcher.

Table 4

Themes and Codes From Dr. Fletcher

Themes	Codes
Supportive or good environments	Exploring career
Cultural biases	Self-care
Negative comments	Driving force or motivation
Finding balance and peace in a toxic place	Purpose
Negativity about sexuality but not race	Need
Make heterosexual people comfortable	Governing boards
Administrator was unprofessional and unethical	Unspoken policy
Homophobia	Double standards
Ignoring policy	Unaware colleagues
Comments made to the participant but not about the participant	Different treatment
Discipline for standing up for self	Cultural biases
Homophobia	Stereotypes

RQ1: Experiences of Organizational Climate

Organizational climate is the prevailing, prevalent, and shared perception of policies and procedures and their application formally and informally. Gaining an understanding of the climate of an organization was the foundation of this research question. The themes uncovered by this question are: Sweep it Under the Rug, Supportive Atmosphere, Exclusionary Experiences, and Being Overlooked.

Theme 1: Sweep It Under the Rug

The first theme that emerged from participants associated with the climate of organizations was the concept of "Sweep It Under the Rug". Specific phrases used by participants were "gaslight", "stay comfortable". "assume positive intent" and "sweep under the rug".

Gaslighting has become a popular word and concept in society. The understanding of what it is often broad but what it is not may provide a better frame to

identify what it is. Kukreja and Pandey (2023) indicate that it is distinct from such things as contention, control, stalling, bullying or vilification. These concepts are different from gaslighting because there is an aspect of gaslighting that involves a power differential between two people such as a supervisor and a subordinate. Unique to gaslighting is the sense one party gets that their reality as presented is being twisted to subvert or undermine their beliefs, thoughts, and perceptions. Often it results in one party questioning their experiences. Gaslighting involves distorting the other party's sense of reality, thus, undermining other's beliefs and thoughts is central to gaslighting behaviors. For example, P4 reported, "…if we bring up a problem, or if we bring up a perspective, then we're the aggressor. And, because we're the first ones to bring up the problem, then we are the problem, not the problem existing."

The participant highlights the way that gaslighting is a form of sweeping things under the rug. Another example of the connection of gaslighting and sweeping things under the rug came from P4 and exemplifies how the two concepts lead to avoidance of underlying issues and concerns of Black LGBTQ educators in the workplace contributing to the climate:

> As opposed to us focusing on the problem it became about, "Oh well, I take that personally" and "That hurt my feelings". So, the Admins were like, "Well, we hurt their feelings and now we need to talk about how we hurt their feelings," as opposed to the actual problem. But, if I were to bring you something that has hurt me, as far as a microaggression or a homophobic slur, you don't have this same passion or follow through with that as you did with my non-BIPOC peers, who

we actually have brought you an actual problem. But you choose not to address the problem, you address that their feelings were hurt. That wouldn't happen with the BIPOC or a queer teacher if they brought a situation up that we need to address our policies and procedures. We wouldn't have the same vigor. It would not be the same.

Just as gaslighting appears as another way sweeping things under the rug is seen, the comfort choosing how a procedure is taught and who is required to follow the actual procedure is associated with sweeping things under the rug. In particular, P5 communicated how training did not coincide with the application of the procedure:

No, I was doing things the way that I was trained and the way that it was done within the organization. But that did not match the actual procedure and then I was required to do it that way. Well, like nobody else did. Same with the policies that like other people wouldn't follow like certain hair color. It's just not followed.

Sweep things under the rug appears as a part of the climate in one school as it is applied to the ways the student handbook is used in discipline as stated by P4, "I think, oftentimes when things are uncomfortable to deal with, we try and sweep them under the rug instead of following the student handbook." The same participant presented a situation where both "assume positive intent" and sweeping things under the rug were coupled in a subtle communication of how things would be handled with student discipline: "Well, you know. They made a mistake and that's what we're gonna, you know, we're gonna pretend like he didn't say it."

P4 embodied each of the aforementioned terms associated with the theme of gaslighting when explaining their experience with both:

When I am blowing the whistle on policy and procedures, on things that I'm noticing from my perspective, whether that comes from student-to-student, whether that comes from colleague-to-student or colleague-to-colleague. If I'm bringing something up that is a topic that they rather sweep under the rug, it's very much I get "assuming positive intent" and "seek to understand." It's almost like the perspective that I'm providing them they're rationalizing it in their own experience and they're saying, "Oh well, it wasn't that." But in my mind, I'm like, "So, you're going to gaslight right now." So, it's very different. As opposed to if a non-BIPOC peer brings something up and it seems like, "Oh, we can tackle that right now."

It is necessary to note that P4 indicated an equity analysis was performed in their workplace that resulted in a finding that the building "as a whole is very culturally evasive." As it applied to sweeping things under the rug it was indicated that "…if we can escape talking about something we can or we will."

All participants except P1 indicated a level of sweeping things under the rug as an aspect of climate in their individual school and/or district. The interaction that produced sweeping things under the rug was experienced in one-on-one interactions with administrators or in a group setting with colleagues present. The perception of all participants who experienced this concept was that talking about crucial issues was

uncomfortable for administrators but left them without resolution or feeling unheard, unprotected, and insignificant.

Theme 2: Supportive Atmosphere

The second theme that emerged was some aspects of the climate that created a supportive atmosphere in the workplace climate. There were multiple ways support was expressed by participants. Specific to a supportive atmosphere was having families that are welcoming of the whole person. P4 indicated having support of families in the building impacted the experience of organizational climate:

…the African American families. Because I'm the only one in my building and so when they see me, they're like, "Whoa!" So, it's the African American families that make me feel really welcome and they're like, "Whatever you need. You got it." Like, "let me know. I will come to your aid".

Participants also indicated that a part of the supportive environment came from the relationships they developed with the children. P4 remembered an exchange with a student as follows:

And I say, like the kids, because I probably say that a lot. I was talking, I think it was last year, to one of my third graders, I've been teaching him since he was in first grade. And he came up to me and he said, "P4, are you gay?" I was like, "Tell me more." And so he said, "Well, do you like boys?" I was like, "Ew. First off, gross. No, I don't like boys that would be disgusting and weird. No, I like men and I'm married to a man. So, if that's what you're asking…," He's like,

"Oh, OK." I said, "Well, does that change anything?" He was like, "No, you're

the same person, P4 that doesn't make sense." So, I would say the kids, too.

These interactions with students provided a place for acceptance without

judgement in the classroom and fostered a healthy teacher-student relationship. Positive

workplace experiences were acknowledged by P5 associated with being a Black educator

and an LGBTQ educator in reference to what their presence brings to workplace despite

other challenges: "I'm able to be representative of other Black children or for Black

children. That's probably really it. There's a lot of homophobia from the children and

from staff." P5 continued the association by disclosing how they believe their presence

makes the workplace a supportive atmosphere not just for colleagues but for students:

"For me? There's LGBT students. And so, I think that makes it a better place for me to be

because I'm able to really help the kids that are pro or anti-LGBTQ. I like that I'm given

that opportunity."

The quality of colleague relationships emerged as an aspect of having a

supportive atmosphere in which to be a Black LGBTQ educator. Specifically having

other teachers as allies and friends was evidenced in two specific examples:

> I think the other thing is that the allies that I do have, like with other teachers who
>
> are actively learning, and they will come to my aid when things are just not
>
> correct, they need to be addressed the way they should be. So, I think that is good
>
> having the allies.

During the pandemic involving the 2019 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19)

relationships with colleagues showed how support was given. P2 spoke about the

opportunities COVID provided to increase connections with work friends: "I would say, my teacher BFF, who works at my Friday school, I would try to visit her class every Friday, usually at the end of the school day." Work friends or teacher-friends were a provided P4 with an experience of allyship as a positive supportive aspect of the workplace in this way:

> I think the other thing is that the allies that I do have, like with other teachers who are actively learning. And they will come to my aid when things are just not correct - they need to be addressed the way they should be. So, I think that is good having the allies.

> A support within the workplace included providing mental health services to LGBTQ students was indicated by P5. The importance of this specific example was further explained by the participant as an example of how the support for LGBTQ students can provide space for educators to discuss issues openly with students and colleagues contributing to an improved work environment. The importance of LGBTQ educator to be in a supportive work environment was noted through the description being able to be self-expressed in the workplace by P1: "And I feel like there is that kind of environment where you can really express yourself without feeling judged." P1 and P3 indicated that there are good district policies against discrimination that provide protections as a Black or LGBTQ educator. P3 described feeling supported in the district because of existing policies:

> No, just because of sexual orientation. District has a lot in place when it comes time to discrimination - they don't play that. They've had calls and things like that

to where the feds had to come in. You know, had situations like that where students, schools were failing and things like that, and too many complaints about biases and orientation, things like that. Too many protections - they know not to pull it.

Participants were able to recall specific elements of the workplace that made it a supportive environment for them to work from the families and relationships with the student to teacher-friends, mental health services and being able to be visible for Black and LGBTQ students.

Theme 3: Exclusionary Experiences

Exclusionary Experiences emerged as the third theme specifically being experienced through a lack of student discipline, teacher reprimands, and protection of non-BIPOC and LGBTQ educators, dress code policies, and exclusive application of policies. The exclusionary ways that discipline was meted out and how teachers are reprimanded emerged in this theme. P3 recounted an instance when a student openly used homophobic and scatological language towards the educator with no disciplinary action while the educator was disciplined:

…one of the students cursed me out. I'm like, I mean, like, cursed me out. With anybody else he would get suspended. He'll get a day out. But, because it was me, you know, like, "he can handle it. He can handle it." Nothing happened so I clicked and cussed the student out. But I got wrote up. Because this student calling me all kinds of "fags" and all kind of stuff. But I clicked and the reason I

clicked was because of how the principal handled the situation. It wasn't so much

at the kid.

When P3 was asked about what the administrator said to him he responded,

"Nothing." The follow up question "You were just reprimanded?" resulted in the answer,

"Yes, that was it." The situation with P3 serves as a segue to the experience of the

protection being given to non-BIPOC or LGBTQ educators not being extended to those

in the aforementioned communities.

The experience of safety and protection for Black LGBTQ educators and the

issues that appear in the school environment were described in this way:

I would say that's LGBT and BIPOC issues like how non-BIPOC teachers see us

and how families may see us and how disciplined looks different. And how

sometimes that is lost in translation when it comes to the investigation role for

students, or even how you address racial slurs or how you don't address racial

slurs or homophobic slurs. If you're trying to protect the person who said the

word versus creating safety for the one that heard it, it's very different the

environment that you're creating.

The environment being created in the workplace of P5 was reflected in the exclusion of

what can be in the classroom of the teacher: "Our classrooms had a policy of, just, you

know, the American flag. No other types of representation. So, no, Black Lives Matter,

no Pride flag, no Puerto Rican flag, Pan African flag." The experience of exclusion also

extended to the dress code policies: "Staff handbook for sure. Dress code policies, I think

we're very exclusionary to hairstyles and accessories." P5 highlights the exclusionary nature of the dress code by noting:

> And there was no written policy, but they were not fans of, like, Pride wear. And I think there might have been something that was like vaguely written about, I can't remember the adjective they used, but like "colorful" clothing - like the clothing would be distracting - so no rainbows.

Participants were able to offer an insight into the ways they experienced exclusion through a lack of student discipline, teacher reprimands, protection of non-BIPOC and LGBTQ educators, dress code policies, and exclusive application of policies.

Theme 4: Being Overlooked

Being overlooked in the workplace through job promotions, support, or rewards was explored and emerged as the fourth theme experienced by all participants except P1 and P4. Being overlooked for a promotion specifically due to being gay was expressed by P3:

> Well, certain jobs that I wanted in the school system. Yes, I know I had more experience, the education behind it, and the knowledge. And I know for a fact it was because I was gay that I didn't get led to certain positions, or certain promotions, in the job that I asked for.

P5 experienced a lack of support and rewards. When asked about receiving supports the participant recalled: "Yeah, I think I'm just often overlooked compared to other teachers and how the administrators actively check in with them and provide them support with the different curriculums that they use. I have to ask multiple times." P5 additionally

recounted having been the only daily participant during a school spirit week. The participant recalled, "They were giving rewards to teachers that participated every day in our spirit wear. I was the only teacher who did it, but I did not receive the reward. Somebody else did." The reward for participation was, "It was a basket of supplies things that teachers would use dry erase boards and markers and clipboards and just goodies that teachers like to have."

The feeling of being unsupported as a Black male teacher rather than for being a member of the LGBTQ community was explicitly conveyed by P2 as follows:

No, I just think that comes from being black male and in education, period. Because, as I've noticed just from observing myself and other Black male teachers, we have a group of us that meet here in regularly, and that's one of the things we talk about. The fact that we don't get as much support that they tend to toss more of their struggling, behaviorally struggling, students into our classes without telling us what's going on with the students. Then, we have to pretty much turn ourselves into the psychiatric social worker or the services attendance counselor and make home visits and figure out what's going on with the students so we can help. You know, sort of turn them around.

In summary, RQ1 revealed four themes about the experience of Black LGBTQ educators in their workplaces. These themes were Sweep it Under the Rug, Supportive Atmosphere, Exclusionary Experiences, and Being Overlooked. These concepts provide insights about the experiences they have had with organizational climate in their individual workplaces. RQ2 addresses their experience of organizational culture.

RQ2: Experiences of Organizational Culture

Common standards, interpretations, and beliefs of those in an organization are aspects of organizational culture. Strategies used, structure, leadership, and the mission (Körner et al., 2015) further shape culture. Organizational culture is the place where employees develop a common purpose, solidarity and a sense of team. Research question two was formulated to explore experiences of organizational culture. Silenced and Ignored, Positive Environment, Consistent Contradictions, and Covert Communication are themes that were uncovered by this question.

Theme 1: Silenced and Ignored

The concept of being silenced and ignored surfaced as the first theme. Being silenced and ignored was evidenced by two specific phrases, "sweep things under the rug" and "turning a blind eye." Sweeping things under the rug was directly expressed by P4 when looking back on things that were learned covertly – those things that were unsaid:

I think, sweeping things under the rug. I think, oftentimes when things are uncomfortable to deal with, we try and sweep them under the rug instead of following the student handbook. For example, if there is a grade level issue, this is in our student handbook, "If there is a grade level issue, it has to be dealt with whole grade level" - like it has to be dealt with. And anyone involved with that grade level should be involved in the conversation of resolution. But people don't follow that policy based on comfort level.

"Turning a blind eye" was recalled by P5 with a situation spotlighting how homosexual students were discouraged from showing affection while heterosexual students were treated differently with the administration and staff turning a blind eye to one group:

> I think it's often overlooked or blind eye to hetero couples. And an eagle eye on homosexual couples in the school. Absolutely no physical contact is supposed to be the rule, but almost on a daily basis I see the same hetero couples hugging, leaning and like falling all over each other holding hands.

P4 experienced being silenced, and concerns being ignored that also felt as though it included an aspect of well-intended organizational climate:

> And so oftentimes my peers, who are not BIPOC or who are not part of the queer community, their response to things is, "Well, I didn't know" or "I'm still learning" or "blah, blah, blah." But they still don't acknowledge the harm is done or they don't acknowledge the malpractice. They just kind of say, "Oh, I don't know," and so then it's like a free pass to be like, "Oh, well, they didn't know. It's, you know, good intent."

Theme 2: Positive Environment

Organizational culture can be a place where employees are made to feel they are accepted and part of a team rather than unseen or unwanted. Two participants communicated how the culture in the school was a positive place for them to work. In particular, P1 recalled that when situations were reported to administrator, whether dealing with race or sexuality, the situations were addressed and done with satisfaction.

Additionally, P1 expressed how being well received in the environment helped to learn to be adaptable: "It has made me realize that I can fit in anywhere. I don't have to try so hard to like, try to fit in. You have to be very receptive of others."

Theme 3: Consistent Contradictions

Inconsistent application and following of policies, conflicting internal and external messaging, and application of policies and procedures being different from training were expressed in multiple ways. P2 and P5 recollect experiencing inconsistent application and following of policies in two distinct ways. An example of inconsistent application was recited by P2:

> Just lately they're not negotiating with their teachers with any of their unions. But as far as "policy policies", I have seen students who do fairly egregious things, not reprimanded for them. The state has a zero-tolerance rule for weapons, and I have seen students not punished at all. Or if they are, it's "you have to sit with the principal every day for a month and have your lunch in the office so you can be watched".

P2 goes on to detail the latter situation and further emphasize the experience of inconsistencies:

> In fact, that was one of my instrumental students. I was just like, "what do you mean he brought a gun to school? And he did what? He did what? He hid it where? Why is he still in the orchestra? You should have put…you, y'all should pull him out!" You know that's the main thing, is when they decide to enforce zero-tolerance policies and when they decide not to - that's the main issue.

The theme of inconsistent application of policies was further characterized in a statement made by P5:

> I think there's a lot of, like, when to not follow policy and when to ignore policy. and when to be more strict and less strict. I think that there is certainly a lot of like CYA that happens. I've learned that it's better to, regardless of what you're told by administrators, to make sure that you're always doing everything by the book because they will not like - it will come to you. It won't come to them, even if they tell you to do it a different way do it by the book anyways and then you can always like leave it up to them to move things forward if they need to, and then not follow policy. But you don't want to get thrown under the bus.

P5 introduced how internal and external messaging can be contradictory with one message being presented to the community and another experienced internally:

> They give out a lot of like literature on how they are diverse and inclusive. But within the district itself, it's not. Higher ups, administrators, are not as liberal as they seem to be on paper with the literature that they share of how inclusive and diverse everything is. So, they, you know, put out, "we respect children's rights to identity and use of pronouns, and we respect them." My children's school, on their forms has an option for multiple pronouns. My school is not adhering to or acknowledging any of it, so.

> The example used indicates there is a feeling that there are values and beliefs

communicated that are not followed with a level of comfort. The ability of colleagues to stay comfortable was previously associated with sweeping things under the rug. In

particular, the choice to follow or not follow a policy based on levels of comfort was learned by P4:

> But people don't follow that policy based on comfort level. If I don't feel comfortable addressing this then, "Oh, I don't know how," and the opt out is, "Oh, well, I don't understand. Well, I don't know. So, I don't have to do it." So, it's just that was the thing that I learned. The comfort in not following policy when it doesn't make you comfortable is the thing that I didn't know.

Participants communicated ways that the theme Consistent Contradictions was experienced in their workplaces specifically with policies, conflicting internal and external messaging, and application of policies and procedures.

Theme 4: Covert Communications

The fourth theme that emerged from this research question was Covert Communications. The participants indicated there was information being communicated nonverbally or when spoken it was said in way that left a message that was not explicitly communicated.

One specific example of covert communication involved the absence of such things as value statements, specific equity policies, and policies and procedures to address colleague interactions or disagreement. P5 indicated that there is an absence of a value statement, "We don't have like values we don't have like things specifically to our building" and policies or procedures associated with how to handle staff disagreements:

> It's not there. I see what you're asking. I've been asking our Union president to step in and say, "hey, there's a school district that has equity policies. Can you

push for that and bargaining?" We need an equity policy expectations and all that

kind of stuff. I'm really fishing for things that aren't there. No, we do not have

anything specifically that protects staff. We do not have equity for staff. We have

equity belief statements for students, but there is nothing for staff.

P2 conveyed feeling the covert communication about the value places on teachers

came through the actions of administrators with respect to scheduling particular days in

the school calendar:

Principals will or I should say, the school district will say that they "value their

teachers". And then send us one more thing to do. That is the first, the biggie for

me. Or they'll say they value their teachers and yet make the teachers stay at

school till 4:00 o'clock every Tuesday instead of letting teachers go home and be

with their families. Or the principal schedules the early dismissal days for their

schools. Some principals will schedule the entire week of parent conferences to be

half days. So, the kids, so the parents can come to conference with the teachers

early so they can go home some. Oftentimes I've seen principles intentionally

scheduled the last day of the semester or full day of school. Which of course

makes morale with the teachers and the kids not cool and but yet they say they

value their staff. Well, then, send the kids home so the staff could relax.

P3 introduced covert communications in the cliques that appeared in the local school

council (LSC) and colleagues. Specific to the LSC P3 reported:

They think they run to school and one of the people that they don't mess with me.

They all come in to see like, "who is this new person? I've been hearing this. I've

been hearing that," and I just smile at them. "Hello, I'm name. I'm nice to meet you. You know anything I could be assistance to you with to move things forward. Please let me know."

The ways covert ways colleagues communicate was experienced P3 and P2. P3 referred to the covert experience with colleagues as cliques: "When I first got there, I was getting side eyed and warned the principal did not introduce me properly. So, when you get people coming in, new that wasn't properly introduced so it's like, 'Who is this?'" Social media was reported as a source of covert communications because the things said on social media were rarely spoken in-person or openly. P2 relayed this covert communication from social media in this way:

> Usually, I will experience crazy stuff on social media. Our teacher's union maintains several Facebook pages and teachers have said some very, very racist, anti-Semitic, sometimes even anti-LGBTQ stuff on the social media site they have. Our union president happens to be an Afro Latina woman and I have seen some very racist things stated about her on the union's Facebook groups to the point that they've shut down new groups for several months to root out so that the crazy folks will go away.

P3 reports experiencing covert communication through microaggressions. P3 speaks four languages and feels that when others in the workplace find out their response symbolizes microaggressions:

> And, then they go, "You, you, you speak…" and then, I have to ask answer your other questions about the other microaggression. "You speak foreign languages?"

"Uhm, yeah, I'm a musician. We kind of have to." I think that's the main thing.

Just dealing with the usual, "You're really intelligent for a Black man" kind of

crap.

"You're intelligent for a Black man" was felt to communicate an expectation that a Black

man would speak one language. These covert communications appeared in the way

colleagues spoke about students as "thugs" or where students live to P5.

Or saying that they're from the "east side". Just today, somebody was like, "Oh,

well, that kid's from the 'East Side'. And I was like, but I was raised on the East

Side so what are you saying? You know, but it's really, it's like when you just

replace the real word with a buzzword.

Speaking without an awareness of the implications or appropriateness of what is said in

the workplace was indicated as part of the experience of P5 with colleagues.

In summary, Silenced and Ignored, Positive Environment, Consistent

Contradictions, and Covert Communication were four themes that surfaced from the

experiences of Black LGBTQ educators in their workplace. RQ2 focused on the

experience of organizational climate in the workplace. RQ3 explores the attributes that

contribute to their experience of climate and culture.

RQ3: Factors Attributed to Experiences of Climate and Culture

What employees experience through the application of policies and procedures,

beliefs and values, assumptions and presumptions, interventions, and what outsiders see

are all foundations for organizational climate and culture. It is through the lens of these

two concepts together that the experience of the participants will be explored in RQ3.

There are three themes associated with this research question: Bigoted Remarks,

Deficiencies in Leadership, and Hush, Hush Vibe.

Theme 1: Bigoted Remarks

   The experience of remarks appeared in reference to being Black and LGBTQ. P2

and P5 experienced the use of religion in the workplace. P2 discussed how a student used

religion:

> I have had students just outright ask me in the middle of class, "Are you gay?"
>
> And, then of course, my response immediately is, "Well, frankly, that's none of
>
> your business," then, move on with the lesson. As I stated earlier, I've had this
>
> student attempt to proselytize to me in class and quote the Bible at me. And I had
>
> to sort of, without quoting the Bible, say, "Look here, you going to stop today."

P2 discussed their specific incidents associated with this theme. A lack of other known

LGBTQ staff members and homophobia were discussed highlighting religious

outspokenness in this way: "Homophobia, lack of other LGBT people, staff that are very

religious and outspoken in their beliefs which can be homophobic." An example of

experiencing this outspokenness from a colleague who was "lecturing the class" was

described in this way: "And, you know, people don't want to see that. But you know she

doesn't live her life like that and she believes in God, and that that's not something that

you should be doing in public."

   An incident was also recalled in which P5 was told by a colleague about a

previous administrator using specific terms to describe the administrator and characterize

the makeup of the administrator's family:

Well, yeah, we had a previous administrator, and I never met him, but somebody

told me that he was "super fruity" and like, "really, really obviously gay". And

then they showed me his Facebook and how he had adopted twins with his

husband, and they didn't know how they were able to get babies.

Additionally, P5 recounted how Black educators are spoken about:

So, they just, if people miss time, if people are late, if things are just not done to

their expectation, they openly speak badly about Black educators more so than

anybody else that I've heard or overheard this year. And they comment on

punctuality, attendance, appearance.

Participants communicated ways that the theme Bigoted Remarks was experienced in

their workplaces specifically with policies, conflicting internal and external messaging,

and application of policies and procedures.

Theme 2: Deficiencies in Leadership

The ways in which leadership engaged in situations was a theme that P4

experienced as lack of response or reaction by school leadership after having "a few

homophobic slurs thrown at me." The recalled reaction was "nothing." Additionally, P4

detailed a situation where a racial slur was used between students and what resulted:

I'll say this. Intent versus impact, right? Where they'll bring a student to the office

and they'll chat, but families still follow up with teachers and say, "how are you

gonna deal with this?" For example, we had a kid that had a racial slur said to

them - "Black". And the mom came in with him to like, "this kid who said it is in

his classroom and nothing happened last year." And the mom started crying and

she was like, "my son has to be in the school year with this person the whole year in the same classroom".

The response of school leadership was recounted like this: "And it was never addressed. And this kid is going to go on like, it's fine. How are you going to address this?" The perception and experience of school leadership in this situation was expressed as:

So, intent versus impact. It's not impactful. It's not prioritizing the kid's safety who heard it and who was violated by the word. It prioritizes, "Well, you know. They made a mistake and that's what we're gonna, you know, we're gonna pretend like he didn't say it." And you know that's the priority, the learning from this and that, "everyone makes mistakes".

The experience of school leadership from P5 involved hearing disparaging comments about Black educators and unequal standards between groups in the workplace. P5 described the experience as follows:

I think the Black educators, they are held to a higher standard. I just had my first negative experience there and they shared it with everybody in the middle school. So, everyone knew that I did not click a button and finalizing an IEP, it was a day late, but they told everyone about it. So, they just, if people miss time, if people are late, if things are just not done to their expectation, they openly speak badly about Black educators more so than anybody else that I've heard or overheard this year. And they comment on punctuality, attendance, appearance. They equate students' behaviors or even dress code to be somehow correlated to the teacher.

Further expounding on the ways Black educators are held to different standards by school leadership, P5 described it in this way:

> Like if a student dresses a certain way, wears a do-rag, wears a head wrap. I've heard the White administrators equate that to be an influence from a Black teacher. "They wear their hair like that, or they were do-rag because somebody else did it because they saw you do it because so and so wears her hair like that." "You know, I don't know why she's wearing those big earrings. It must be because 'Miss Wilson' likes to wear big earrings all the time." So, I like try not to wear really big hoops, even though it's a good style when you wear head wrap and it's not unprofessional but try to keep it a smaller size. So that there's not a negative connotation to what I'm wearing. And I don't think that student's negative performance or dress or behavior should be, and it's usually not equated to a teacher or correlated to a teacher, but it often is with Black educators.

P3 recounted an interaction with a colleague that was characterized as unethical in this way: "He was discussing these derogatory things with me. He also was telling students…he was having a conversation about people having kids and being gay. I just thought that was totally unethical for him to discuss this." When this was relayed to the principal, P3 described the interaction as follows: "I told the principal, once again he was like, 'So what do you want me to do?' And I said, 'You know what? Nothing. Absolutely nothing.'" P3 indicates that months later the same teacher remained in the school and won a prestigious award:

It's like a big award that they give you. It took everything in my powers not to go

to that ceremony and just tell everybody the horrible things that he's done to me.

The horrible things he's done to students.

The response from the principal indicates a level of workplace politics as

Nothing, because he knew that this teacher was one of the top performing scholars

in the whole area which he was. His students had a history of winning math

competitions and everything, going to top high schools and things like that. He

knows that would have been something that they're like…Why was he?!

P3 summarized the response by the principal with two phrases, "Brush it under the rug.

Did nothing" ending in the resignation of the principal: "…it got to the point to where he

had to leave. He couldn't even handle the rest of the year, he had to leave in the middle of

the year, he had to resign." Participants communicated ways that the theme Consistent

Contradictions was experienced in their workplaces specifically with unequal standards,

no action, and lack of leadership intervention when needed.

Theme 3: Hush, Hush Vibe

The last theme associated with RQ3 is the experience of there being an unspoken

undertone of keeping things silent or hushed for those who are Black LGBTQ educators

emerged in the lack of acknowledgement of their relationships, unspoken messages in

conversations, hidden policies and procedures. The undertone of silence in

acknowledging relationships was discussed by P4 and P5. P4 called to mind the way

conversations about his relationship status brought with it an undertone of having to be

silent: "'Are you married?' I would say yes, and then, I would be in the principal's office

and they be like, 'Why did you share that information?' And I was like, 'Oh, ok, so we don't share. OK, got it.'" The resulting takeaway from the experience was clear for P4:

> There's no policies in place, but it's more so a culture of like, "Hush, hush." Keep
> that to yourself so you don't wind up in the office in an investigation. So that's
> kind of, I don't actively hide, but I don't actively publicize either.

P4 distinguished how this experience contrasts that of heterosexual colleagues in this way:

> Oh, absolutely, absolutely. Because I have heterosexual colleagues that have like
> marriage photos and fairly, not intimate, but like very like, "ohh, we're holding
> each other close" on their like main screen as they're like whiteboard - as for the
> students to see. So, like all the students, see them holding hands or looking
> intimately into each other's eyes – that's their main screen. But if I did that, oh let
> me tell you, there would be an upbringing, "a nocturnal uprising" as S&L would
> say it.

> P5 reports not knowing any other Black LGBTQ educators in their school and

disclosed how the undertone of ignoring their relationship was experienced:

> As far as I know, I am the only staff member in my school. And it just looks like
> not asking about my partner or not acknowledging that I said anything about my
> partner but except for the ones that are also Black that I'm just close with.

The undertone of silence was described by P1 by stating:

I feel like not everyone can love you. Someone will just hate you, but they will

not be very direct with you on that. So, there's that kind of like treatment, which

is silent somehow not so aggressive, but silent.

The experience of an undertone and "vibe" of silence when something involves

Black educators was narrated by P4:

I haven't heard the comments. But it's…. It's that vibe, like every time someone

of color speaks and it's quiet. Or that vibe where a person of color speaks and no

one responds, or they just move on to the next thing. No one has said it, but you

can feel it in the room. Oh, it's unsaid. It's unsaid and leadership doesn't know

how they perpetuate it by like, "Oh, next thing!" So, I haven't heard it. I have not

heard it. But I also don't think that leadership has taken the journey to understand

that silence and so they don't know that there should be action taken. Does that

make sense?

An unspoken undertone associated with acknowledgement of relationships,

unspoken messages, hidden policies, and an inferred vibe was explored with each

participant. Participants provided anecdotal accounts of what attributes of their workplace

contribute to their experiences of organizational climate and culture.

Common Themes

"Sweep things under the rug", "hush, hush", and "silence/ignored" emerged as

common themes throughout each research question. These themes appear as experiences

of the workplace conditions, practices, policies, beliefs and values, assumptions and

presumptions associated with organizational climate. Phrases indicating an experience of

the organizational climate and culture as one of silence, ignoring, keeping things "hush, hush", or sweeping things under the rug" were present in the interviews of each participant with respect to all research concepts in this study.

Unanticipated Results

Impact of Social and Racial Climate on Workplace Experiences

Social and racial climate intertwined with the occurrence of COVID-19. As participants engaged in their professional environments these places were not immune from the external climate. Interactions with coworkers are an integral part of the workplace. During times of social unrest these dynamics can increase awarenesses while revealing unforeseen opinions whether similar or opposing. Social media platforms were a place where opinions and perspectives were expressed by coworkers. Participants reported reading anti-Semitic, anti-LGBTQ, and racist remarks of colleagues on social media.

COVID Impact on Workplace Dynamics

Each participant expressed different experiences of the workplace except for two who confirmed changes in perceptions of colleagues due to the global health crisis and social unrest in the U.S. Participants took precautions such as the prioritization of sanitizing and hand washing. There were increased interactions with colleagues and students online. One participant reported these interactions materialized as a barrier for educators who were unfamiliar with online interfaces and instruction. A program overseen by a participant was subjected to "shrinkage" and a loss of student participation. Another participant appeared to recognize that COVID revealed weaknesses of

colleagues such as consistently low-test scores for students. One participant stated the death of George Floyd reiterated that racism is not a "thing of the past" and the shift to online learn needed to be a moment for educators to address "disparities or those equity gaps".

COVID Impact on Workplace Relationships

Two participants indicated an increase in awareness in distinctive ways. The social and racial climate was not reported as having a significant impact for one participant; however, they did indicate hearing negativity and noticing the contrast in results between colleagues. Participants experienced colleagues being "out of the hot seat" through carefully choosing what they say. Others recalled feeling that the social and racial climate in the country emboldened colleagues. The social climate was seen as an opportunity for colleagues to engage in learning about the perspectives of others. Instead of using the occasion to increase understanding, the response of peers was less than expected.

Two participants reported relationships with colleagues became stronger due to email communication, online communication, and additional contact. A reduction in trust with colleagues and their avoidance of accountability were also reported. Similarly, a change in perception of colleagues happened. Prior to the pandemic there was a perception of being "cutting edge", interested in learning and "reaching the masses." The pandemic exposed that not all teachers embraced being "cutting edge" with things returning to status quo even though there were weaknesses expose. Interactions with colleagues changed to avoid possible exposure to COVID-19, such as choosing to equip a

classroom with a microwave and refrigerator. One participant described the impact of COVID-19 on work relationships as "less personable". Seeing the lives of children outside of the school provided a window not often experienced prior to the pandemic. This opportunity was a double-edged sword, in that they were invited into home environments but sometimes were faced with disheartening realities.

As the participants have revealed, the intersection of social unrest and a pandemic cannot be prevented from influencing the workplace. These unforeseen occurrences in society changed the way the researcher needed to address the study and how participants interacted with their environments. It is because of this intersection the Results required a context to be provided through which they can be seen. For Black LGBTQ educators there exists important historical background information relevant to the social unrest surrounding the time of the interviews that fuses with the occurrence of the pandemic, political climate, and their experience of the workplace (See Appendix H). This information underscores the significance of providing a cultural-historical context in research.

Summary

The purpose of this study is to understand the workplace experiences of Black LGBTQ public school K-12 educators in the school setting. These experiences were explored through the concepts of climate and culture using semi-structured interviews with participants. Interview questions were developed with the three research questions as a framework. The chapter began by explaining the setting requirements for each interview and demographic characteristics of each of the five participants. Data collection

and analysis processes, modes, and procedures were detailed. Specifically, the feedback of two expert raters was offered to reduce researcher bias. The results were explained following the presentation of expert rater feedback.

Results were framed in the context of social and political events in the United States and a concurrent pandemic happening during the relevant timeframe. The teachers' experience of organizational climate and culture, and the factors they attribute to their experience of organizational climate and culture were detailed. Thematic analysis resulted in 11 themes emerging from the experiences of the teachers. Chapter 5 consists of a discussion of the key findings from the study results, addresses the research purpose, discloses the limitations of the study, considers the implications of findings, and gives recommendation for future research.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Introduction

I conducted a qualitative study to explore the workplace experiences of LGBTQ teachers in public K-12 education who identify as African American or Black in the United States. A qualitative study exclusively exploring the workplace experiences of Black LGBTQ teachers in K-12 education would address the gap in the research regarding experiences for Black teachers and LGBTQ teachers. There are studies that explore workplace climate for LGBT teachers (Wright, 2010; Wright, Smith, 2015), Black lesbian teachers in the U.S. Southeast (Ford, 2017), and the experiences of out gay and lesbian K-12 Caucasian educators in California (DeJean, 2007). As stated in the introduction to the study, DeJean (2007) set out to include Black teachers but failed to recruit any respondents, leading to an inquiry of how the experiences of educators who identify as Black and gay or lesbian compared to those of White educators. A study exclusively dedicated to the experiences of Black LGBTQ educators was required on the grounds of its absence. The void or silence signaled the need for "education to address the troubling intersections of race and sexuality" (Kumashiro, 2001, p. 20, as cited in DeJean, 2007). This study is born out of that gap in the research of DeJean (2007). In Chapter 5, I will discuss the findings, present limitations, examine implications, and conclude with an outline of recommendations that can be derived from the results.

Interpretation of the Findings

Three research questions guided this dissertation. The questions used to interview participants were chosen to extract information useful in understanding their experiences

of organizational climate and culture and what contributes to these experiences. Each of the research questions was connected to either organizational climate or organizational culture or addressed the concepts together to understand specific factors. The research questions were:

RQ1: How do Black LGBTQ educators experience organizational climate?

RQ2: How do Black LGBTQ educators experience organizational culture?

RQ3: What factors do Black LGBTQ educators attribute to their experience of organizational climate and culture?

Retention of Black educators has been a challenge in the United States since the *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*, 347 US 483 (1954), decision due to the loss of approximately 38,000 Black educators through demotions, discriminatory hiring practices, and loss of employment (Milner & Howard, 2004). Cultural dissimilarity, adverse racial climates, microaggressions, pay rates, school climate, and lack of support have all been proposed as reasons for a lack of Black educators (Achinstein et al., 2010; Dingus, 2008; Kohli, 2016; Quiñones, 2018; Simon & Johnson, 2015). A qualitative organizational perspective of the experiences of Black educators was needed to understand how they experience their work environment, warranting the use of a subgroup (Achinstein et al., 2010; Elma, 2013; Ingersoll et al., 2017). Through the qualitative experiences of this subgroup, organizational characteristics and conditions can be understood, analyzed, and used to improve policies and practices and encourage further research.

Data from five Black LGBTQ educators teaching in K-12 public schools were collected. None of the participants lived or worked in the same state. While the participants had varying career specialties, work paths, and time in the field of education, the common themes among them provide a view of their workplace climate and culture experiences as Black LGBTQ public school K-12 educators. Data were collected through Google Forms and a semistructured interview. After completing qualitative thematic analysis, 11 themes emerged associated with the three research questions: (a) sweep it under the rug, (b) supportive atmosphere, (c) exclusionary experiences, (d) being overlooked, (e) silenced and ignored, (f) positive environment, (g) consistent contradictions, (h) covert communication, (i) bigoted remarks, (j) deficiencies in leadership, and (k) hush, hush vibe.

RQ1: Experiences of Organizational Climate

Experiences of organizational climate comes from the attitudes, perceptions, and interpretations of employees about policies, practices, and procedures. Organizational climate is also experienced through how employees are supported and rewarded or who is provided with support and rewards. Participants interpreted the organizational climates as a place where crucial conversations are unwelcome, and they are sometimes overlooked. At the same time, parallel experiences of supportiveness and exclusion coexist. This theme supports the assertion that various climates exist in a workplace (Schneider et al., 2013). Climate is reflected in the interpretation, approach, and inferences given to policies and procedures in addition to rewarded and supported behaviors (Schneider &

Barbera, 2014; Schneider et al., 2013; Schneider & Reichers, 1983; Schneider et al., 1998;).

Sweep It Under the Rug

Schneider et al. (2013) indicated that various climates exist in organizations concurrently. This theme, *sweep it under the rug*, exemplifies this finding because it aligns with multiple climate types found in research. These particular climates are examples of the ways a collective attitude is interpreted and becomes analogous with experiences and behaviors of employees. In climate research, attitudes and perceptions are associated with the policies, practices, and procedures as experienced by employees through witnessing behaviors rather than reading policies and procedures. In the practice of policies and procedures, climate is experienced, observed, and interpreted by participants.

Participants reported incidents in which they perceived explanations or execution of formal policies or procedures were unfairly applied. Liu and Hallinger (2022) indicated that through procedural justice climate teachers experience appreciation for their work, feel valued for their contributions, and a sense of care for their well-being that includes a sense of safety within the workplace. The absences of action during situations covertly communicates a lack of care for well-being and safety of employees. The extent to which an employee feels safe to speak up, know they will be heard, and is confident that what is conveyed will be acted upon represents the established voice climate (Farndale et al., 2011). Participants provided examples of speaking up only to feel that the administration gaslit the conversation, permitted conversations to be derailed, and let

specific policy or procedure conversations remain unaddressed contributing to voice and ethical climates. These incidents resulted in some participants indicating a reduction in voice and trust through choosing to remain silent.

To sweep things under the rug is to have knowledge of a problem and choose to ignore it. In a workplace, policies and procedures are a way ethical climate is communicated. Ethical climate illustrates the lens through which employees evaluate situations that occur, distinguish ethical concerns, and rectify complicated ethical dilemmas (Cullen et al., 2003; Shapira-Lishchinsky & Roensblatt, 2010). Participants expressed an understanding of acceptable and unacceptable behaviors, both codified and informal, that were apparent in the ethical climate of their respective workplaces. It is apparent from the participants that there are concerns for policies, procedures, and expectations to be applied to all employees. Ethical climate is thought to protect employees from mistreatment through fair resource apportionment and procedural transparency (Shapira-Lishchinsky & Roensblatt, 2010). Specifically in the field of education, a lack of ethical climate is found to contribute to absenteeism and decreased organizational commitment (Cullen et al., 2003; Kelley & Dorsch, 1991; Klebe Treviño et al., 2001; Shapira-Lishchinsky & Roensblatt, 2010). While ethical rules are a way for employees to learn how to behave and what behaviors are accepted and rewarded, the converse is true that employees are taught through climate what behaviors to suppress because they result in injustice.

To actively exercise an ethical climate, an effective communication climate is necessary. Through the climate of communication, voicing concerns and issues happens

(Taguiam, 2022). Taguiam (2022) stated how and to what extent these concerns and issues are voiced depends on the communication climate. Specifically, how leaders and employees do or do not talk to, award or praise, express disagreements, or share knowledge and information are aspects of the communication climate in a workplace. As indicated by participant responses, when leadership is afforded the option to take no action or remain silent when an employee presents a critical issue, the inaction is disempowering. This leads to a climate where policies and practices do not support access to power in the workplace, an example of how empowerment climate is perceived (Conger & Kanunga, 1988; Seibert et al., 2004).

Sweeping things under the rug or silencing employees in the workplace is an example of how empowerment climate is experienced in the workplace. Sweeping things under the rug calls for two perspectives. Empowerment climate is approached through a structural or psychological lens. Specifically, structural empowerment is the degree to which leaders share information and informal power and allow access to resources, whereas psychological empowerment represents the experience of empowerment in the workplace (Coun et al., 2022). Employees' intentions to leave increases in environments where employees experience minimal occasions for empowerment (Sandhya & Sulphey, 2019). The degree to which employees feel support and share in power is shown to predict job satisfaction and turnover (Ganji, 2021). Participants sharing concerns and seeking support from administrators is an opportunity to make an intentional contribution to empowering, collaborative, communication, and diversity climates. Collaborative climate measures the cooperation and trust integrated in the climate of the organization

(Taştan & Davoudi, 2015). Jiang et al. (2022) found that collaboration and voice strengthen diversity climate; however, in workplaces where employees are mainly White, the centralized decision making is decreased. All participants in this research work in organizations where the majority of the employees are White. A report from the U.S. Department of Education indicated that 6.1% of public-school teachers are Black, while 80 percent are White (Taie & Lewis, 2022). Inside these statistics there exists a landscape of climate associated with this study and theme within the field of education worthy of exploration to increase a climate of structural and psychological empowerment.

Supportive Atmosphere

This study found participants expressed experiencing a supportive environment through the availability of mental health services, engagement with families and students, and their visibility as Black LGBTQ educators to be seen by Black and LGBTQ students. A participant reported that the allies within the workplace actively engage in learning and confronting injustices. When allies witness mistreatment it is an opportunity to act upon their comradery by questioning the offender and calling out biases (Schneider et al., 2017). Calling out biases is an example of an ally sharing their access to power to support a colleague. Perceptions of who can use what structures, policies, and practices as an avenue to access power represents climate in the form of empowerment. The appearance of allyship within the workplace validates the need for leader, and colleagues, to exemplify allyship (Schneider et al., 2017). For this study, the topic of allyship and coconspirators is important because research indicates that those from marginalized

identities who feel unsupported or excluded attribute the feelings to their identity (Schneider et al., 2017).

In a school setting, educators expect to feel safe physically, emotionally, and psychologically. Schools that provide safe and affirming environments are places where all students and staff have beneficial and constructive interactions without threat, promote positive relationships and personal growth, and protect everyone from harm (Bucher & Manning, 2005; Edmondson & Lei, 2014). This assertion validates the experience of two participants who expressed feeling safe because of the protections in district policies against discrimination based on race and sexual orientation. These policies contribute to psychological safety and a positive ethical climate experience.

Exclusionary Experiences and Being Overlooked

Exclusionary Experiences and Being Overlooked emerged as the themes specifically being experienced through a lack of student discipline, teacher reprimands, protection of non-BIPOC and LGBTQ educators, dress code policies, protection of non-BIPOC and non-LGBTQ educators, and exclusive application of policies. These experiences of exclusion align with research that has found exclusionary practice contribute to a climate of incivility (Sharp et al., 2020). Incivility in the workplace can look like vague interactions or being singled out. For example, P5 recalled being singled out by administration sharing a mistake with coworkers "everyone knew that I did not click a button and finalizing an IEP, it was a day late, but they told everyone about it."

Previous research indicates exclusionary actions such as singling out, mistreatment, and refusing to give support impact self-confidence, reduce productivity,

and result in feelings of rejection and comparing self with colleagues (Ferris et al., 2015; Leung & Tong, 2003; MacDonald & Leary, 2005). Black LGBTQ educators fall into a group considered "underrepresented" making them a likely target for rejection, shunning, and exclusion from ingroup members. As a result, it is probable they also experience feeling less important, useful, and influential in the workplace leading to increased experiences of depression (Ferris et al., 2015; Penhaligon et al., 2013; Pierce et al., 1989).

Organizational climate is a blend of organizational characteristics that amount to messages about the behaviors expected of members and the probable consequences of the behaviors (Ashforth, 1985; Pritchard & Karasick, 1973; Scott & Bruce, 1994). The existence of multiple climates is represented in this theme specifically procedural justice, ethical, voice, communication, collaborative, and diversity. Sweep It Under the Rug, Supportive Atmosphere, Exclusionary Experiences, and Being Overlooked are examples of the message received and outcomes experienced by participants. Prior research projects have investigated organizational climate for LGBTQ educators with minimal participation from LGBT educators. The results from this theme add to the existing literature because it exclusively centers the voices of Black LGBTQ educators and their experiences of organizational climate.

RQ2: Their Experience of Organizational Culture

Organizational culture is defined as the common long-standing prevailing values, assumptions, and beliefs associated with past organizational behaviors; conscious efforts of organizational leaders to enforce or establish shared norms for thoughts, feelings, and behavior; and the learned knowledge structures of all organizational members pertaining

to problem-solving related to external adaptation and internal assimilation (Peterson et al., 2011; Schneider et al., 2013).

Silenced and Ignored

Practices that are communicated overtly or covertly to employees that reinforce values, beliefs, and assumptions are aspects of organizational culture. Research indicates that it is through organizational culture that people interact, find norms and values, and adopt patterns of behaviors (Guerra et al., 2020). Participants communicated experiencing being silenced when an issue is presented and remains unaddressed because it is perceived as uncomfortable for a specific group in the workplace. This theme aligns with the assertion of Guerra et al. (2020) that indicates organizational culture contributes to the degree of tolerance members of a group exhibit when differing opinions manifest in dialogue.

Positive Environment

Participants recalled having situations satisfactorily addressed by leadership and feeling of belonging in the environment. This theme aligns with the establishment of a culture where support, fair treatment, favorable treatment, and practices are put into place (Peterson et al., 2011; Schneider et al., 2013). Additionally, the theme highlights the connection between climate and culture in the appearance of procedural justice in culture. Positive organizational support (POS) experiences are strongly correlated with procedural justice while procedural justice is associated with organizational commitment and engagement (Eisenberger et al., 2020). Hoy and Tarter (2004) add that trust between employees is an essential component in organizational culture providing a basis for

optimal organizational functioning. Optimal functioning aligns with the four components of organizational justice theory: distributive, procedural, interpersonal, and informational justice (Griffin & Moorhead, 2012). This theme aligns with organizational culture and organizational justice theory while demonstrating the interconnectedness of climate and culture.

Consistent Contradictions

Contrary practice and application of policies, incongruous internal and external messaging, and conflicting execution of policies and procedures following instruction are the foundational experiences of participants for this theme. The experience of organizational culture is a process that happens as employees interact with others and the organization (Schneider, & Barbera, 2014). While the experience of organizational climate comes from written policies, procedures, practices, and how rewards or support are distributed, organizational culture is developed covertly. Schneider et al. (2013) confirms organizational culture is communicated outside of the contents of the policy and procedure manuals as this study notes.

This theme aligns with research indicating that organizational culture is developed unconsciously in a covert, subtle manner (Schneider et al., 1996). How organizations handle situations internally and externally is communicated from employee to employee, year after year, and conveys accepted practices not formally found in policies or procedures. The experience of consistent contradictory messaging, practice of policy execution and contrary enforcement of policies and procedures is an example of culture being subtly introduced to the psychology of the workplace.

Covert Communications

According to Vijfeijken (2019) "culture is what you see when compliance is not in the room" (p. 1), that can be interpreted to mean information and sentiments are communicated verbally and nonverbally when there is a lack of policy enforcement. Verbal communication can also consist of covert messaging. Research indicates interactions between individuals contribute to the development and solidification of culture through language (Lubis & Hanum, 2020). For example, participants recounted feeling unvalued due to scheduling by administration, absence of protective policies, cliques, social media involvement of colleagues, and microaggressions. These each contribute to the overall experience of culture in a workplace.

The value statements, equity policies, policies and procedures to address colleague interactions or disagreement, actions of administrators with respect to scheduling particular days in the school, nonverbal "side eye", and microaggressions experienced are examples of covert communication to specific groups. Who identifies with us and with whom we identify is how identity in the workplace is developed. We feel distant from those we believe are not in our group – the ingroup (Pickett, & Brewer, 2005). Organizations that permit and sustain these persistent ways of communication and the in- and out- group dynamics are complicit in the corrosion of organizational commitment, increased feelings of exclusion, decrease openness and trust, and hinder an ideal climate and culture (Hofhuis et al., 2016; Schneider et al., 2013).

RQ3: Factors Attributed to Their Experience of Climate and Culture

The clear definition of climate and culture within this research is in line with assertion that defining the concepts establishes the foundation for description and analysis (Schein, 2000). In this theme, the attributing factors to an experience of climate and culture align with research that posits that these concepts are interlaced and ideally studied in combination to understand the inner workings of an organization (Schneider, Ehrhart, & Macey, 2013). Participants attributed three specific characteristics to their experience of organizational climate and culture: deficiencies of leadership, bigoted remarks, and a "hush, hush, vibe."

Peterson et al. (2011) and Schneider et al. (2013) discuss the nature of both concepts. Organizational climate focuses on the interpretation of policies, practices, and procedures experienced and behaviors seen. While culture is learned through experiencing what an organization values, assumptions made, and beliefs what values are demonstrated (Peterson et al., 2011; Schneider et al., 2013). Additionally, culture relies on the history of the organization as well as the vigilant, intentional efforts of leaders to enforce the existing or establish collective norms for thinking, beliefs, and behaviors. The results of this theme indicate that existing culture and climate enforcement by leadership exposed their deficiencies.

The principal has the responsibility of clearly and coherently making the climate and culture of the school obvious to students faculty, and staff (Manley et al. 2011). While the climate and culture of the organizations in which participants worked may not have been what they desired the climates and cultures were obvious by how, who, and

what garnered the attention of leadership. The results of these interactions solidify the in- and out- group dynamics, send the message of what is expected and accepted. Hearing bigoted remarks said without consequences and being silenced about problems form the background through which other interactions are experienced.

These findings concur with those of Smith et al. (2008) and Wright and Smith (2015), that indicate bullying language and principal support are chief aspects of climate and culture that are instrumental in the experience of being unsafe whether physically or psychologically. In the aforementioned research, rarely was there an experience of intervention by leadership and colleagues when homophobic language was heard coming from students, colleagues, and administrators. Two participants recounted colleagues openly speaking about LGBTQ relationships or individuals in three ways "people don't want to see that", "super fruity" and "really, really obviously gay". One participant recollected an interaction with a student participating in evangelizing in class about homosexuality. While the participants of the study conducted by Smith et al. (2008) and Wright and Smith (2015) were overwhelmingly White, the findings are similar in the use of language and lack of leadership as contributing factors for climate and culture in schools.

As noted by Schneider et al. (2017), it is the opinion of this researcher that climate and culture in the workplace can be impacted by the allyship of leaders. It is through the day-to-day leadership of principals support and endorsement of virulent environments that climate and culture in schools are established, molded, and solidified (Deal, & Peterson, 1998; Deal, & Peterson, 2016). Accountability for successful

operation of the school relies upon the behavior of the principal along with their ability to recognize its culture because they are crucial in its development and preservation (Çelikten, 2006; Karadag, & Oztekin-Bayir, 2018; Schein, 1992; Schein, 2004). Principals are obligated to be aware of the climate and culture being ingrained in the school because they set the foundation for organizational justice perceptions.

Workplaces with essential core values and attributes produce a sense of well-being for everyone, are effective, and are sustained by leadership who are the barometer for the climate and culture (Manley et al., 2011; Wright, 2010). The leadership is entrusted with aligning the climate and culture allowing for a safe school. Physical, emotional, and psychological safety are aspects of climate and culture established by leadership in the school for students and employees. The creation and management of climate and culture is the most significant role of a leader.

Implications to Theory

Organizational Justice in the Findings

The essence of this study is to understand the experiences of Black LGBTQ educators as it pertains to organizational climate and culture. To investigate this, it is necessary to incorporate concepts of justice due to the history of the field of education with respect to Black and LGBTQ educators as well as the intersectional and marginalized nature of the participants. The results of the study present the experiences of participants through the organizational justice theory lens of fairness in outcomes (distributive justice), fairness in processes (procedural justice), and interpersonal treatment (interactional justice) aligning it with the theory.

Organizational justice occurs in a social context where people interact. Participants' interaction with leaders, rewards, promotions, inclusion or exclusion, and the dissimilarity of their experience with those of coworkers aligns with previous research of Hemmelgarn and Glisson (2018) and Pinder (2008). An example of this concept is narrated by a participant in a same sex relationship. When asked about their marital status by a student they responded affirmatively resulting in being questioned by administration about the reason for answering. The outcome is an experience of keeping things secret, the "hush, hush vibe." It was indicated that the same would not have happened to a heterosexual colleague. Displaying photographs of heterosexual colleagues with their significant others was indicated as acceptable. The ability of Black LGBTQ participants to discuss their relationship status or exhibit photographs of their significant other openly as their heterosexual colleagues demonstrates the alignment with inquiries of organizational justice.

Critical Race Theory in the Findings

CRT combines with an intersectional approach because it concedes the interrelatedness of race and class and exposes disadvantageous racial climates involved in inequities present in interpersonal and institutional (Kohli, 2016). It is through this framework that three concepts can be studied: (a) ways schools undertake daily operations that instigate racial status quos are analyzed, (b) intersectional experiences unattached to just race and sexuality, (c) racial climates, and (d) marginalized representation in education (Cho et al., 2013; Crenshaw, 1989; DeCuir-Gunby & Gunby, 2016; Kohli, 2016; Solórzano, 1997). The use of this theory aligns with the study, as

participants reported microaggressions targeted at both race and sexual orientation. For example, one participant related an incident of being told she was "pretty face for a Black woman" while a male participant an interaction that intimated, "You're intelligent for a Black man," Comments focused on sexual orientation such as "people don't want to see that", and "that's not something that you should be doing in public" were conveyed to participants.

The word microaggression has been endorsed by CRT scholars interested in education to study covert ways systemic racism happens in educational institutions (Allen & Solórzano, 2001; Kohli, 2016; Smith et al., 2007; Solórzano, 1998; Solórzano, et al., 2002). The examples of microaggressions, microassaults, microinsults, and microinvalidations identified by participant align with research that maintains these incidents are directed at sexual orientation, race, gender, and faith beliefs of a particular individual or group (Sue, 2010). The use of CRT in this study highlights the intersectional nature of microaggressions including microassaults, microinsults, and microinvalidations, due to multidimensional identities as referenced by the groundbreaking research of Sue et al. (2007).

Intersectionality in the Findings

The results of this study align with an intersectionality framework. Intersectionality theory is rooted in the soil of social justice organizing seeded by grassroot intellectuals and watered by the writings of Frances Beal (Burnham, 2020; Hiraide & Evans, 2023). Crenshaw (1989) states that research involving Black people must concede there are various identity markers, without the acknowledgement there

exist inherent limitations in an inflexibly structured framework. Examining the experiences of Black LGBTQ educators requires a perspective that accounts for the indivisibility of their identities which include gender, race, social class, gender, and sexual orientation which is found in intersectionality (Whitfield et al., 2014; Figure 1).

Each theme derived from this study aligns with the intersectional approach because of opportunity to incorporate an unorthodox multifaceted viewpoint for advocacy, policy formation, and social justice fundamental characteristics of intersectionality (African American Policy Forum [AAPF], n.d.). The results highlight the unrecognized, acknowledged incidents that cause harm and contribute to the climate and culture experiences of LGBTQ educators. The AAPF (n.d.) states that an intersectional approach targets damage suffered and often unrecognized interactions such as being silenced, overlooked, or having colleagues as allies seen in the responses of the participants. These responses align with the call from Rodriguez et al. (2016) for discrimination, power, and inequity in the workplace to be investigated adopting an intersectional approach. This study allowed for the use of intersectionality in the examination of organizational climate and culture to be explored through the voices and vantage point of Black LGBTQ educators. This vantage point directly alludes to the uniqueness of an intersectional approach that can uncover the dynamics of power and privilege and stand as an occasion to advocate, scrutinize and implement policies, and seek justice.

Figure 1

Concept of Intersectionality

Race / Ethnicity

Gender

Class

INTERSECTIONALITY

Abilities

Nationality

Sexual Orientation
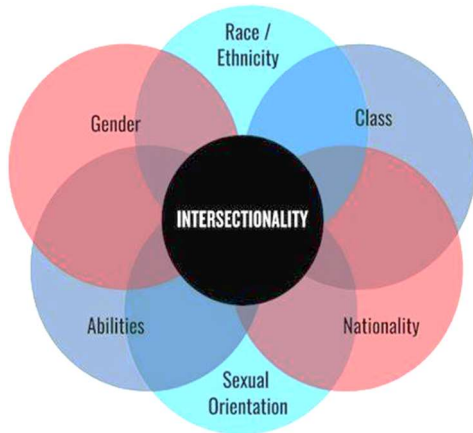
Implications to Practice

Findings from this dissertation have practical implications for IOP. Practitioners benefit from an understanding of the ways that climate and culture are observed and experienced by employees. An increased consciousness of the interpretations derived from specific interactions that impact voice, ethical, empowerment, collaborative, communication, and diversity climates in the workplace environment. As a result of this dissertation, practitioners can gain insight into the culture that exists for Black LGBTQ educators and how the culture is sustained. Additionally, the recollections, examples, and quotes of participants can assist in the acknowledgement, appreciated, and awareness of factors that can be attributed to organizational climate and culture in the workplace. Specifically, practitioners can use the findings as an opportunity to examine the ways leadership, being silenced, and bigoted remarks contribute to the experiences of climate and culture.

From an applied IOP perspective, practitioners would benefit from clearly defining the climate and culture of an organization to understand the experiences of employees. It is important for practitioners to remain cognizant that climate and culture are formal and informal. It is the informal nature of these concepts that manifest in behaviors and is articulated in conversations (González-Torres, 2023). Gaining insights directly from organization members or employees about what they have noticed, experienced, heard, seen, or perceived through interactions with leaders, coworkers, and customers or clients about climate and culture allows for those insights to be analyzed from primary data sources. Evaluating and interpreting the two constructs jointly ensures a comprehensive view of the workplace environment as indicated by Schneider and Barbera (2014). Additionally, it would be irresponsible of a practitioner to neglect addressing the leadership responsibilities.

Practitioners would be remiss to neglect addressing the significant role leaders play in consistently, effectively, and coherently communicating organizational climate and culture. Organizational culture and climate follow leadership and therefore are linked (Xenikou, 2022). Leaders are tasked with clearly articulating the climate and culture and its maintenance (Khanare & Marina, 2023). Transformational leadership has been shown to motivate, embolden, and influence others to pioneer new practices, processes, procedures, and techniques that are constructive (Kim & Park, 2020). Kim and Park (2020) found organizational climate, knowledge-sharing, and organizational learning were positively affected by transformational leadership. Additionally, organizational climate and employee behavior are both influenced by transformational leadership. The

results of this current study call for practitioners to impress upon leadership to make understanding, evaluation, and correction of climate and culture a priority. Similarly, assisting leadership in making climate and culture tangible for daily practical and interpersonal enrichment can improve their understanding of operational implementation of these two crucial workplace concepts.

Practitioners may use the findings as a means for providing a new lens through which to practice in their chosen industry. Most industrial and organizational psychologists work in scientific research and development services, higher education or professional schools, state or local government, and schools (U.S. Department of Labor Statistics, 2023). The findings, though focused on elementary and secondary schools, are essentially about the experience of organizational climate and culture in the workplace from the vantage point of Black LGBTQ. In the United States, The Williams Institute estimates there are 1.2 million Black LGBTQ adults in the country (UCLA School of Law Williams Institute, 2021). These individuals engage with educational, state and local, and private or public organizations daily whether as a consumer or employee.

IOP practitioners are largely applied scientists tasked with using relevant research to benefit the welfare and performance of organizations and those in their employ (SIOP, 2024). The research confronts issues expressed and experienced by Black LGBTQ employees such as gaslighting, silencing, lack of protective policies, bigoted remarks, and insufficient leadership each a part of the climate and culture of a workplace. These findings are rife with avenues for advocacy, education, and reviews of effective, protective, and equitable policy and procedure actions. Additionally, because of the

population focus of this dissertation, diversity in the workplace cannot be ignored. This perspective in practice can be used to encourage a healthy diversity climate as an asset to organizations with a myriad cultural, racial, language, religious, ethnic, sexual orientation, ability, personality, and political views.

Previous research has found the establishment, maintenance, communication, and endorsement of organizational climate and culture are controlled by leadership (Day et al., 2014; Nabella et al., 2022; Schneider et al., 2017). These findings are upheld by the results of this dissertation. Specifically, leaders were found to be unresponsive, dismissive, or gaslit Black LGBTQ employees in consequential discussions or allowed others to evade accountability during meaningful or distressing discourse. Future research conducted by IOP practitioners and scholars should examine (a) how leaders understand their role in managing and maintaining organizational climate and culture, (b) in- and out- group experiences of leadership according to specific demographic markers in a workplace, (c) how leadership identification with majority or marginalized communities impacts climate and culture establishment or experiences, and (d) whether leader race, ethnicity or sexual orientation are factors in the experience of climate and culture depending on participant demographics. Findings from future research into these topics will help inform applied practice to further support wellbeing and performance in organizations.

Implications for Social Change

The results of this research have social change implications. Social change at the core seeks to improve lives through shifts in social structures, value systems, behavioral

rules, organizations, and human interactions (Wilterdink & Form, 2024). Shifting human interactions begins the transformation of idealized beliefs, ways of behaving and relating socially. These transformations affect institutions and organizations whether educational or cultural in nature. Social structures, value systems, behaviors rules, human interactions, and organizational dynamics used to maintain the climate and culture within organizations can be changed as consequence of these findings.

These results uncover the experiences of Black LGBTQ educators in elementary and secondary schools related to interactions with colleagues, administrators, students and families, and policies and procedures. As a result, it is recommended that work environments that listen to the voices, perspectives, and concerns of marginalized community members be intentionally implemented. Previous research has found access to available diverse voices encourages communication about cultural heritage and behaviors, encourages a view of differences a valuable, is linked to "satisfaction, inclusion, and performance" (Hofhuis et al., 2016) and a sense of belonging.

Limitations of the Study

Previous theory and research were substantiated by the dissertation results and prompted new discoveries. The results are best appreciated within the scope of its six limitations. Recruitment of Black LGBTQ K-12 educators in the United States is constricted by the number of Black educators in the profession, the percentage of those who identify as a member of the LGBTQ community and are willing to participate. The recruitment process was stalled due to a lack of participants who fit previous parameters of being an elementary school educator. A requirement to identify with the community

and concerns with remaining unidentified may have been a limitation to a greater number of participants.

IPA as the chosen methodology for this dissertation restricts the number of participants and generalizability of the study. When applying IPA, graduate students are recommended to use a small sample size between three and six participants to achieve depth rather than breadth (Smith & Fieldsend, 2021; Smith et al., 2012). The use of thick descriptions of the process and participants addresses the extent to which the study can be considered transferable as determined by the audience (Korstjens & Moser, 2018).

Researchers are obligated to be aware of their own biases, values, and assumptions to minimize their own influence. I chose the topic due to involvement within the field of education, identifying as a Black person, and support for the LGBTQ community. An expert panel was assembled to establish reliability and reduce researcher bias. Two appreciable limitations were unexpected as a part of the study: social unrest and COVID-19. Social unrest and the contemporaneous emergence of COVID-19 across the world caused a change in the questions being asked of participants, their worldview and workplace experiences.

Recommendations for Future Research

A qualitative approach was chosen for this dissertation study devoted to the voices, perspectives and lived experiences of Black LGBTQ educators to be included in research focused on organizational climate and culture. Future research should consider another research design, use a mixed methods or quantitative approach.

Akyildiz and Ahmed (2021) indicate that the use of a focus group design allows for a social context in which rich, high-quality data can be obtained. In a focus group, participants become social, explore experiences, communicate with peers, evoke ideas or memories, and discuss various viewpoints. Using a focus group a researcher would be able to obtain data from multiple participants effectively and gain insights. The current study uncovered deficiencies with leadership that could serve as topic for a focus group with leaders. A focus group with school leaders could examine how they handle inappropriate remarks between employees and how this has impacted the climate and culture of the workplace. A longitudinal study using a person-centered approach to investigate the dynamics of voice climate and how it is associated with organizational commitment in Black educators is another opportunity for future research. Last, a survey of school leaders investigating their attitudes of diversity climate with respect to marginalized groups could provide insight into how their attitudes impact the organizational climate and culture, execution of policies and procedures, and turnover. Future research should be focused on such options as focus groups, longitudinal studies, or surveys to increase sample size, reliability, validity, and transferability (Fryer et al., 2018).

During the interview process phenotype was unexpectedly introduced as a possible factor in how climate and culture are experienced. A participant indicated they present as a cisgender woman who identifies as queer while a colleague who is lesbian is masculine presenting. Contrasting experiences of interacting with administration, colleagues, parents, and students due to presentation was raised as another research

opportunity. Future research could explore how phenotype factors into the experience of climate and culture for employees in marginalized groups specifically those who are LGBTQ. For example, a study could use feminine and masculine presenting women to explore the similarities and differences in their experience workplace climate and culture.

There were no interviews with leadership, principals, or administrators to explore the ways they address, manage, maintain, correct, or create organizational climate and culture for marginalized groups. Participants indicated experiencing being silenced, unheard, gaslit, treated unequally, and inaction by leadership as well as coworkers. Future research could utilize the theme of deficiencies in leadership as a starting point for research that addresses climate and culture development for welcoming workplaces. For example, a future study could inquire with school employees to gather data about what policies, practices, procedures and interactions provide a feeling of being welcomed in the workplace. Additionally, how, when, and with whom policies and procedures are enforced and the impact on climate and culture is a justifiable topic for future research. A qualitative study could explore the enforcement of policies and procedures within schools to discover how, when, and with whom enforcement happens and the ways the climate and culture are impacted. In particular, understanding how enforcement impact the perception of climate and culture as the observer and/or the receiver of enforcement with an interest in the demographics of the observer and receiver.

The results indicate there are positive and supportive aspects of climate and culture such as policies, coworkers, welcoming atmosphere, representation, and fit. Due to the scope and purpose of the current research further inquiry into the development and

maintenance of positive and supportive facets of climate and culture is warranted. Future research could investigate specific ways employees have made the workplace welcoming for colleagues to feel they belong. Participants indicated the development of supportive relationships with coworkers who present as allies. The presence of allies impacts the climate and culture experiences for marginalized individuals. As a byproduct of this study, future research could explore specific ways allies or coconspirators experience and choose to impact climate and culture in workplaces with marginalized individuals is valid.

Participants in this study do not live in the same states, represent public elementary and middle schools, have three to nine plus years of experience, were between 30-45 years old, out in the workplace, and self-identify as gay, lesbian or queer. Future research has a myriad of options to explore organizational climate and culture from the point of view of Black LGBTQ educators. For example, recruitment of educators in the same school district, private school educators, identify as lesbian, or are not out in the workplace can contribute to scholarship in organizational psychology and education.

This dissertation highlighted the school climate research of Wright (2010), Wright and Smith (2015), and Wright et al. (2019). Although this previous research is extensive and provides valuable scholarship in the field of education, the voices of Black LGBTQ educators is not at the forefront, it does not incorporate both climate and culture, and used a quantitative approach. This research uses the stories, experiences, and voices of Black LGBTQ educators to fill a gap in extant organizational climate and culture research in

schools. The results of this research adds to the body of inquiries questioning factors associated with low retention and recruitment of Black educators from a new perspective that of Black LGBTQ educators and organizational climate and culture. The field of education could benefit from future research focused on culture in schools for marginalized communities specifically using a qualitative approach to extract details a quantitative approach may leave undiscovered such as mental health outcomes in the workplace.

I hold a master of science in mental health counseling, leading to an unusual way of viewing the results. Minority stress may be amplified by policies and practices in the workplace because workplaces are where many people spend the most time. When compared to the health of cisgender heterosexuals, those who identify as LGBTQ consistently have worse outcomes (King et al., 2008; Valentine & Shipherd, 2018). Lewis and Mills (2016) suggest unfavorable experiences and expectations of having a safe and reassuring workplace affect the mental health of marginalized communities. Future research to examine the impact organizational climate and culture have on the mental health of Black LGBTQ educators would serve to inform the fields of IOP, education, and mental health.

Conclusion

The present study sought to explore the climate and culture experiences of Black LGBTQ educators in K-12 education in the United States. Five Black LGBTQ educators living in different states participated in the interview process. Results from this dissertation helped to identify climate and culture experiences and factors that contribute

to those experiences. Eleven themes associated with three research questions were the outcome: (a) sweep it under the rug, (b) supportive atmosphere, (c) exclusionary experiences, (d) being overlooked, (e) silenced and ignored, (f) positive environment, (g) consistent contradictions, (h) covert communication, (i) bigoted remarks, (j) deficiencies in leadership, and (k) hush, hush vibe are the resulting themes.

As a result of this research, specific themes helped to define climate and culture by detailing incidents, interactions, and contradictions within the workplace such as sweeping things under the rug, deficiencies in leadership, supportive coworkers, and covert communication. These findings reveal ways Black LGBTQ educators experience coworkers, leadership, and the workplace. It is through this research there now exist a body of information associated climate and culture in schools for Black LGBTQ educators apart from previous research with minimal participation from this population. These findings were able to identify facets of climate and culture that contribute to workplace their workplace experiences. These facets can be used to address policies, practices, procedures, building supportive workplaces, in- and out- group dynamics, and deficiencies in leadership.

This dissertation used IOP to explore an understudied marginalized population in education using a three-pronged approach crossing multiple disciplines. The study allowed the voices of Black LGBTQ educators to be centered in an exploration of workplace experiences specific to climate and culture framed by CRT, Intersectionality, and Organizational Justice Theory. P4 addressed the uniqueness and significance of the study in this way:

There are none, no studies like this and I am really excited about getting this data to show people so that we can be visible. Because oftentimes when we're sharing our experiences at the ground level, it's like, "Oh, well, you're the only one here. So, you know, we can't provide any validity to that." But when you get data, get research, when you have studies, when you have scholars who are posting about these things, it gives us validity and it gives us support.

Theories used in this dissertation supported the intersectional nature of participant identities, informed the interpretation and analysis of interpersonal interactions in the school from a racial perspective, and framed findings using types of organizational justice to explain results. The study crosses the fields of IOP, education, and mental health encouraging further research in each field associated with climate and culture with respect to workplaces. Findings brought attention to the need for the education of industrial and organizational psychologists to reflect a cross-cultural perspective as workplaces have become increasingly diverse. This increase in diversity requires IOP practitioners to integrate a cross cultural view of practice with individuals and organizations because diversity alone will not ensure retention. The future of IOP depends on producing professionals able to employ cultural humility if they are to address individual and organizational issues effectively. Continuing to research, investigate, and apply research results of the topics and concepts in this dissertation should be done. This continuation will inform graduate level curriculum development, improve practice, and support IOP to be at the forefront of understanding dynamic global workforce diversity.

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Appendix A: Invitation to Participate

To be sent to potential participants to invite them to engage in the research study.

Greetings,

I am Sidney Gaskins, a doctoral candidate, at Walden University in the Industrial and Organizational Psychology program. I invite you to participate in research I am conducting for the completion of my dissertation. The study looks to understand the workplace experiences of Black LGBTQ elementary school educators.

I would like to interview individuals who hold a current teaching license, have been teaching at least 3-5 years, identify as Black or African American and consider themselves to be lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or queer/questioning, and out. The interview is expected to be 60 to 90 minutes. If you fit the previous criteria, have questions, or want to participate, please contact Sidney Gaskins.

Appendix B: Request for Support

To be sent to previously contacted persons and organizational personnel to invite them to engage in the research study.

Greetings,

I am Sidney Gaskins, a doctoral candidate, at Walden University in the Industrial and Organizational Psychology program. I am contacting you to garner support in identifying and communicating with potential participants in the research I am conducting for the completion of my dissertation. The study looks to understand the workplace experiences of Black LGBTQ elementary school educators.

I would like to interview individuals who hold a current teaching license, have been teaching at least 3-5 years, identify as Black or African American and consider themselves to be lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or queer/questioning, and out. The interview is expected to be 60 to 90 minutes. If you know anyone who fits the previous criteria and may be willing to participate, please forward this information to them. Additionally, if you do not personally know some but a colleague may I respectfully ask that you forward this to them. The prospective participant is welcome to contact Sidney Gaskins via email.

Appendix C: Recruitment Flyer

Seeking Dissertation Research Participants

Black LGBTQ K-12 Educators
Let Your Voice Be Heard

What is it about?

Seeking individuals to contribute to the current research involving the workplace experiences of Black LGBTQ K-12 educators across the United States. Black LGBTQ K-12 educators have a perspective about the workplace that can contribute to policymaking, multiple fields, and research that is distinctive. The researcher seeks to hear directly from Black LGBTQ K-12 educators to fill these gaps.

Why participate?

- I want to have my voice and perspective as a Black LGBTQ educator to be heard.
- I want to contribute to research in the field of industrial and organizational psychology as well as education and others.
- I would like to receive a commemorative gift for my participation.

Walden University Study#:
02-02-22-0165017

Do I fit the criteria?

- Do you identify as Black, African American, or African diaspora?
- Do you identify as LGBTQ+?
- Are you currently a public school educator in the United States with 3+ years of experience?
- Are you between the ages of 30-50?

If you answered "yes" to each of these, you are welcome to participate.

What do I have to do?

- 1 consent form
- 1 qualifying survey
- 1 pre-interview questionnaire
- 1 45-60 minute recorded interview via Zoom
- 1 follow-up interview, if deemed necessary

Dissertation Information   Participant Questionnaire

Do you have further questions?
Please contact:
Sidney Gaskins

If you want to participate, meet the criteria, and agree with the requirements, please complete the consent and survey at :
Black LGBTQ Educators

Appendix D: Screening Survey

The following questions will be used to screen participants.

1. Do you hold a current teaching certificate?

☐ Yes

☐ No

2. Which level do you currently teach?

☐ Elementary (K-5/6)

☐ Middle (6/7-8)

☐ High School (9-12)

3. How many years have you been teaching?

☐ 1-2

☐ 3-4

☐ 5-6

☐ 7-8

☐ 9+

4. What category best fits your age range?

☐ 20-25

☐ 26-31

☐ 32-37

☐ 38-43

☐ 44-49

☐ 50+

5. Which one of these best describes how you identify?

☐ Black

☐ African American

6. Which one of these identifies you best?

☐ Lesbian

☐ Gay

☐ Bisexual

☐ Transgender

☐ Queer

☐ Questioning

7. Are you out at work?

☐ Yes

☐ No

8. Are you willing and able to participate in the study?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Appendix E: Pre-Interview Questionnaire

1. In what year did you begin teaching?

2. What year did you begin working in your current school?

3. In how many other schools have you taught?

4. What grades have you taught?

5. What grade do you teach currently?

6. What subjects do you teach?

7. How many teachers are in your current school?

8. What type of school is this? (i.e., Magnet, Traditional Public, Public Charter, other)

9. How many principals are in your current school? (i.e., grade level principals, assistant principals, etc.)

10. When did you first share your sexual orientation personally?

11. When did you first share your sexual orientation professionally?

12. Are you out at work?

13. Due to COVID19 which mode of teaching are you engage in?

14. How do you identify?

   ☐ Lesbian

   ☐ Gay

   ☐ Bisexual

   ☐ Transgender

   ☐ Queer

☐ Questioning

☐ Pansexual

☐ Other

15. Which of these best fits how you identify?

☐ Black

☐ African American

☐ Other African Diaspora

Appendix F: Interview Protocol

1. Please tell me two things that drew you to becoming a teacher.

2. What are three reasons you have chosen to remain in the field of education?

3. What are some of the things in the current school that make it a good place for you to be a Black LGBTQ educator?

4. What are some of the things in the current school that make it a difficult place for you to be a Black LGBTQ educator?

5. When you first started at this school, what were some of the unsaid things you were taught or learned about the school that were not a part of the policy manual?

6. Have you ever heard negative comments about Black educators during your time at this job? Probe: If so, how has the administration handled those comments?

7. Have you ever heard negative comments about LGTBQ educators during your time at this job?

   Probe: If so, how has the administration handled those comments?

8. Do you feel there is a difference between the way racial and LGBTQ comments are handled?

   Probe: If so, what are they?

9. As Black LGBTQ educator, can you tell me about an incident when you felt or thought your were treated differently from a colleague with respect specific to:

   a. Rewards?

   b. Awards?

    c. Support?

Probe: If so, what was the situation?

10. In what ways has COVID-19 impacted your work experiences?

11. As a Black LGBTQ educator, has there been a time you felt you were treated differently with respect to:

    a. Policies?

    b. Promotions?

    c. Procedures?

Probe: If so, what was the situation?

12. Can you tell me about time, at the current job, that the values and beliefs you have been told were important to the organization did not match with the policies and procedures that are practiced?

Probe: If so, what was the policy and the difference in practice?

13. In what ways have the current racial and social climate impacted your work experiences?

14. Before we conclude, is there anything you can think of that I have not asked that you believe is relevant to best understand your experience as a Black LGBTQ educator in a public school?

Appendix G: Men and Women Killed in Interactions With Law Enforcement

Year	Name	Date of Death	Age	Location
2014	Gabriella Nevarez	March	22	Sacramento, CA
	Eric Garner	July	43	New York, NY
	Michael Brown	August	18	Ferguson, MO
	Michelle Cusseaux	August	50	Pheonix, AZ
	Akai Gurley	November	28	New York, NY
	Tamir Rice	November	12	Cleveland, OH
	Aura Rosser	November	40	Ann Arbor, MI
2015	Janisha Fonville	February	20	Charlotte, NC
	Eric Harris	April	43	Tulsa, OK
	Walter Scott	April	50	North Charleston, SC
	Freddie Gray	April	25	Baltimore, MD
	Sandra Bland	July	28	Hempstead, TX
2016	Kevin Hicks	April	44	Indianapolis, IN
	Vernell Bing Jr.	May	22	Jacksonville, FL
	Philando Castile	July	32	Falcon Heights, MN
	Alton Sterling	July	37	Baton Rouge, LA
2017	Muhammad Muhaymin Jr.	January	43	Phoenix, AZ
	Wardel Davis	January	20	Buffalo, NY
	Quanice Hayes	February	17	Portland, OR
	Keita O'Neil	December	42	San Francisco, CA
2018	Crystalline Barnes	January	21	Jackson, MS
	Christopher Eisinger	March	35	Anaheim, CA
	Stephon Clark	March	22	Sacramento, CA
	Botham Jean	September	27	Dallas, TX
2019	George Robinson	January	62	Jackson, MS
	Javier Ambler	March	40	Austin, TX
	Isaiah Lewis	April	17	Edmond, CA
	Elijah McClain	August	23	Aurora, CO
	Atatiana Jefferson	October	28	Fort Worth, TX
2020	William Howard Green	January	43	Oxon Hill, MD
	Leonard Parker Jr.	February	53	Gulfport, MS
	Breonna Taylor	March	26	Louisville, KY
	Daniel Prude	March	41	Rochester, NY
	Shaun Fuhr	May	24	Seattle, WA
	Maurice Gordon	May	28	Bass River, NJ
	George Floyd	May	46	Minneapolis, MN

Appendix H: Map of Protests Across the United States

Note: The map represents protests and National Guard activation sites as of June 29, 2020

(Haseman et al., 2020).