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The Lived Experience Of African American Teachers Utilizing Co-Cultural Adaptation At Predominantly White Rural Schools In Central Appalachia

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THE LIVED EXPERIENCE OF AFRICAN AMERICAN TEACHRS UTILIZING CO-CULTURAL ADAPTATION AT PREDOMINANTLY WHITE RURAL SCHOOLS IN CENTRAL APPALACHIA

BY

TONY E. SWEATT

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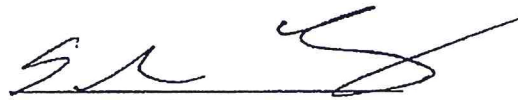Chair, Advisory Committee

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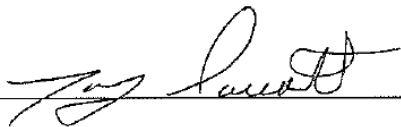
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THE LIVED EXPERIENCE OF AFRICAN AMERICAN TEACHERS UTILIZING CO-CULTURAL ADAPTATION AT PREDOMINANTLY WHITE RURAL SCHOOLS IN CENTRAL APPALACHIA

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in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of
DOCTORATE OF EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP
December, 2017

DEDICATION

First and foremost I must thank God, my Father. Without Him, this dissertation would never have come to fruition. "I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye!" Psalm 32:8

I dedicate this work and the fact that it exists to four awesome ladies who have played an essential part of my life. To my loving wife, Felicia, who has given me her unwavering support, love, and encouragement throughout this entire process: Thank you for your infinite patience, understanding, and support. You allowed me to immerse myself into completing this dissertation. This dissertation is a testament to the support you have given me. I love you. Also, to my daughter Brittany, who from the beginning inspired me to do the best and be the best for us. I love you always. Likewise, my mother Doris Ann and grandmother Missouri Cottrell, who always encouraged me to set goals and work diligently to accomplish them. Thank you for your prayers and the encouraging words. I love you both dearly.

Lastly, I wish to thank the 5 K's in my life, Kiera, Kirk, Kirsynn, Khloe, and Kenyon, as well as the African American teachers who participated in this study, my family, friends, co-workers, faculty, and staff who showered me with emotional support and prayers throughout this arduous journey.

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I would also like to thank Dr. Rose Skepple. Thank you for stepping in at the last minute and re-arranging your schedule to help me though. You challenged me in so many ways, pushing me to levels I never thought I could reach. Likewise, to Dr. Sherwood Thompson, you were one of my first professors and had been in my corner from the very beginning. I appreciate your support and your guidance, not only on academia but life as well. You did so much for me behind the scenes to help me through the program, and for that, I am truly, truly grateful. Last, but certainly not least, I could never have made this journey without my Dissertation Chair, Dr. Roger Cleveland. You have always made yourself available to me and have never made me feel like the nuisance I am! I am so grateful to you for your guidance. I could not have asked for a more perfect committee chair and life supporter.

ABSTRACT

Primary and secondary schools across the nation are becoming increasingly heterogeneous, yet the teacher population remains homogenous. In fairness, this is not a new issue: At the turn of the century, Whites represented a significant aggregate of the teacher population: 73% in the inner city; 81% in suburban schools; 91% in small towns; and 98% in rural areas. The magnitude of this issue is significant since approximately 33% of schools in the U.S. are located in rural areas, which already struggle with recruiting and retaining teachers, much less African-American ones. In fact, Bireda and Chait (2011) found that over 40% of public schools lack a single African American teacher on staff.

The shortage of African American teachers can be traced back to the historic *Brown v. Board of Education* Supreme Court decision in 1954. While recruitment initiatives have been somewhat productive, studies nonetheless reveal a "revolving door" whereby scores of teachers abandon their jobs before retirement. Attrition is the primary factor impacting retention, according to the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future. Retaining African American teachers is an essential part of narrowing this chasm.

As an effort to understand the causes of attrition and perseverance among African-American teachers, this study offers several qualitative interviews as part of an inductive, multiple-case study. The findings indicate that White superintendents are consciously or unconsciously supportive of the veils of oppression. Meanwhile, the principals and White faculty in these districts remain purposefully negligent of the needs and issues that African American teachers confront as co-cultural group members at predominantly White school districts.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Primary and secondary schools across the nation are becoming increasingly

heterogeneous, yet the teacher population remains homogenous (Alonzo-Osborne, 2008;

Farinde, LeBlanc, & Otten, 2015; McNulty & Brown, 2009; Madkins, 2011; Vilegas,

Strom, & Lucas, 2012; Lash & Ratcliffe, 2014; Barnes-Johnson, 2008). African

American teachers, which constitute the core focus of this study, represent 6.4 percent of

public school teachers (Goldring, Gray, & Bitterman, 2013). This alarming percentage

reinforces the NCES' (2010) point that the education field is currently dominated by

White, middle-class teachers (Landsman & Lewis, 2011; Lewis & Toldson, 2013). The

shortage of African American teachers can be traced back to the historic Brown v. Board

of Education Supreme Court decision in 1954 (Karpinski, 2006; Patterson & Freehling,

2001). Shortly after the court's decision, approximately 40,000 African American

teachers were terminated from their professions in 17 Southern states and those that

border them (Toppo, 2004).

In fairness, this is not a new issue: At the turn of the century, Whites represented a

significant aggregate of the teacher population: 73% in the inner city; 81% in suburban

schools; 91% in small towns; and 98% in rural areas (as cited in Alonzo-Osborne, 2008).

The magnitude of this issue is significant, since approximately 33% of schools in the U.S.

are located in rural areas (Strange, Johnson, Showalter, & Klein, 2012), which already

struggle with recruiting and retaining teachers, much less African-American ones

(Achinstein, Ogawa, Sextion, & Freitas, 2010; NCES, 2010). In short, African American

teachers are a disproportionally small group in the profession, even relative to their portion of the general population.

As a result, policymakers and educators alike have spent the last two decades devising initiatives aimed at addressing this issue. Since the early 1990s, 36 states have adopted policies designed to recruit more African American teachers (Villegas & Davis, 2008). To substantiate these efforts, Villegas and Irvine (2010) identified three major arguments for diversifying the teaching force: (1) African American teachers serve as role models for all students; (2) the potential of African American teachers to improve the academic outcomes and school experiences of students of color; and (3) the workforce rationale.

In light of this reality, the present study aims to provide rural school administrators, policymakers, and researchers with valuable information regarding African American teacher retention efforts. Specifically, this dissertation offers an inductive, theory-building, and descriptive multi-case study of a predominantly White rural school district in Central Appalachia, with a particular focus on those strategies that the schools/districts use to support co-cultural adaptation. The researcher utilized in-depth interview questions to acquire information regarding co-cultural adjustment, adaptation strategies, and communicative behaviors used at these particular schools to better understand how certain factors affect African-American teacher persistence. Many studies have neglected to examine those communication attributes that appear to be essential for African American teachers' persistence. Additionally, this study focused on how traditionally marginalized individuals utilize specific communication strategies in

the dominant societal structure to adapt and persevere. The results reveal African-American educators' perceptions about their work environment.

Statement of the Problem

This disproportionality in teacher racial distribution is problematic in light of an increasingly diverse student population (Madkins, 2011; Villegas, Strom, & Lucas, 2012; Landsman & Lewis, 2011; Bryan & Ford, 2014). Unfortunately, the public education system continues to show a lack of commitment to recruiting and retaining African American teachers whose backgrounds parallel those of their rapidly growing number of students, especially in rural areas. In fact, Bireda and Chait (2011) found that over 40% of public schools lack a single African American teacher on staff. Meanwhile, the representational racial/ethnic gap between African American students and African American teachers persists and widens (Bryan & Ford, 2014; Farinde, LeBlanc, & Otten, 2015; Landsman & Lewis, 2011; Madkins, 2011; McNulty & Brown, 2009; Vilegas, Strom, & Lucas, 2012;). Supporters of a diverse teaching force warn that this cultural split could result in many students rarely encountering an African American teacher (Bryan & Ford, 2014; Irvine & Fenwick, 2011; Ladson-Billings, 2009). This scarcity has been a running acknowledgment for several decades now: In the late 1990s, U.S. Secretary of Education Richard Riley (1998) noted that the teaching profession must resemble the country's diversity:

> If we are to be responsive to the special demands and great opportunities of our
>
> nation's pluralistic makeup, we should develop a teaching force that is diverse…

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Children need role models--they need to see themselves in the faces of their

teachers. (p. 19)

More recently, U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan (2010) stated:

I'm very concerned that increasingly, our teachers don't reflect the great diversity

of our nation's young people, and so making sure we have more teachers of color

and particularly more men, more Black and Latino men, coming into education is

going to be a significant part of this Teach Campaign. (Bireda & Chait, 2011, p.

1)

Interestingly, there was a point in American history where African Americans

were more deeply invested in the teaching profession. In the 1950s, in fact, nearly half of

all African American professionals in the United States were teachers (Cole, 1986;

Madkins, 2011; Walker, 2000). Teaching provided stable and secure employment

opportunities for African Americans, as well as prestige and status within the African

American community. However, the percentage of African American Educators in the

U.S. has declined over the past 65 years, despite the growing diversity of the public

school population (Lash & Ratcliffe, 2014; NCES, 2010).

Attrition is the primary factor impacting retention, according to the National

Commission on Teaching and America's Future (NCTAF, 2003). Fifty percent of new

teachers and African American teachers quit their jobs within five years: The primary

reason is job dissatisfaction, whereas only 12% of attrition for African American teachers

stems from retirement (Ingersoll & Connor, 2009). While recruitment initiatives have

been somewhat productive, studies nonetheless reveal a "revolving door" whereby scores

of teachers abandon their jobs before retirement (Ingersoll, 2003, 2004). The national

teacher attrition rates have not varied across racial or ethnic groups. However, in 2004-2005, the TFS data revealed higher attrition among African American teachers (Ingersoll & Connor, 2009; Marvel et al., 2007): Specifically, 19.4% and 20.7% for minority and African American teachers, respectively, compared to 16.4% for their White counterparts (Ingersoll & Connor, 2009). This has dire consequences for minority students, who fall well below their white counterparts academically and thus stand to lose the most from a lack of role model (KewalRamani, Gilbertson, Fox, & Provasnik, 2007; Swanson, 2004; Havey & Anderson, 2007).

Purpose of the Study

Retaining African American teachers is an essential part of narrowing this chasm. Indeed, a growing body of evidence suggests that African American teachers have a positive influence on minority learning (Dee, 2004, 2005; Hanushek, Kain, & Rivkin, 2004; Irvine, 1989; King, 1993; Quiocho & Rios, 2000; Villegas & Irvine, 2010; Villegas & Lucas, 2004). For instance, Meier, Stewart, and England (1989) found that the presence of African American teachers in school systems reduces the percentage of African Americans placed in special education classes. Furthermore, fewer African Americans were suspended or expelled, while more were placed in gifted and talented programs. As expected under such conditions, more African Americans graduated from high school (Irvine & Fenwick, 2011).

The democratic imperative asserts that African American teachers can improve academic results on standardized exam scores, attendance, retention, advanced-level course enrollment, and college-going rates for students of color (Clewell, Puma, &

McKay, 2001; Dee, 2004; England & Meier, 1985; Hanushek, Kain, O'Brien, & Rivkin, 2005; Klopfenstein, 2005; Villegas & Davis, 2008; Villegas & Irvine, 2009). However, scholars have not always agreed on the best approach to studying this issue. According to Frankenberg (2008), the benefits of a diverse faculty include a richer knowledge base, a dedicated effort to social justice, and higher student expectations. On this basis, this dissertation seeks to aid diversity by examining the persistence strategies utilized by African American teachers—particularly those working in predominantly White rural school districts in Central Appalachia. Specifically, the researcher sought to detail the satisfactory and unsuccessful policies and measures arising from African American teachers' efforts at co-cultural adaptation.

There are several possible reasons for these effects: First of all, African American teachers possess cultural capital that is not easily emulated by other ethnic groups, which may allow them to encourage minority students to achieve equality. Furthermore, African American teachers have historically believed in and promoted inclusion so as to minimize the marginalization of minority students. African American teachers can serve as role models for young African American children, fostering their positive identity and orientation toward school and self. Additionally, there is evidence that racially heterogeneous groups produce higher-quality ideas in brainstorming exercises than homogeneous groups (McLeod & Lobel, 1992). In short, a diverse teaching force permits the recognition and inclusion of diverse cultures and learning styles within the classroom. In this way, the make-up of the faculty can more closely resembles the nation's demographics (Bireda & Chait, 2011; Holcomb-McCoy & Bradley, 2003; Riley, 1998).

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In order to reap these benefits, predominantly White rural school districts need first to retain their African American teachers, which can significantly depend on a given school's culture of support. The literature underscores a link between teacher retention and administrative support (Borman & Dowling, 2008), with lower administrative support and a lack of influence over decision-making increasing teacher attrition (Ingersoll, 1999, 2001). However, there is still a dearth of literature about the relationship between African American teachers' persistence and co-cultural adaptation. Thus, the researcher sought to explore the factors behind African American teacher adaptation. In particular, this dissertation applies the co-cultural theory to explain how African American teachers adapt to working in predominantly White rural school districts in Central Appalachia.

The goals of this dissertation include 1) exploring African American teachers' observations to derive factors that relate to persistence, 2) identifying those policies and practices that help or hinder these teachers' persistence, and 3) improving the overall understanding of co-cultural adaptation in predominantly White rural public schools in Central Appalachia.

Significance of the Study

The early literature on African American teachers focused on Black teachers' experiences, curriculum development, and instructional practices in public school classrooms, both pre- and post-desegregation (Foster, 1990, 1993; Irvine & Irvine, 1983; King, 1993). Milner (2012), in contrast, described African American teachers' perceptions and instructional practices in a positive view, discussing how:

- African American teachers are role models for students;

- African American teachers develop and explicitly enact and explain their high expectation for students;

- African American teachers take on the role of 'other parents' for their students; and

- African American teachers empathize with, not pity, their students. (p. 31)

However, the researcher is unacquainted with any studies utilizing a co-cultural approach to understand African American teachers' persistence and co-cultural adaptation in predominantly White rural school districts in Central Appalachia. There are a plethora of studies on rural teacher employment in other countries (Collins, 1990), but the literature regarding rural education in the U.S. is relatively new. This study aims to contribute to this burgeoning field and ultimately assist African American teachers in creating a co-cultural environment, developing strategies to promote teacher adjustment, and bolstering the available support systems.

Persisting at predominantly White rural schools (PWRSs) is not just contingent on how well African American teachers perform in the classroom, but also on how they maneuver and adapt themselves to an environment primarily dominated by Whites. In order to delineate some salient aspects of co-cultural adaptation, this dissertation explores those strategies used by African American teachers and predominantly White rural school districts to integrate African Americans into the educational environment.

First, it is worth reiterating that the number of African American teachers is disproportionally low compared to their White counterparts (Boser, 2014; Maxwell, 2014; NCES, 2010, 2012), and this is particularly true in rural areas. When one considers

the racial composition of K-12 public schools, it should be troublesome that many students of all ethnic groups will not encounter an African American teacher in their entire K-12 experience (Ladson-Billings, 2009; NCES, 2010). In those rare scenarios where African Americans and other minority teachers work in rural school districts, research has found that cultural conflicts can occur (Alonzo-Osborne, 2008; Castaneda, Kambutu, & Rios, 2006; Jay, 2009; Kelly, 2007; Marx, 2006.

This literature review provides background information on some of the issues that challenge African Americans in predominantly White settings. Of course, the literature about African American teachers' experiences in rural areas is scarce. Most of this literature has focused on how to recruit and hire quality teachers in rural school districts or the degree of teacher satisfaction in rural areas. While researchers have presented evidence of African American teachers' feeling of isolation, they have not focused exclusively on African American teachers' persistence. Furthermore, prior intercultural communication studies have not specified the factors that influence communication outcomes and ultimately impact teacher perseverance. To bolster this discussion, the researcher explored the effects of co-cultural adaptation on African American teacher persistence. By promoting persistence, this literature review recognizes the need to include marginalized groups in intercultural communication research.

This dissertation studies intercultural communication via the co-cultural theory, which encompasses the various techniques that co-cultural group members utilize in everyday communication with dominant and in-group members, as well as the methods used to navigate oppressive societal structures (Camara & Orbe, 2010; Orbe & Harris, 2008; Orbe & Roberts, 2012). Furthermore, co-cultural theory has been employed to

understand Non-Dominant Group Members (NDGMs') experiences and communicative phenomena on college campuses and university settings (Burnett et al., 2009; Orbe, & Roberts, 2012), in the workplace (Cohen & Avanzino, 2010), and across various racial and ethnic groups (Bridgewater & Buzzanell, 2010; Orbe & Roberts, 2012; Ramirez-Sanchez, 2008). With the support of previous research, co-cultural theory highlights the essential characteristics of communication in various settings.

Research Questions & Methodology

In pursuit of this effort, this study will address the following two research questions:

1. What are African American teachers' perceptions regarding adaptation at predominantly White rural schools in Central Appalachia?

2. What are African American teachers' perceptions of district support systems in regards to adaptation at predominantly White rural schools in Central Appalachia?

To answer these questions, the researcher applied an inductive, theory-building, descriptive, multiple-case study. According to Berg (1998), case study methods encompass systematically collecting adequate data about a particular person, social setting, event, or group to permit the investigator to understand how it maneuvers or functions. The researcher determined that this approach was preferable to the survey method, which diminishes subjects or special experiences and responses to numerical data. According to Denzin and Lincoln (1994), this type of study concentrates on the socially constructed nature of reality, the intimate relationships between the researcher

and what is being investigated, and the situational constraints that shape inquiry, which are more useful for understanding a nuanced phenomenon like co-cultural perseverance.

Study Limitations

Due to its qualitative nature, this investigation cannot broadly generalize its findings regarding African American teachers at predominantly White rural school districts. Rather it centers explicitly on African American teachers in rural Central Appalachia. Likewise, the main focus of this dissertation is on African American adaptation as experienced by individual participants; it also provides information on the development of co-cultural relationships and how they can impact persistence at the district/school level. Finally, this investigation reveals its participants' attitudes and perceptions of the role the district/school plays in promoting co-cultural relations.

Definition of Key Terms

This study is grounded in the following terms, which rely on Gause's (2011) descriptions:

Acculturation: The exchange of cultural paradigms from the continuous first-hand contact with different cultural groups, which results in the original patterns of either or both groups being altered even as the groups remain distinct. (p. 21)

Collaborative activism: Different groups collectively and systemically working together to transform their communities, without regard to their differences, values, and beliefs. These individuals view this work as counter-hegemonic and anti-oppressive. They seek to eliminate barriers and biases. (p. 8)

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Contractual benevolence: Members of the dominant (White) culture extending an invitation, though limited, to a person of color to participate in various settings, including employment. Invitees must adhere to all "codes" and not question or critique inequities. For example, they are invited to dinner, but they must behave at the dinner table; however, they have no idea what is inappropriate behavior. (p. 8)

Culture: a) socially constructed and lived experiences translated from individuals' meaning-making—that is, how individuals view themselves as participants in the world around them and how they make sense of their daily interactions; b) transmitted systems of symbols and patterns embodied with meaning. (p. 9)

Civil rights: The rights of personal liberty guaranteed by the 13th and 14th Amendments to the U. S. Constitution and by acts of Congress. Civil rights also refers to a movement by African Americans calling for the desegregation of schools, bussing companies, restaurants, hotels, and other public venues. This movement involved marches, sit-ins, protests, and other forms of resistance. (p. 21)

Cultural capital: The possession and/or access to endowments or resources that provide an advantage to individuals, groups, and families to succeed in American culture. Wealth, language competence, academic competence, and the ability to navigate institutional structures and systems are considered elements of cultural capital. (p. 22)

Culturally responsive teaching: A pedagogy that views and affirms the cultures, values, and experiences of students as strengths and reflects the students' "lived" experiences in the teaching process. (p. 22)

Democracy: An enacted daily practice through which people interact and relate through personal, social, and professional routines, with a primary focus on continuing the betterment of our humanity. (p. 9)

Diverse: Exhibiting characteristics that set individuals apart from one another. (p. 22)

Diversity: Representations of real or perceived identity constructs based on religion, ideology, political belief, sex, creed, color, national origin, age, socioeconomic status, gender identity/expression, physical characteristics, sexual orientation/identity, able-ness, parental status, (dis)ability, weight, cultural capital, height, and/or race. (p. 9)

Diversity witness: Those who find themselves assigned to diversity committees or projects, appointed to other committees as the minority representative, or asked to facilitate diversity discussions. Whether "qualified" or not, they end up speaking to the historical evolution of race relations in the United States. (p. 60)

Empowering school culture/social structure: Restructuring the culture and organization of the school so students from diverse racial, ethnic, socioeconomic, and language groups partake in the teaching process. (p. 22)

Equity pedagogy: A technique in which teachers modify their teaching in ways that will facilitate the academic achievement of students from diverse racial, cultural, socioeconomic, and language groups. This includes using a variety of

teaching styles and approaches that are consistent with the range of learning

styles within various cultural and ethnic groups. (p. 22)

Enculturation: Acquiring the characteristics of a given culture, becoming

competent in its rituals, customs, language, "ways of being," learning, and

behaving. This process usually begins at birth and is often done for assimilation

purposes. (p. 22)

Equality: A state of being in which one cultural group is not inferior or superior

to another and all groups have access to the same societal benefits regardless of

group membership. (p. 22)

Hegemony: The cultural, political, ideological, and economic power exerted over

a group or groups of individuals by a dominant group regardless of consent. (p.

9)

Inclusivity: A system designed to quantify and qualify the acts and processes of

affirming identity difference of individuals and groups by eliminating barriers.

(p. 23)

Inclusive education: A radical, democratic, social-justice-oriented approach to

creating, developing, and sustaining inquiry-based, bias-free learning

communities; the development of engaging, affirming, and dynamic learning

communities that empower all members regardless of identity differences to

achieve and excel by eliminating all barriers to inclusive policies and practices.

(p. 10)

Knowledge construction process: A technique in which teachers utilize

activities that help students to understand, investigate, and determine how the

implicit cultural assumptions, frames of references, perspectives, and biases of

researchers and textbook writers influence the ways in which knowledge is

constructed. (p. 23)

Multicultural education: An educational framework that addresses schools'

cultural diversity and equity by incorporating different cultural group

memberships, emphasizing the interactions of race/ethnicity, gender, social class,

and ability in students' lives. (p. 24)

Multiculturalism: The affirmation of multiple ethnic cultures, religious beliefs,

and group identities without specifically promoting the values of one group over

the other. (p. 24)

Marginalization: Being placed into a position that is neither outside of the

dominant culture nor accepted by most people. (p. 10)

Prejudice reduction: A technique in which teachers facilitate activities and

exercises through which students develop positive and democratic racial

attitudes. It also helps students to understand how ethnic identity is influenced by

the context of schooling and the attitudes and beliefs of dominant social groups.

(p. 24)

Race: A socially constructed category of human difference and division.

Although the boundaries and meanings have changed over time, the category of

race remains a mechanism for the unequal distribution and allocation of social

goods and status. (p. 52)

Social integration: Minority groups, particularly ethnic minorities, giving up their cultural identities to assimilate into the dominant culture to gain access to the rights, privileges, and resources of that culture. (p. 24)

Tokenism: Policies, behaviors, and practices of the limited inclusion of members who are not the majority, creating a false appearance of inclusive practices and a diverse community. Examples: Purposely including a Black character in an all-White cast; including women in a traditionally male environment; allowing space for the limited use of a language other than English; purposely including one person from another ethnic background or ability group in the major context. (p. 10)

Veils of oppression: A social distancing of those impoverished and the maintenance of cultural identities concerning social status. (p. 53)

White establishment: The understood status quo of being a White, Protestant, male heterosexual with the power-base to rule, dominate, and control all economic, social, political, and cultural resources. (p. 10)

White privilege: A conceptualization of racial inequities based on critical race theory that speaks to the advantages White people accrue from a society based on their "Whiteness," juxtaposed with the disadvantages that people of color experience. (p. 10)

Summary

The research on African American teachers in predominantly White rural areas is apparently scarce (Alonzo-Osborne, 2008; Holloway, 2014; Lewis, 2013; Reeves-

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Weaver, 2010). Researchers of diversity in primary and secondary school systems have largely focused on the experiences of racial minorities and the challenges of group cohesion among teachers (Epstein, 2005; Harvey & Harvey, 2005). They have uncovered several factors that contribute to the shortage of African-American educators, especially in rural areas, the most common ones being: inadequate preparation for college (Irvine, 1988); standardized testing for teachers (Leaonard & Martin, 2013); the lure of more lucrative careers (Madkins, 2011); feelings of isolation and neglect, and a lack of real support systems (Mullinix, 2002). The literature also highlights a need for more culturally and linguistically diverse teachers in primary and secondary school classrooms (Baber, 1995; Boutte, 1999; Nieto, 2003; Sleeter, 2001; Zeichner & Liston, 2014; Ball & Forzani, 2011).

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

There are a plethora of studies on rural teacher employment in other countries (Collins, 1990), but the literature regarding rural education in the U.S. is relatively new and limited. Consequently, there is still a dearth of knowledge about the relationship between African American teachers' persistence and co-cultural adaptation. Most of this literature has focused on how to recruit and hire quality teachers in rural school districts, the degree of teacher satisfaction in rural areas, Black teachers' experiences, curriculum development, and instructional practices in public classrooms, both pre and post-desegregation (Foster, 1990, 1993; Irvine & Irvine, 1983; King, 1993). While researchers have presented evidence of African American teachers' feeling of isolation, they have not focused exclusively on African American teachers' persistence. Furthermore, prior intercultural communication studies have not specified the factors that influence communication outcomes and ultimately impact teacher perseverance.

Given this background, this literature review will provide an in-depth look at African American teachers from the perspective of persisting and adapting in a predominantly White rural school district. The review has been segmented into five parts: The first section examines past research to establish the historical context of African Americans in primary and secondary education in America. The second section is an analysis of the profoundly unified affiliation between rural communities and rural schools. This includes the cyclical relationship between curriculum, traditions, and cultures in rural America. The third section discusses African-American teachers' recruitment, retention, and attrition. The fourth section reviews several studies to

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illustrate the impact of organizational culture and intergroup differences on African-American teachers' persistence in predominantly White schools. The chapter concludes with a description of the study's theoretical framework: muted group theory, standpoint theory, and co-cultural theory. Each is explored as a foundation for the cultural interaction, communication, and relationship between dominant and non-dominant group members.

Historical Context of African-American Teachers in America

The public education system in America was segregated based on race for the overwhelming majority of America's history. Furthermore, the mere threat of desegregated schools was almost always met with fierce local opposition. Before the Civil War, African Americans received little to no formal education. In the South, many states had laws prohibiting teaching African Americans to read or write, while in the North, some free African Americans were able to read. Shortly after the Civil War, a coalition of freedmen and White Republicans in the South passed laws establishing public education. Consequently, 30,000 African American teachers were trained and put to work in the South, and the literacy rate significantly increased in little more than a generation.

In 1837, the Quakers founded Cheyney College, the first educational institute for African Americans in Pennsylvania (Brown & Davis, 2001). Cheyney College began as an elementary and high school for runaway slaves. There were few institutes to educate Blacks in the North and the very notion was illegal in the antebellum South. Disenfranchised Blacks would not find freedom from oppression or the same access to

education as their White counterparts until many years later when initiatives such as the Morrill Land Grant Acts and Affirmative Action policies took effect (Harper, Patton, & Wooden, 2009). By the time of *Plessy v. Ferguson*, African-American educators represented the overwhelming majority of working Black professionals due to limited opportunities in other careers.

Furthermore, as far back as the 1860s, Black educators have had an agenda on the tradition and quality of sound education for Black children (Foster, 1993; Pollard, 1997; Walker, 2000, 2001). With help from their communities, Black educators built and operated schools, solicited funds and became advocates for the education of Black children (Tilman, 2004). During segregation, African American teachers in the south were trained professionals and did not allow themselves to be victims of their environment—despite working in miserable, prejudicial, and discriminatory positions (Walker, 2001). Black teachers' key purpose was to dispel the ignorance, immorality, and misconception that many believed slavery had bestowed to the Black community (Fairclough, 2000). Therefore, the teachers in the Black community were a natural source of leadership and the schools played a vital role in uplifting the community.

Likewise, the respect given to Black teachers reflected the high value that Blacks placed on education and as a result they enjoyed the prestige and wielded influence. Early African American educators "tilled the soil and planted the seeds of what eventually became a full-blown revolt against segregation and discrimination: the civil rights movement"(Fairclough, 2000, pp. 67-68). Subsequently, the shortage of African American teachers can be traced back to the historical *Brown v. Board of Education* Supreme Court decision in 1954 (Karpinski, 2006; Patterson & Freehling, 2001). In fact,

approximately 50% of all Black professionals in the United States were teachers until 1954, when the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision was made (Madkins, 2011). Shortly after the court's decision, approximately 40,000 African American teachers were terminated from their professions in 17 Southern states and those that border them (Toppo, 2004). The effects of school desegregation are now more publicly apparent: Over the past 65 years, the percentage of African American educators in the U.S. has declined while public school populations have become more diverse (Lash & Ratcliffe, 2014). Due to the aftermath of this decision, African American teachers now comprise only 6.4 percent of the teaching force (Goldring, Gray, & Bitterman, 2013).

Rural Community and Rural School Districts

The rural community and its school are deeply interconnected (Theobald & Nachtigal, 1995), to the point that Miller (1993) described these schools as community centers. Due to their dwindling populations, many rural communities are preserving their heritage through school curriculum that revisits the traditions and cultures of old (Fontaine, 1998). Obviously, this entails complications in rural communities with some ethnic diversity, which may become conflicted over ethnic or socioeconomic lines. For instance, when a high school principal in an Appalachian town attempted reform measures, he ran into serious opposition (Glascock, 1998): The conservatives, Members of the Ku Klux Klan, and militia believed many of his policies were elitist and voted not to renew his contract. This aligns with Little and Miller's (2003) finding that the values held by rural stakeholders impact personnel practices within school districts—and the

stakeholders with political power in such settings are sports and organization boosters, parent-teacher associations, and civic groups (Farmer, 2009).

Ultimately, the community's ideology has a direct impact on schools' ability to educate their students. Case in point: Torres and Scheurich (2007) performed a case study on a school district characterized by its homogeneity of race and religion, finding that the larger community was driven by a belief in White supremacy. After a racially motivated attack, the school district wanted to send a message to the community that it was time for a change by hiring an African American principal to lead the predominantly White Odden High School and its predominantly White staff. When the principal, on the recommendation of his staff, enforced a tardiness policy, he was met with serious opposition from the wealthy White stakeholders. Furthermore, one constituent believed that diversifying was detrimental to Odden's identity as a community.

To challenge this homogeneity of race and religion, rural school districts must embrace an empowering school culture. According to Gause (2011), an empowering school culture is a result of restructuring the school's culture and organization so that students from diverse racial, ethnic, socioeconomic, and language groups benefit from the teaching process (p. 22). To achieve this, Boykin, Tyler, Watkins-Lewis, and Kizzie (2006) and Lynn (2006) have suggested that public school systems must break from their Eurocentric, middle-class value system to offer an excellent education for minority and low-income students. However, this is easier said than done, as the hegemonic influence pervades both the structure and curriculum of the school. As Loewen (2008) argues, popular history books create the impression that Europe's control of the world is based on its supremacy. The combination of monocultural values, instructional practices, and

curriculum development constitute a powerful form of racism in America's public school system. To counter this racism, schools need to invite different perspectives into their classrooms (Kohli, 2009). African American teachers are particularly "essential to reforming education for diverse student populations" (Castaneda et al., 2006, p. 13).

Creating empowered schools begins with recognizing and addressing the hostility faced by minority students and faculty. For instance, Lynn and Dixson (2013) noted that African American students, their families, and communities are often the target of racism and hostility from their schools. Conversely, the research found that African American female teachers in these schools take on an adversary role for their students, as well as their families and communities. However, some African American teachers find themselves at odds with their White colleagues and administrators when supporting African American students they feel have been discriminated against (Dickar, 2008). Similarly, an African American male participant in Lynn and Jennings' (2009) study expressed dissatisfaction with a system that was failing its students, especially African American males. Likewise, in a study on racial tokenism at a predominantly White school, African American participants reported that they endured an uncomfortable working climate for the sake of their students (Kelly, 2007). One participant in Kelly's (2007) study embodied the Civil Rights ideology, which is based on the belief that racist attitudes and societal barriers can be overcome through intergroup interaction (Kelly, 2007). In this case, the teacher noted that he would remain even though he experienced racism in his school because he and the African American students needed each other.

These issues extend beyond public school and loom over minorities in college environments. Spafford, Nygaard, and Boyd (2006) studied racial minorities among

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Canadian college professors and likened them to their American elementary and secondary school counterparts in terms of their isolation, the level of acceptance of White faculty, minimum collegial support, and being utilized as mentors without ever receiving mentoring themselves. Furthermore, participants felt their visibility did not allow them to challenge the status quo. Spafford et al. (2006) termed this reluctance to question a "don't rock the boat strategy" (p. 16). The faculty members still viewed themselves as possible change agents, despite having to assimilate somewhat or "risk career advancement and personal well-being" (Spafford et al., 2006, p. 17).

African American Views that Affect Recruitment, Retention, and Attrition

Which factors affect the recruitment, retention, and attrition of African American teachers? Overall, research asserts that African Americans decide to enter teaching for deliberate and thoughtful reasons. For instance, Gist and White (2011) discovered that many African Americans who have chosen to teach in recent years were older and career changers. Along the same line, Chin and Young (2007) reported that African Americans become teachers out of a desire to work with young people, give back to their communities (Dixson & Dingus, 2008), and follow their family tradition of becoming a teacher. Correspondingly, Villegas and Irvine (2010) identified five perceptions commonly held by African American teachers: they hold higher expectations, they use culturally relevant teaching, they develop caring and trusting relationships, they confront issues of racism in education, and they serve as advocates and cultural brokers for students. On this point, research suggests that African American teachers' humanistic commitments are often omitted by general studies on teacher retention (Lewis, 2006;

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Kottkamp, Cohn, McCloskey, & Provenzo, 1987; Su, 1997; Villegas & Irvine, 2009).

The benefits of this humanistic commitment are evident: For example, Irvine and

Fenwick (2011) found that the presence of African American teachers in schools systems

results in fewer African American students being placed in special education classes,

suspended or expelled, and more African American students being placed in gifted and

talented programs, and ultimately graduating from high school.

More recent research substantiates this notion that African American teachers

have a positive influence on minority learning (Dee, 2004, 2005; Hanushek, Kain, &

Rivkin, 2004; King, 1993; Quiocho & Rios, 2000). Additionally, McLeod and Lobel

(1992) found that racially heterogeneous groups produced higher quality ideas in a

brainstorming exercise than did homogeneous groups. Similarly, Frankenberg (2008)

noted that a diverse faculty could lead to a richer knowledge base, a committed effort

toward social justice, and higher student expectations. As minority populations

significantly increase in size, there is a mounting need to build a culturally and

linguistically diverse faculty that more closely resembles the nation's demographics

(Baber, 1995; Boutte, 1999; Holcomb-McCoy & Bradley, 2003; Nieto, 2003; Sleeter,

2001).

To underscore the need for diversity, it is worth reiterating that the number of

African American teachers is disproportionally low compared to their White counterparts

(Boser, 2014; NCES, 2010, 2012; Maxwell, 2014). Many factors contribute to the

shortage of African American educators in the K-12 Public Schools Districts, especially

in rural areas. The most prevailing ones appear to be the attrition rate of new teachers, a

decline in college students majoring in education, the availability of more lucrative

careers, the feelings of isolation and neglect, and the lack of a real support system (Mullinix, 2002). Other researchers have noted the challenges of group cohesion among teachers (Epstein, 2005; Harvey & Harvey, 2005). The end result is that African American teachers continue to suffer the highest rate of attrition among new teachers. For example, Connor (2009) revealed that the African American teacher turnover rate was 20.7%, compared to 16.4% among their White counterparts. Moreover, 36.0% of the 283,050 African American teachers were in job transition during the same period, and over 56,000 departed at the end of the year, which greatly exceeded the less than 45,000 who began the school year.

Compared to White teachers, African American teachers are more likely to work and persevere in urban schools that serve high proportions of students from low-income and racially and culturally nondominant communities (Achinstein et al., 2010). This explains Brown and Butty's (1999) finding that Whites represent a significant amount of the teacher population 98% in rural areas (as cited in Alonzo-Osborne, 2008). The magnitude of this issue is significant, since approximately 33% of schools in the U.S. are located in rural areas (Strange, Johnson, Showalter, & Klein, 2012), which already struggle with recruiting and retaining teachers, much less African American ones (Achinstein et al., 2010; NCES, 2010). As a matter of perspective, this means that there is not a single African American teacher in 40% of public schools (Bireda & Chait, 2011).

In fairness, policymakers and educators alike have spent the last two decades devising initiatives aimed at addressing this issue: Since the early 1990s, 36 states have adopted policies designed to recruit more African American teachers (Villegas & Davis, 2008). To substantiate these efforts, Villegas and Irvine (2010) identified three major

arguments for diversifying the teaching force: (1) African American teachers serve as role models for all students; (2) the potential of African American teachers to improve the academic outcomes and school experiences of students of color; and (3) the workforce rationale. However, these arguments have yet to translate into social movement; as such, African American teachers remain a disproportionally small group in the profession, even relative to their portion of the general population. Case in point: The researcher found only one African American currently teaching during the 2016-2017 school years in this study's service area, and approximately 20 in the whole Eastern Kentucky Coal Field (EKCF) region.

Boosting the hiring of African American teachers begins with understanding why they might be drawn to the profession. On this point, Lewis (2006) surveyed 147 new African American male teachers about their views on factors that affect recruitment and retention. Although "job security" was the most important retention factor, it was closely followed by "contributions to humanity." Furthermore, it seems that African American teachers perceive intrinsic rewards as more critical to their retention than their White counterparts (Kottkamp et al., 1987). The focus on humanistic commitments was also evident in Su's (1997) case study of 56 minority teacher candidates. Su reported significant differences among minority faculty and their White peers, with the former wanting to make a difference in the lives of low-income minority students. Minority teachers also focused on reducing social and structural inequalities (Su, 1997). Likewise, Villegas and Irvine (2009) reported that, for many African American teachers joining the profession, their primary motivation was to improve the educational opportunities and lives of minority students. In an ethnographic study by Dixson and Dingus (2008), five

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Black female teachers recognized teaching as "community work" that allowed them to remain connected to African American communities and students. A different examination of African American women's decisions to teach found that mothers, female community members, and female teachers significantly influenced their desire to teach (McCray, Sindelar, Kilgore, & Neal, 2002).

<div align="center">**School Climate and Intergroup Differences**</div>

Studies by Mabokela and Madsen (2003) and Madsen and Mabokela (2000) examined the impact of organizational culture and intergroup disagreements over African American teachers' persistence in predominantly White suburban schools. Not only did African American teachers believe they had to prove themselves constantly and were judged based on their color and notability (Madsen & Mabokela, 2000), but they reported being stereotyped as less intelligent, less hard working, and even incompetent (Mabokela & Madsen, 2003). In fact, participants in Madsen and Mabokela's (2000) study indicated that administrators were not prepared to handle the issues that accompanied hiring African American teachers in predominantly White schools. Nonetheless, Madsen and Mabokela (2000) and Gordon (2007) believe that schools administrators can be pioneers in preparing the school and community to embrace faculty of color.

Barnes-Johnson (2008), Brown and Brown (2010), and Epstein (2005) found that African American teachers' struggles to challenge elements of racism and racial insensitivity in teaching could lead to feelings of isolation. This is compounded by the fact that African American faculty are not privy to informal networks and information sources, which leads to their work and ideas being frequently diminished (Fries-Britt &

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Kelly, 2005). Consequently, Black faculty show significantly less trust in schools to manage racial conflict, as well as a lower sense of school membership, greater racial stress, and more racial socialization that their White counterparts. African American teachers are often in charge of diversity initiatives without backing from lead administrators (Hall & Stevenson, 2007; Katz, 2011). As a result, African American teachers often encounter negative stereotypes such as:

- African American teachers are too strict and provide too much structure in the classroom learning environment.

- African American teachers 'yell' at students and 'damage' their self-esteem.

- African American teachers do not provide for enough creativity in the classroom.

- African American teachers become too personal with their students and cross professional-personal lines. (Milner, 2012, p. 28)

As an example, Delpit (1995) revealed a response from a White teacher about the pedagogical approach of an African American teacher:

It's a shame, but she (that Black teacher upstairs) seem to be so authoritarian, so focused on skills and so teacher directed. Those poor kids never seem to be allowed to express their creativity. (And she even yells at them.) (p. 33)

To the contrary, a later story about Maggie Washington (1993) demonstrates the value of an administrator's support in a predominantly White school. Several White teachers were troubled about having to work with an African American teacher and complained to the principal. The principal told anyone who had a problem working with Ms. Washington to leave their transfer request on his desk, and some did (Washington,

1993). More recently, the African American teachers in Alonzo-Osborne's (2008) study felt a sense of positive support from their administrators. Likewise, in the studies by Castaneda et al. (2006) and Ortiz and Jani (2010), one participant in each reported a positive attitude toward their administrators.

<div align="center">

Theoretical Framework

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The ultimate goal of this dissertation is to describe the characteristics that the study's participants used to adapt to a co-cultural environment. However, there are various lenses through which to view these lived experiences. Thus, this research employed three theoretical frameworks as interpretive lenses: Ardeners' (1978) muted group theory, Smith's (1987) standpoint theory, and Orbe's (1998) co-cultural theoretical model. Together, they offer breadth and variety regarding the communication strategies that traditionally marginalized groups use to adapt and persevere in the dominant societal structure.

Muted Group Theory

The first theory directing this investigation was initially derived from the field of anthropology, but received later contributions from communication scholars. Anthropologists Shirley and Edwin Ardener originally developed muted group theory after Edwin Ardener found that anthropologists conducting ethnographic research often understood populations solely from the perspective of the male inhabitants (Littlejohn, 1996). As a result, he affirmed that a considerable amount of the data collected in his field was based on information given solely by half of the population (E. Ardener, 1971). Based on his studies, he maintained that males construct the meanings for a group and

mute female voices (Littlejohn, 1996). In this way, E. Ardener (1971) established a path between anthropology and communication studies.

Shirley Ardener, his wife, expanded on this notion when she started to observe the silencing of women in public communication (S. Ardener, 1975, 1993). Through her work, she concluded that because men dominate societies, they dictate public communication (S. Ardener, 1975, 1993). When communication generated by men succeed, women are often challenged communicating publicly. Consequently, S. Ardener suggested that women are more restrained than men in their public communication (Littlejohn, 1996). Subsequently, when male and female meanings conflict, men dominate due to the power they hold in society (S. Ardener, 1975, 1993).

Building on S. Ardener's work, Kramarae (1981) employed Muted Group Theory to explore the marginalized experience of women in American society. According to Kramarae (1981), muted group theory is centered on the notion that societies have social hierarchies that shape their communication system. Over time, these communication arrangements are replicated in the discourse of both the dominant group members (DGMs) and non-dominate group members (NDGMs). In this way, the dominant group comes to control the communication systems (Castle Bell, Hopson, Weathers, & Ross, 2015), leaving NDGMs deprived of equal representation (Hogg & Reid, 2006; Meares, 2003). Applying muted group theory to women's communication, Kramarae (1981) posited seven hypotheses:

- Women express themselves with more difficulty than do men.
- Women understand men's meanings more easily than men understand women's.

- Women have created their means of expression outside the dominant male system.

- Women tend to express more dissatisfaction about communication than do men.

- Women often make efforts to change the dominant rules of disclosure to get around or resist conventional rules.

- Women are traditionally less likely to coin new words that become popular in society as a whole and feel excluded from contributing to language.

- Women find different things humorous than do men.

Later, Kramarae and Treichler (1992) published a feminist glossary that assembled hundreds of words and expressions that stemmed from the female experience. Some notable examples include herstory (i.e., the human experience as told by women about women) and Ms. (defined as a form of address for females who want to be recognized as individuals rather than through their relationship with a man).

For muted groups to "fit in," they must change the way they act and talk, which results in a loss of power (Ardener, 1978; Henley & Kramarae, 2001; Orbe, 1998). Thus, muted group theory mainly deals with the nonexistence of voice and confrontations of silencing (Kramarae, 1981). According to Gramsci (1971), the silencing of groups and the construction of power is facilitated through coercion and hegemony. Injustice is a direct result of the dominant group's concerns being attended to while the concerns of the minority group are muted (Orbe, 1998). Moreover, because asymmetrical power relations exist in all societies, there is always a muted group framework in place (Meares, 2003; Meares et al., 2004).

These studies have helped distill muted group theory into four main principles. First, members of diverse groups have different experiences and, as a result, different perceptions of the world. Second, each society develops a hierarchy wherein some groups are positioned over others (Ardener, 1975, 1978; Kramarae, 1981). Communication facilitates this hierarchy, allowing the dominant group to determine the governing discourse for that society and reinforce their worldview while muting or silencing the minority group (Ardener & Ardener, 1975; E. Ardener, 1978; S. Ardener, 1978; Gal, 1989). Third, the subordinate group(s) must use the communication style of the dominant group to get their concerns acknowledged in the public realm (Meares, 2003). Finally, resistance and change are possible. By illuminating how marginalized groups are muted, muted group theory provides opportunities to understand subordinate voices and address their underlying concerns to create a more equitable society (Houston & Kramarae, 1991). Even as it substantiates the vast swath of experiences among groups, the theory attempts to reveal commonalities among subordinate group members.

Later, Orbe (1994) translated discussions about muted group theory from gender to ethnicity. For example, he examined the communication of African American males as a muted group since their worldview is not part of the dominant norm in American society. Orbe (1994) recognized four themes when focusing on their communication with European Americans (i.e., learning how to connect with them, keeping a distance from them, testing their sincerity, and playing a role in interactions with them) and two themes when focusing on communication with other African Americans (the importance of other African Americans and the responsibility to help each other). From these conclusions,

Orbe (1994) developed an understanding of how subordinate group members could confront, challenge, or confirm their lack of voice.

Muted group theory serves as the foundation for the co-cultural theoretical model, which guides the present study. First, muted group theory recognizes that societies are structured hierarchically, designating some groups as dominant and others as marginal (Wood, 2005). Second, the lives and knowledge of marginalized groups are valued by the muted group theorist. Third, the power of naming is indispensable to understanding power relations between groups: The theory proclaims that those who get to name the world do so from their viewpoints, thereby suppressing other perceptions. Also, having one's voice muted directly ties one to a subordinate group such as women, gays, and other minorities. If marginalized groups wish to communicate, they must be socially integrated and enculturated by the dominant group. Fourth, muted group theory has two purposes: (1) to call attention to the muting of marginalized groups' voices and experiences; and (2) to reform language so that marginalized groups' experiences and perspectives are fully represented (Wood, 2005).

Standpoint Theory

While Wood and Houston are most often recognized as the founders of Standpoint Theory, many scholars contributed to its development (Harding, 1987, 1991, 2004, 2008; Hartsock, 1983; Smith, 1987) and applied it to the lived experiences of various disenfranchised populations (Smith, 1987). This theory requires one to explore the life experiences of the marginalized group through its members' vantage points, which "will be relevant to the kinds of experiences one has because of how [they affect] one's social, political, and material circumstances" (Intemann, 2010, p. 785). In other

words, standpoint theory highlights the social conditions that a group may encounter in power relationships, while also emphasizing the shared common experiences that underlie the group's way of knowing. In short, standpoint theory investigates knowledge that is produced by historically shared, group-based experiences.

To acquire a standpoint, one must be critically aware of the different lived experiences that occur as a direct result of one's societal positioning and communicative interactions with cultural group members (Bell et al., 2015). According to Harding (2004), standpoints "are distinctive insights about how hierarchal social structures work" (p. 31). As a result, standpoint is formed by one's social location (Wood, 2009) but does not automatically arise from inhabiting a particular social location (Intemann, 2010). Hartsock (1983) noted that standpoint theory is rooted in the Marxian analysis of the conditions of the working class. As Swigonski (1994) affirmed: "Standpoint theory begins with the idea that the less powerful members of society experience a different reality as a consequence of their oppression" (p. 390). People from marginalized groups must be focused on not only their viewpoint, but that of the dominant culture as well. Consequently, marginalized groups have the potential for a comprehensive worldview, which can be utilized as a survival skill.

There are three essential tenets of standpoint theory. First, people view society from their viewpoint. In short, for both DGMs and NDGMs, the societal position serves to define their standpoint(s) or their critically unique way(s) of viewing the world (Droogsma, 2007; Intemann, 2010; Wood, 1994). Second, people have multiple identities: They belong to more than one cultural group and have dialogues with both in-group and out-group members (Hecht, Jackson, & Ribbeau, 2002). For instance, an

African American gay man may identify as both an African American man and gay. Third, standpoint theory postulates that there is an issue of power at play in the social world (Hopson, 2011; Orbe & Camara, 2010; Wood, 1992, 2009). DGMs are the privileged who hold power and oppress the NDGMs or their standpoints. As such, power impacts everyday intercultural communication between NDGMs and DGMs.

Sociologist Dorothy Smith was particularly influential in this domain, having helped establish women's standpoint theory with such works as *The Everyday World as Problematic* (1987) and *The Conceptual Practices of Power* (1990). Smith (1987) asserts that "women's standpoint as I have developed it is not at all the same thing [as a feminist standpoint] and has nothing to do with justifying feminist knowledge. Rather, I am arguing that women's standpoint returns us to the actualities of our lives as we live them in the local particularities of the every day/every night's world" (p. 393). As a result, Smith's (1987) standpoint theory emphasizes and analyzes women's daily routines and habits as sites of experiential knowledge. In other words, she viewed standpoint theory as an investigation of the complex relationship between knowledge and governing power, grounded by the gender stories of females' lived experiences.

Smith's (1987) work on standpoint theory would later inform Orbe's co-cultural theoretical models (discussed later). In broad terms, standpoint theory guides co-cultural theory with the following tenets:

- Life experiences structures one's understanding of life;
- Members of the most and least powerful groups will potentially have opposed understandings of the world;
- The less powerful group's standpoint has to be developed through education;

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- The perspective of those outside the dominant group develops from their daily activities;

- The appropriate perspective for research activities is everyday life;

- Members of marginalized groups are valuable "strangers" to the social order;

- Many others are not just outsiders, but also "outsiders within'.

Co-Cultural Theory

Orbe (1994) provided the blueprint for 'co-cultural theory', which theoretically explores the communicative behaviors of people from marginalized backgrounds. The co-cultural theory (CCT) emerged out of a phenomenological methodology, and particularly from qualitative interviews and analysis (Orbe, 1996). Unsurprisingly, the following co-cultural studies mostly utilized qualitative approaches: Urban and Orbe (2007) textually analyzed personal essays; Hopson and Orbe (2007) used class texts; Groscurth and Orbe (2006) studied rhetoric in public meetings; Orbe and Groscurth (2004) used focus groups and in-depth interviews.

Like standpoint theory, co-cultural theory contends that societies possess hierarchies that give dominant group members privilege over non-dominant group members. The most privileged groups in the US includes Whites, Protestants, males, and heterosexuals. Dominant group members create and continue communication systems that reflect, support, and promote their White privilege. Meanwhile, non-dominant group members realize their marginalized status within the dominant culture. Consequently, non-dominant group members strategically adopt certain communication behaviors to successfully navigate the oppressive dominant culture (Orbe & Spellers, 2005). Of course, co-cultural communication can be challenging, as an individual's position in

society entails a variety of concurrent memberships (e.g., a gay African-American male who identifies as both).

Orbe (1998) defined the co-cultural phenomenon as an:

Approach to communication situated in the belief that the United States is a country of many cultures, each of which exists simultaneously within, as well as cpart from other cultures. The term co-culture is embraced over other terminology to signify the notion that no one culture is our society is inherently superior (but may be dominant) over other co-existing cultures. (p. 2)

The basic principles of the co-cultural theory are as follows:

Although representing a widely diverse array of lived experiences, co-cultural group members- including women, people of color, gays/lesbian/bisexuals, individuals with disabilities and those from a socioeconomic status will share a the similar societal position that renders them marginalized and underrepresented in dominant structures; and (2) in order to confront oppressive dominant structures and achieve any measures of success, co-cultural group members adopt certain communication orientations when functioning within the confines of public communicative structures. (Orbe, 1998, p. 7)

The Co-cultural Theory is an intercultural communication theory that reviews the various techniques that co-cultural group members utilize in everyday communication with dominant and in-group members, as well as the methods used to navigate oppressive societal structures (Camara & Orbe, 2010; Orbe & Harris, 2008; Orbe & Roberts, 2012). Furthermore, co-cultural theory has been employed to understand NDGMs' experiences and communicative phenomena on college campuses and university settings (Burnett et

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al., 2009; Orbe, & Roberts, 2012), in the workplace (Cohen & Avanzino, 2010), and across various racial and ethnic groups (Bridgewater & Buzzanell, 2010; Orbe & Roberts, 2012; Ramirez-Sanchez, 2008). With the support of previous research, co-cultural theory highlights essential characteristics of communication in various settings.

According to Brislin (1993), communication and culture are inextricably associated. Following from this perspective, a significant amount of research has focused on how dominant and non-dominant groups communicate. For instance, there are several studies about the communicative experiences of people of color (Hecht, Collier, & Ribeau, 1993), although the majority of the research has been filtered through the dominant perspective (Orbe, 1995). This is evidenced by the variety of names assigned to what is now often referred to as co-cultural communication—names such as "intracultural" (Sitaram & Cogdell, 1976), "subordinate," "inferior," "minority" (Stanback & Pearce, 1981), "sub-cultural" (Nelson & Pearson, 1991), "nondominant" (Folb, 1994), and "muted group" (S. Ardener, 1978).

Seeking to address this troubled paradigm, the CCT provides a framework to assess co-cultural groups' views of the intersection between dominant and non-dominant relations within existing social structures (Allison & Hibbler, 2004). Based on the theoretical foundations of muted group theory and standpoint theory, CCT advocates that dominant and non-dominant group relations be played out in the interactive and communicative experiences of everyday life (Allison & Hibbler, 2004). However, CCT mainly observes communication strategies from the perspective of more socially marginalized groups. As Orbe (1998) argues, "theorizing from a marginalized perspective simultaneously unites and differentiates experiences without essentializing them" (p. 1).

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The development of CCT came from Orbe's (1994) study, which explored the communication strategies of African American men in a variety of social settings. Through phenomenological interviews with co-researchers, Orbe (1998) developed a framework for co-cultural communication practices. The framework consists of nine co-cultural orientations, six co-cultural factors, and an initial set of 26 co-cultural practices. The nine co-cultural orientations consisted of communication approaches and preferred outcomes. Those strategies include (a) assimilation (trying to remove cultural differences); (b) accommodation (mutually beneficial collaboration with the dominant culture), and (c) separation (distance from dominant culture). Moreover, each strategy can be communicated in one of three ways: (a) nonassertive (non-confrontational), (b) assertive (considers both oneself and counterpart's needs equally), and (c) aggressive (overly expressive and confrontational). Co-cultural groups can combine these strategies and outcomes (e.g., assertive or aggressive assimilation, etc.; Orbe, 1998; Orbe & Spellers, 2005). Orbe (1998) declared that various factors - such as personal ability, costs and rewards, and context - shape the communication strategies used by co-cultural groups to achieve desired outcomes.

In this vein, Glenn and Johnson (2012) found that African American men learn how to interact with non-African Americans through direct talks with others, observation, and trial and error. Furthermore, their investigation highlighted the importance of "playing the part," i.e., garnering acceptance from European-Americans without showing too much social distance from African Americans.

The challenge in enacting these strategies is the fact that White, European-American, heterosexual males hold power and set the parameters for interaction in our

major societal institutions (Orbe, 1994). Indeed, Samovar and Porter (1994) found that

the experiences of non-dominant cultures are often made invisible by the pervasiveness

of the dominant culture. This applies to African American teachers, who frequently

experience cultural differences and often find themselves working in isolation within

traditionally White professions. To persevere in the dominant group's environment, CCT

argues, co-cultural members must adopt certain communication skills.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

The first two chapters provided an overview of the study and the literature that most pertains to the study's purpose, which was to explore the lived experience of African American teachers utilizing co-cultural adaptation at predominantly White rural schools in Central Appalachia. This chapter describes the method of qualitative inquiry—specifically, the use of individual interviews—as well as the study's design, population selection, data collection instrument, and analytical procedure.

The study described herein represents an inductive, theory-building, descriptive, multiple-case study. Qualitative inquiry is a form of research design frequently used to explore a phenomenon or experience. According to Denzin and Lincoln (1998), qualitative research developed out of the positivist era in the early 1900s. In the following decades, sociologists and anthropologist introduced qualitative studies, whereby researchers traveled into remote settings to observe the customs and habits of other societies and cultures (Rosaldo, 1989). However, these early investigators alleged that "objective" reality could never be captured. To the contrary, qualitative researchers posited that reality is socially constructed and there exists a close connection between the researcher and what is investigated (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). Unlike quantitative research, the qualitative methodology can focus on circumstances or people to acquire a complete understanding and interpretation of the experiences of individuals in "their natural settings" (Creswell, 1998, p. 15). In a physical setting, the researcher manufactures a complex, holistic picture by analyzing the words and details reported by informants (Creswell, 1998).

The researcher chose case methodology because this investigation focuses on African American teachers' perspectives and the approach is generally better able to capture richer, more detailed information than a quantitative inquiry. According to Yin (2003), a descriptive case study is utilized to describe a phenomenon and the real-life context in which it occurred; whereas, a multiple case study enables the researcher to explore differences within and between cases. By collecting adequate data about a particular person, social setting, event, or group, the researcher can comprehend how it operates or functions (Berg, 1998).

There are numerous methods to qualitative inquiry, such as ethnomethodology, phenomenology, hermeneutics, feminism, etc. With that being said, the phenomenological methodology most closely aligns with this study's goals. According to Creswell (1998) phenomenology is defined as the "lived experiences" of several individuals regarding a particular concept or phenomenon. Similarly, Hatch (2002) found that a phenomenological study gives credibility to individual human experiences, presenting them as significant events that should be open to studying. Furthermore, according to Groenewald (2004), phenomenology can limit a qualitative researcher's biases (2004).

As the study of human experience (Sokolowski, 2000), phenomenology views society as a place determined by the perceptions of those who live in it. In this vein, this analysis examines the lived experiences of African Americans teachers' own observations regarding co-cultural adaptation. In this way, the study hopes to uncover the factors that allow African-Americans to persist in a predominantly White rural public school district. This information may help to identify those policies and practices that

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help or hinder African American persistence, as well as improve our overall understanding of the process of co-cultural adaptation in predominantly White rural public schools in Central Appalachia. Through its use of individual interviews, this study is guaranteed to increase the general understanding of African American teachers' co-cultural experiences and adaptation strategies. Consequently, future African American teachers working in predominantly White, rural schools may obtain greater insight into the processes likely to promote their adaptation and perseverance.

Research Approach

The researcher designed this study as a multiple-case study to help determine (1) what one can discover about the significance of co-cultural relationships from the perspective of African American teachers, and how these relationships affect persistence; (2) what strategies that African American teachers use to help them adapt in a predominantly White rural school district in Central Appalachia; (3) how the school and district environments influence African American teachers' ability to adapt and persist; and (4) what strategies the school and district use to help African American teachers adjust to a predominantly White rural school district in Central Appalachia. Building on the notion that African American teachers come to represent their social system (predominantly White rural school districts in Central Appalachia), the researcher anticipated that the interviewees would define their relationships in accordance with their observations.

This research is built on Creswell's eight points of rationale for conducting a qualitative approach. According to Creswell et al. (2007), "we conduct qualitative

research when we want to empower individuals to share their stories, hear their voices, and minimize the power relationships that often exist between a researcher and the participants in a study" (p. 40). In the following, I will present each rationale and my accompanying motivation for adopting it.

First, Creswell (1998) explains:

Select a qualitative study because of the nature of the research question. In a qualitative study, the research question often starts with a how or a what, so that initial forays into the topic describe what is going on. (as cited in West, 2010)

As Creswell suggests, I am using a qualitative approach because I want to understand African American teachers' perceptions regarding adaptation at predominantly White rural schools in Central Appalachia, as well as their perceptions of district support systems. More personally, I am choosing to study teachers in predominantly White, rural K-12 public schools because of my K-12 school experience in a rural area.

Second, Creswell (1998) further explains reasons for conducting a qualitative study:

Choose a qualitative study because the topic needs to be explored. By this, I mean that variables cannot be easily identified, theories are not available to explain the behavior of participants or their population of study, and approaches need to be developed. (as cited in West, 2010)

Understanding the professional lives and working relationships of African American teachers in predominantly rural K-12 school districts is a complex process. It is not an inquiry into variables that are measurable, and there are no specific theories about these teachers that need to be investigated.

Creswell's (1998) third consideration is to:

Use a qualitative study because of the need to present a detailed view of the topic. The Wide angled lens or the distant panoramic shot will not suffice to give answers to the problem, or the close-up view does not exist. (as cited in West, 2010)

By allowing African American teachers to answer open-ended questions, the study was able to create a detailed visual of their lived experience that would be impossible with quantitative research.

Creswell's (1998) fourth rationale is to:

Choose a qualitative approach in order to explore individuals in their natural setting. This involves going out to the setting of the field of study, gaining access, and gathering material. If participants are removed from their environment, it leads to contrived findings that are out of context. (as cited in West, 2010)

Following Creswell's suggestion, the interviews were conducted in the teacher's classroom or a place they felt more comfortable.

Fifth, Creswell (1998) suggests:

Select a qualitative approach because of interest in writing in a literary style; the writer brings herself or himself into the study, the personal pronoun 'I' is used, or perhaps the writer engages a storytelling form of narration. (as cited in West, 2010)

The qualitative analysis of this study was time-consuming, but the mass amount of data collected allowed me to create structure and meaning from the teachers' experiences.

Unlike quantitative reporting, the qualitative methodology enabled me to be creative in writing the analysis while keeping my focus on the research questions about teachers.

Sixth, Creswell (1998) remarks:

> Employ a qualitative study because of sufficient time and resources to spend on extensive data selection in the field and detailed data analysis of 'text' information. (as cited in West, 2010)

This study has been an extensive development. The teacher interviews for this study were conducted over a three-month period, and it took several additional months to transcribe several hundred pages of text. Several more months were needed to carry out the data analysis.

Seventh, Creswell (1998) says:

> Select a qualitative approach because audiences are receptive to qualitative research. This audience might be a graduate advisor or committee, a discipline inclusive of multiple research methodologies, or publication outlets with editors receptive to qualitative approaches. (as cited in West, 2010)

My advisor and dissertation committee are amenable to a qualitative dissertation study, as it is appropriate for a study focused on recording teachers' lived experiences.

Finally, Creswell's (1998) eighth rationale is to:

> Emphasize the researcher's role as an active learner who can tell the story from the participant's view rather than as an "expert" who passes judgment on participants. (as cited in West, 2010)

This study will allow the teachers to paint a vivid portrait of their experiences through their words rather than allowing me to be the "expert" (Creswell, 1998, as cited

in West, 2010). The use of open-ended questions (e.g., "Tell me what it is like to be a teacher") afforded interview participants the freedom to provide detailed accounts of their experiences, which helped me derive a better understanding of said experiences. My main task was to properly relay their views about their professional experiences and their working relationships with their peers.

Research Questions

My research questions were derived from the literature review. I specifically relied on the literature that addresses minorities' adaptation to predominantly White settings, their overall experiences, and their communication orientations. I designed this study's research questions around advancing my understanding of African American teacher's co-cultural adaptation strategies in predominantly White rural school districts in Central Appalachia. Namely:

1. What are the perceptions of African American teachers regarding adaptation at predominantly White rural schools in Central Appalachia?

2. What are the African American teachers' perceptions of district support systems in regard to helping them adapt at predominantly White rural schools in Central Appalachia?

Background Demographic Questions

1. What is your age?

2. What is your highest degree achieved?

3. How long have/did you teach in this school/district?

4. Have or did you teach outside this region?

5. Where were you born?

6. What grade and subject did you teach?

Interview Questions

Perceptions Regarding Co-Cultural Adaptation

1. How would you describe your adaptation process as an African American teacher at a Central Appalachian predominantly White rural school district?

2. Compare your adaptation experience as an African American teacher to White teachers at a Central Appalachian predominantly White rural school district?

3. Discuss your perception of African American teachers assimilating, acculturating, or separating to adapt to the Central Appalachian predominantly White rural school district?

4. What advice would you offer future African American teachers on adaptation at a Central Appalachian predominantly White rural school district?

5. What advice would you offer a Central Appalachian predominantly White rural school district on enabling African American teachers to adapt to a predominantly White district?

Development of Relationships with Superintendant/Principal

1. Describe how the relationship developed between you and your superintendent/principal in your district. How is the relationship similar to or different from White teachers' relationships with their superintendent/principal?

2. Discuss ways in which your relationship with your superintendent/principal contributed to your persevering.

3. Discuss ways in which your relationship with other faculty contributed to your persevering.

4. Discuss any conflicts you may have encountered with faculty at your school. Explain how you dealt with the conflict.

5. Discuss the significance, if any, of the presence of African American faculty for African American students at the predominantly White rural school district.

Support Systems Used to Adapt and Persist in Co-Cultural Environments

1. What is your definition of a support system?

2. How would you describe your support system as an African American teacher at your predominantly White rural school district?

3. What is your perception of the support system that is available for African American teachers at a predominantly White rural school district? Discuss how this support system is different from or similar to the support system available for White teachers in your district?

4. In what way(s) does the support system, provided by your school/district, encourage you to adapt and persevere?

5. What advice would you offer future African American teachers regarding the necessity of support systems to adapt and persevere at a predominantly White rural school district?

School/District Strategies To Promote African American Teacher Adjustment

1. What is your perception of the role school/district plays in promoting African American teacher adjustment?

2. How would you describe the strategies used by your school/district in their endeavor to support your adjustment, as an African American teacher, to the school/district environment?

3. Discuss strategies you used to adjust as an African American teacher in your school/district?

4. What information would you offer your school/district regarding strategies to support African American teacher adjustment in your school/district?

5. Discuss policies or programs you would like to see in place to support African American teacher adjustment in predominantly White rural school districts?

Perception of the Co-Cultural Environment

1. How would you describe your social experiences as an African American teacher at a predominantly White rural school district?

2. What is your perception of similarities or differences, if any, between African American teacher socialization and White teacher socialization at a predominantly White rural school district?

3. What is your perception of African American teachers encountering alienation and social isolation at predominantly White rural school districts?

4. What is your perception of racism at your district? Discuss how racism at you district can become an obstacle for African American teachers.

5. How would you describe your overall experience in pursuit of a successful career at your predominantly White rural school district?

Research Sample

The study participants included former African American teachers in Central Appalachia. They were either retired or had left the district for personal or other reasons. All the participants came to the researcher as a convenience sample: Either they were recruited by the researcher personally, or were referred by members of the community who provided names of individuals who met the criteria for this study. The researcher sought out this particular region because it offered the greatest opportunity to collect the experiences of African American teacher at a predominantly White, rural school district. The participants were accessible to the researcher as a result of past associations, and they provided reasonable and efficient data collection opportunities. Also, many grade levels were represented within this group (elementary, middle school, and high school), which led to multiple perspectives from several viewpoints. The interviews lasted from one hour to two hours. The variation in time resulted from several participants providing elaborated commentary while others were more succinct.

According to a report compiled by the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE), there were about 7,132 employed teachers in Eastern Kentucky Coalfield (EKC) during the 2016-2017 school year; of these, there were 20 African American teachers: nine males and 11 females. Initially, the researcher sought to contact all 20 African American

teachers currently working in the EKC by sending a solicitation email to their principal. Surprisingly, none of the principals responded to the solicitation. Therefore, the researcher had to rely on local referrals. However, "a small sample is sufficient when the researchers have chosen a homogeneous group or when they wish to investigate unusual or atypical phenomena" (Holloway, 1997, p. 143).

Several criteria were utilized for participants: self-identification as an African American; current employment, previous employment, or retired from a predominantly White rural school in Central Appalachia; and a commitment to offer clarification on the transcribed interviews should the researcher have questions or need confirmation. The participants also provided their age, gender, education level, and so forth for the purpose of frequency counts. This information was utilized to identify various characteristics of the population. After confirming the criteria, the researcher scheduled and conducted the interviews upon which this study is based. Teachers who were retired, as well as those who had formerly been employed, were interviewed for this study.

Data Collection

Data were collected via in-depth, individual, one-to-two hour recorded interviews with each teacher. Data collections were focused on gathering interviews with the teachers, allowing them to describe their perceptions regarding co-cultural adaptation, development of relationships, support systems used to adapt and persist, strategies used by school and district to promote African American teacher adjustment, and perceptions of the co-cultural environment. Each interview was transcribed and subsequently sent to the teachers to check for accuracy. Protecting the identity of the teachers was a primary

concern. Thus, interview transcripts have been stored in a locked file in my office for three years, after which time everything will be destroyed.

Data Analysis

The following steps represent Colaizzi's process for phenomenological data analysis (cited in Sanders, 2003; Speziale & Carpenter, 2007).

1. Each transcription was read and re-read to acquire an overall sense about the entire content.

2. Significant accounts were extracted from each transcript and documented in a separate manuscript, noting their pages and lines numbers.

3. These important statements resulted in meaning.

4. The formulated meanings were arranged into categories and themes.

5. The results of the study were integrated into an exhaustive description of the phenomenon under study.

6. A description of the fundamental structure of the phenomenon was provided.

7. Finally, validation of the findings was sought from the research participants to compare the researcher's detailed results with their experiences.

The analysis resulted in a carefully formulated meaning creation regarding teachers' perceptions about co-cultural adaptation; the development of relationships with superintendents, principals, and other faculty; the support systems used to adapt and persist; the strategies used by the school and district to promote African American teacher adjustment; and the overall perception of the co-cultural environment.

Researcher Subjectivity

Creswell (2007) stated that clarifying bias is a central part of qualitative research design, hence the importance of using multiple validation strategies in the process of a study. Additionally, Creswell et al. (2007) specified that "comments by the researchers about how their background shapes their interpretation of the findings, such as their gender, culture, history, and socioeconomic origin" (p. 192). Therefore, researchers and professionals possess an inherent bias on our view of society. Nevertheless, the researcher believes that voicing our viewpoints and experiences is essential to providing a serious approach to scholarly research (Creswell, 2007).

I was the interviewer, as well as the individual collector and analyst of the data. The participants in the study were all former teachers, and four taught in the district I attended as a student and substituted/coached in from 1998-2005. Also, I personally knew four of the participants, two of which I currently work with at the local community and technical college.

I did not offer payment, goods, or services in exchange for participation. I assumed the participants spoke openly and honestly about their experiences. Participants' names were kept confidential so as to avoid negative responses in their former school, the school district, or the community at-large.

I was aware of my biases that I developed as a result of substituting and coaching in a predominantly White rural school district. As a result, the researcher kept his ego in check which allowed the participant to be the expert. Also, I am mindful of the fact that my biases as a substitute teacher and assistant coach are not equivalent to that of a certified teacher. Furthermore, for the researcher to hold the view that one knows enough

already and do not need to know others' perspective is anti-intellectual and leads to only one standpoint.

Trustworthiness

Each teacher was provided a copy of the transcript of their interview and asked to check it for accuracy, making sure it was correctly transcribed. Also, each teacher was given a copy of the report for member checking (Creswell, 2007). This process allowed them to provide feedback regarding my interpretations, thus reducing the potential for researcher bias and subjectivity. As researchers, "we must consider who we are and what we believe when we do field work. Otherwise, we might not see how we shape the story" (Kleinman & Copp, 1993, p. 13). My concern for learning more about African American teachers in predominantly White rural school districts and its significance to the literature has helped me remain unbiased to the results.

As stated above, I have acknowledged ways that my biases may impact this investigation; however, my acknowledgment has helped me uncover the means to avoid influencing the findings in this inquiry. By using the narratives of the teachers' actual dialogue, I can accurately reflect their perspectives of co-cultural adaptation. By utilizing open-ended questions, the participants were allowed to provide an infinite number of possible answers. Hopefully, by including the voices of African American teachers from predominantly White rural schools/districts in Central Appalachia, their experiences can help administrators, as well as other African Americans pursuing a teaching career, to relate to their experiences and feelings, and provide support when necessary.

Connection between Research and Co-Cultural Adaptation

The Co-cultural Theory focuses on the factors that influence the persistence of marginalized groups. Orbe (1998) was the first to utilize co-cultural theory to define the communication process between marginalized groups and the dominant societal structures. This theory provides a lens through which one can investigate the communication methods that marginalized groups employ and how these methodologies seem to affect their interactions with dominant group members. African American teachers employed at predominantly White, rural school districts in Central Appalachia often find themselves ostracized within the workplace, partly due to their cultural differences.

The literature review in this study showed that there is a shortage of African American teachers across the nation (Alonzo-Osborne, 2008; Farinde et al., 2015; McNulty & Brown, 2009)—and according to the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future (NCTAF), attrition is the primary factor impacting retention (Hunt & Carroll, 2003). This study adds to the literature regarding African American teachers' ability to create a co-cultural environment, develop strategies to promote teacher adjustment, and strengthen the available support systems.

When well-qualified African American teachers retire or resign from their positions in predominantly White rural school districts in Central Appalachia, who replaces them? My hope is that school administrators, as well as local, state and federal policymakers, will read what these teachers have to say about the satisfactory and unsuccessful policies and measures arising from African American teachers' efforts at co-cultural adaptation. First, African American teachers are a valuable resource on the

topic of recruiting and retaining minority teachers; the responses they provide may help

the district redesign its current policies and practices for targeting African American

teachers. Second, the knowledge produced by this dissertation may help districts develop

new programs and policies that support a more diverse faculty.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

This investigation explored the experiences of African American teachers who previously taught in predominantly White rural schools in Central Appalachia. Adopting a multiple-case study, the researcher utilized extensive interviews to detect how historically marginalized individuals adapt to and persist in a profession dominated by White, middle-class, female teachers.

The participants included three retired teachers and three teachers who chose to pursue another career. As outlined in the previous chapter, the researcher initially emailed 14 principals of schools in the Eastern Kentucky Coal-Fields (EKCFs) that employed African American teachers, but none responded with a referral. However, utilizing a snowball/convenience sample, seven former teachers were phoned or emailed to confirm if they were interested in this study. All were interested and met the criteria discussed in chapter three for taking part in the study; however, one retired teacher failed to follow through on a scheduled interview and was removed.

The data collection occurred from December 2016 until January 2017. Five individual interviews were conducted on the researcher's main campus face-to-face; one took place in the participant's home. The researcher transcribed all interviews within a month. The investigator chose not to reveal the participants' names or schools since there are few African American teachers in the EKCFs and thus they could be easily identified. These teachers had similar background experiences that led them to teach in the selected school district. For instance, one teacher began teaching at her school because there was a

critical need for a qualified science teacher. Another teacher began teaching because of the shortage of eligible math teachers.

Table 1 provides a high-level overview of the participants' background, as well as establishes the pseudonyms that will be used throughout this chapter.

Table 1. Participant Demographic Details

Pseudonym	Age Range	Years Teaching	Teaching Level
Ms. Christian	80-90	4	Elementary
Mrs. Pope	60-70	43	Elementary
Mrs. Robinson	60-70	32.5	Elementary
Dr. Letterman	50-60	3	Secondary
Ms. Wynette	50-60	18	Secondary
Mr. Rice	50-60	32	Elementary / Secondary

Overview of Interviewees

The subjects were between the ages of 53 and 85. The average age was 63.6 years. Females (N=4) comprised two-thirds of the sample. All six of the subjects were born and raised in Central Appalachia, and all had graduated from colleges or universities located in the region. Only one participant had earned a degree outside of Appalachia— namely, one of her Bachelor degrees from a Bible Institution in Washington D.C.—and she was the first Black to graduate from said college. Additionally, one other teacher was the only one to teach outside of the region.

One teacher graduated with an Education Specialist degree; three teachers graduated with a degree in Masters of Education; one earned two Bachelor degrees, and one earned a single Bachelor degree. Additionally, two of the female participants had earned their principalship. Of the three who retired, one had worked for 43 years, and the

other two had been employed more than 30. The three who chose to leave teaching had been employed for three, four and 18 years, respectively. Four of the participants had family members who had been educators. Three participants reported that they did not have any relationship with their previous superintendent.

Participants Interviews

Participant 1: Mrs. Robinson

Mrs. Robinson earned an EdS degree and taught in a rural elementary school district in Central Appalachia. After 32.5 years, she retired from K-12 and now enjoys teaching as an adjunct at the local community college. Mrs. Robinson was born and raised in the county where she taught. Also, Mrs. Robinson attended an all-Black segregated school until junior high.

When asked to describe her adaptation process, Mrs. Robinson said,

I have always been around the other races, so it was that big transition to me.

Also, I worked with an excellent group of teachers, and I was easily accepted. I

was just me. I fit in perfectly; I did not have any problems.

She explained, "It would have been different if I had to depend on them but I knew what I had to do, and I did it, and I excel at it." Mrs. Robinson stated that her aunt was a retired schoolteacher and teaching was something she always wanted to do.

When asked to discuss her perception of assimilating (mutually beneficial collaboration with the dominant culture), acculturating (trying to remove cultural differences), or separating (distance from dominant culture) to adapt to their school district, Mrs. Robinson replied, "You kill some people with kindness and intellect." As

for assimilating, she explained that she worked with a great group of teachers and that mutual respect benefitted all stakeholders, especially the children. Mrs. Robinson seeks to eradicate barriers and prejudices. Concerning acculturating, it is worth reiterating that Mrs. Robinson was reared in Central Appalachia and was accustomed to its culture. Furthermore, she is an advocate for acculturation.

When asked about what advice she would offer future African American teachers regarding adaptation at a similar school district, Mrs. Robinson answered:

> First and foremost, you are on a mission. Your mission is to do your job, do it well, go home, oh and keep your mouth closed. Some teachers talk too much and get in he says she says, I call them the pronoun. Your number one job is to meet the qualification, teach, and go home. And, again, foremost keep your mouth closed.

She mentioned her mission several times during the interview. Mrs. Robinson's mission was to educate all the children whom she came in contact with. Also, she said that in order to accomplish your mission, you have to be qualified and constantly hone your craft. Finally, yet importantly, she cautioned against engaging with the rumor mills: If it is not constructive and beneficial to the improvement of the school culture, do not participate in it. She continued:

> You have to be equal, fair, and consistent. Do not go in expecting special treatment. Policies that are in place that benefited a few and not all based on nationality only cause bad blood between dominant and non-dominant group members.

She expressed a profound belief in inclusivity and equality. Mrs. Robinson went on to say, all one should expect in life is an opportunity and to be treated fair.

On the topic of her relationship with her district's superintendent/principal, Mrs. Robinson responded, "I did not have any connection with the superintendent, but I went through three superintendents, and each one recommended that I teach their children." With regard to the principal, she stated, "If you gain the respect of your principal, then he is going to be your biggest supporter. And, he is going support you to the students, parents, and the higher administrative authority." Mrs. Robinson compared her relationship with her principal as collaborative activism.

When participants were asked to describe how their relationship was different from their White counterparts, Mrs. Robinson replied, "It was basically the same as Dr. So and So's wife." She went on to say, "If there were a noticeable difference in my treatment compared to White teachers, I would have approached the principal in a dignified way for an explanation, but I never had to do that."

When asked to discuss how her relationship with other faculty contributed to their persevering, Mrs. Robinson stated that she worked with a good group of teachers. Also, she and several other teachers took graduate level classes together with the principal. Mrs. Robinson added,

> So again, they knew I was highly qualified and knowledgeable. Although my
> relationship with other faculty was a good one, it was knowledge of my job that
> ultimately aided me most in persevering.

When asked to discuss how they dealt with conflicts, Mrs. Robinson described what she referred to as a funny encounter:

We had bus duty, and we rotated doing it. It was my time to monitor the students who waited on the bus. So one day one of my colleagues was trying to do the duty, but it was my turn, and she said what are you doing here Robinson and I said bus monitoring and I said what are you doing here. She turned red and when she turned red her neck would turn red and protrude, and in her deep voice, I am supposed to have bus duty. Read the bus monitoring chart, who name do you see? Thank you. Know what you are doing. I'm not going have her go out and slander my good name for not showing up for duty. Know what you are doing and do it well.

She added, "As an educator, part of my mission is to dispel the myths bestowed by many of the dominant cultures that African Americans are ignorant and inept."

When asked to discuss the significance, if any, of the presence of African American teachers at the predominantly White rural school district, Mrs. Robinson started by saying:

Big impact on all students. Some Caucasians had not ever been around an African American or seen an African American. African American students would see me, and some of them thought well I could do that. It was a positive impact on all students. Even when African American parents would come they would respect me and then Caucasian would come it was good for them to interact with me and see that I was working with their children and helping them. So it was good for the students overall but the parents also, it gave them something to think about, and it carried on in the community as well. White parents could see she is Black but not dirty. We have been labeled as being Black, dirty, and lazy.

When asked about their perception of the role played by the school/district in promoting African American teacher adjustment. Mrs. Robinson responded by saying, "they would provide us with what we needed to incorporate diversity." In addition, she stood by her previous statement that "policies in place that benefited a few and not all based on nationality only causes bad blood between dominant and non-dominant group members."

When asked to discuss her strategies for adjusting to their district as an African American teacher, Mrs. Robinson stated that:

A lot of the times us minorities want to fly off the handle and act the way they expect us to act. I do not give them that opportunity. Plus, there is a professional way if they get smart or disrespectful that you can come back. You can use your intellect to put them down just as easily. Now that will turn their face red for sure. We have to be just as good or better. Always document incidents within the school and action taken. I wrote down all violation and the course of action taken against faculty, staff, and students.

In general, Mrs. Robinson believed her background, qualification, and experience made her adjustment a seamless transition. As she stated earlier, "I was more qualified than the others. In reality, they needed or depended on me."

When asked about what information she would offer their school/district regarding strategies to support African American teacher adjustment, Mrs. Robinson stated, "More recognition and better incentives." However, she stated, "that goes for all teachers not just minorities."

When asked to discuss policies or programs she would like to see in place to support African American teacher adjustment in predominantly White, rural school districts, Mrs. Robinson voiced her concern that:

You're trying to be equal and fair. You got to be equal and fair. I don't think I would like policies in place that benefited me, but not all based on nationality, and other are sitting there resenting it because that causes bad blood. If something like that did happen, it would have to come from the state, and the school board would have to implement it and then you would have problems.

She expressed a belief in treating individuals as equally as possible, without regard to race, culture, or ethnicity.

When asked to describe her social experiences as an African American teacher at their predominantly White, rural school district, Mrs. Robinson stated that:

I socialized. It was mostly at school functions. However, I have friends now although we have retired we still interact. I was always included in the school and outside of school. They would go overboard to make me feel welcome.

She indicated that the group of teachers she worked with believed in inclusivity.

When asked about her perceptions of African American teachers encountering alienation and social isolation at the predominantly White rural school district, Mrs. Robinson reiterated that "I was just me. I fit in perfectly; I did not have any problems with alienation or social isolation."

When asked about their perception of racism at their district, Mrs. Robinson replied:

One time we were at a professional development meeting and someone from our

school district but a different school. I sat beside her, and she did not say

anything, but she gave me that downgrading look. I did not move. I started talking

to her. You kill some people with kindness and intellect.

She recognized that African Americans are better off today than they were in the past, but

that some in the dominant cultures believe in the veils of oppression and White privilege.

Also, she noted that this form of racism is covert rather than overt.

When asked to describe her overall experience in pursuit of a successful career at

her predominantly White, rural school district, Mrs. Robinson said, "I enjoyed every

moment of it. I have no regrets; I got to do what I enjoyed doing and gain respect for

doing it. I think my mission is a good one and I live by it."

Participant 2: Mr. Rice

Mr. Rice held a master's degree and taught 32 years in a rural school district in

Central Appalachia. Although retired from teaching, he currently works as an aide and

bus driver for the same school district. Mr. Rice was born and raised in the same

community he taught in for all those years. Furthermore, the community he is from is

more diverse than the rest of the county. In fact, it is one of the most diverse communities

in all of Appalachia, or at least it was years ago.

When asked to describe his adaptation process, Mr. Rice responded:

I did not have a problem with adapting. I was raised in a White neighborhood and

basically knew all the people I was working with. As for the children, I knew their

parents from going to school with them.

Reared in a White community, he had enculturated to the traditional ways of Central

Appalachia.

Next, participants were asked to compare their adaptation experiences as African

American teacher to their White counterparts. Mr. Rice reported no noticeable

differences. He added:

> The way I approached it was I was going to show the children that I give respect
>
> but also demand respect. That also went for the teachers I worked with. No matter
>
> what every morning I would speak and be cordial toward them and go on about
>
> my business. Treat them the way I wanted to be treated.

When asked to discuss his perception of assimilating, acculturating, or separating

to adapt to their school district, Mr. Rice responded:

> You have to listen to a lot of stuff you do not agree with. For example, when we
>
> had a Black President he was scrutinized for everything he was doing. However,
>
> when there was a White President, he was doing everything right. Even though I
>
> did not agree with what the White President was doing; I never degraded or
>
> belittled him as they did President Obama. Actually, some White teachers will
>
> blatantly say some negative things and look over at me for a response. However, I
>
> did not give them the satisfaction of responding.

He noted that some, but not all dominant group members think they can say anything

based on their White privilege status, especially the ones from the White establishment.

When asked about what advice they would offer future African American

teachers regarding adaptation at a similar school district, participants responded with a

variety of recommendations that mainly oriented around assisting teachers with adapting and persevering. Mr. Rice suggested:

Go in with an open mind and willingness to adjust to the situation and try to win over the kids first. Work with your colleagues second, and if you win over the kids, you have accomplished what you are there for. You are not there for your colleagues or the pats on the back.

He believed first and foremost that educating the children was the only reason to enter teaching, and with that in mind, Mr. Rice stated, "I still have former students approach me and tell me they appreciate me for what I've done. And sometimes it was just words of encouragement."

When asked about how they would advise a Central Appalachian, predominantly White rural school district regarding enabling African American teachers' adaptation, all participants had recommendations. Mr. Rice advised they should recognize African American holidays, plan activities for Black History month, and invite African American speakers from the region. He stated, "Offer more during Black history month or a Black History class. The only Black history taught in schools is slavery, Martin Luther King and that is not fair." Mr. Rice went on to explain that African Americans have played an instrumental role in the development of our great nation and need to be recognized for their contribution.

On the topic of their relationship with their district's superintendent/principal, the participants largely responded in the positive. Mr. Rice answered:

Some of the members of the community made some calls to the superintendent, and they set up a meeting for me to meet with the Assistant Superintendent the

day before school started, and about an hour later I got a phone call telling me

what school to report to the next day. I did not even have a classroom; they set me

up in the back of the library. I always got along with Principal and

Superintendent. My first year they had me teaching P.E., and one day the

Superintendent come by and ask me how things were going. I said well they have

me teaching P.E. and I do not think I have the equipment I need to teach. A few

days later the principal had me to come in the office and said that the

superintendent said whatever you required for P.E. for me to get it for you. Of

course, the principal was not happy about having to spend the money, but he did

it. And then the principal said you should have come to me, and I said you never

asked, but the superintendent asked.

From this point on, if he needed something, Mr. Rice would ask and he would receive it.

When participants were asked to describe how their relationship was different

from their White counterparts, Mr. Rice stated: "They had a better relationship being

White because they did more stuff together. But it wasn't too much of a difference." He

went on to explain that because they came from the same culture and part of the

hegemony, they have more in common and are more likely to attend functions outside of

the workplace.

When asked to discuss how the relationship with the superintendent/principal

contributed to his persevering, Mr. Rice replied:

They would send me to meetings on new programs coming out, and I would come

back to update other teachers on what was going on. Me and another White

teacher would always go and report back to the Central Office. It made it easier

for me if I had a problem to go in to talk about it. They encourage you to go back

to school. They provide grants for you to further your education in hard to fill

positions. Regularly sent out emails on the opportunities out there to advance your

career.

He noted that this collaboration was vital in his persevering.

When asked to discuss how his relationship with other faculty contributed to their

persevering, Mr. Rice responded that his colleagues assisted him in obtaining his

Masters. He also mentioned that "young teachers would approach me for my expertise,

which made me feel value." Mr. Rice added that these interactions with his co-worker's

aided in eliminating barriers and stereotypes.

When asked to discuss how he dealt with conflicts, Mr. Rice said: "Believe it or

not I did not have any conflicts with anyone. I always made friends with everyone whom

I worked with."

When asked to discuss policies or programs he would like to see in place to

support African American teacher adjustment in predominantly White, rural school

districts, Mr. Rice said, "diversity should be open for discussion, and also they should

have a diversity committee." He explained that we all benefit and are better off with

diversity.

When asked to describe his social experiences as an African American teacher at

their predominantly White, rural school district, Mr. Rice began by saying:

> I always made friends with everyone whom I worked with. They would see me
>
> out eating or something and would ask me how I'm doing. Never had any issues
>
> with anyone and didn't know of anyone having issues with me. It was a mutual

relationship. I cannot go to any store where someone does not come up to me and

ask about my teams or how I was doing.

However, Mr. Rice also commented that, "They would hand out an invitation to each

other and when it comes to me, they may tell me we have something, and you are

welcome to come, but they do not officially invite you."

When asked about his perception of similarities or differences, if any, between

African American and White teacher socialization at their school district, Mr. Rice

reiterated his statement earlier that, "They may have done more things together outside of

work, but that it was basically the same."

When asked about his perceptions of African American teachers encountering

alienation and social isolation at the predominantly White rural school district, Mr. Rice's

view on alienation and social isolation was: "I think that comes more from parents more

than co-workers. Some parents feel if they were not taught by a Black teacher and their

kid should not be taught by one."

When asked about his perception of racism at their district, Mr. Rice asserted:

Racism is there. Black students are not pushed to get their grades, which to me is

a form of racism. Because they expect you to get the Black kids to go along with

everything they are doing. However, everything they are doing is only benefiting

the White kids. Also, I was sent to a school on the opposite end of the county to

teach alternative school, and I thought that was a form of racism. I believe that

political alliances felt that I had supported someone else for the school board.

However, Mr. Rice recalled:

> A student told one of the teachers that I do not want the Black teacher speaking to me [Author's Note: I would question if the N word was used by the student]. However, every morning I would speak to him, and he turns around and does not look at me. One particular day I greeted him that morning and later that day him, and the other teacher in alternative education had gotten into an argument. So, I had to go over and calm both of them down. Then I told the student if you want to come over to my room until you cool down you are more than welcome. So, he did, and the next morning I notice the student was not sitting in his normal spot and when I walk in my room he was already in there. After that, he stayed in my room the rest of the year and would speak to me out in the stores.

When asked to describe his support system as an African American teacher at their predominantly White rural school district, Mr. Rice concluded that:

> It is laid back and not overly aggressive. If you wanted to know something you could ask, but no one is going to come to tell you. You can get some support through professional development. You could go to administrators or colleagues to get advice or ask for help or anything that would help you be a better teacher. Things that were going to advance you and the system. However, the support system in the district needs improvement.

When asked to describe his overall experience in pursuit of a successful career at their predominantly White, rural school district, Mr. Rice replied, "I thought I had a pretty good job and I basically got along with everyone I worked with."

Participant 3: Mrs. Pope

Mrs. Pope taught 43 years in a rural school district in Central Appalachia. She is now retired but still lives in the same community. Also, Mrs. Pope received her formal schooling from an all-Black school up to the 7th grade. Furthermore, her aunt was a teacher as well.

When asked to describe her adaptation process, Mrs. Pope claimed, "It was difficult adapting because they were not used to a Black person being their equal. It was ok if you were an aid or janitor, but if you were a teacher, it was like she does not know what she is doing. I was viewed as a troublemaker."

When asked to compare her adaptation experiences as African American teacher to their White counterparts, Mrs. Pope stated, "there was no comparison between the two. They did not have to adapt. They are in the majority."

When asked to discuss her perception of assimilating, acculturating, or separating to adjust to their school district, Mrs. Pope said, "I was just me. First of all, I did work there to make friends. My job was to teach them, children. It is not like I was mean to them or anything. I would speak and be cordial and go on about my business. They knew I did not take their mess."

When asked about what advice she would offer future African American teachers regarding adaptation at a similar school district, Mrs. Pope advised:

I would tell them you have to work harder because all eyes are on you and they are waiting for you to mess up or slip up. Control you anger, don't raise your voice and if you get mad, you just have to walk off. You always have to outwork them because the camera is on you. Eventually, it will get easier.

When asked about how she would advise a Central Appalachian, predominantly White rural school district regarding enabling African American teachers' adaptation, Mrs. Pope added, "school districts should recognize African American holidays, plan activities for Black History month, and invite African American speakers from the region."

On the topic of her relationship with their district's superintendent/principal, Mrs. Pope did not mention having a relationship with the superintendent. However, she stated her sentiments regarding her principal:

> He was really nice to me, and he would always tell me if I needed something come to him. He was one of them arrogant people, but whatever he told me to do I did it, and he would say you are the only one that when I tell you to do something I know it will get done. However, he was really good and would always let me know if I needed anything to let him know.

When asked to discuss how the relationship with the superintendent/principal contributed to their persevering, Mrs. Pope responded, "It had no effect on me persevering. Like I said before, I was there to teach those children."

When asked to describe her support system as an African American teacher at their predominantly White rural school district, Mrs. Pope stated that:

> Well, my aunt was a teacher. Plus I had good Black teachers. I went to an all-Black school until we integrated into the 7th grade. The old teachers who were retired when I started would come and tell me what to do and how to do it. They would say watch your back you cannot loaf around like some in the hall. You do the very best you can and dress professional. Some White teachers would ask

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what you dress up for to come to school; I'd say I am not a bum. I don't need to come to school looking like the kids with holes in my pants and a sweat shirt on.

When asked to discuss how the support system is different from or similar to the support system available for White teachers in your district, Mrs. Pope simply stated, "There is no comparison."

When asked about her perception of the role played by the school/district in promoting African American teacher adjustment, Mrs. Pope replied, "They do not do anything special. In fact, I am always on them telling they need to hire more Black teachers or at least Black substitutes."

When asked about what information she would offer their school/district regarding strategies to support African American teacher adjustment, Mrs. Pope said that:

During Black History month, for example, do not bring some White person in trying to teach you something about what it means to be Black. We have more Blacks teachers, doctors and other professionals that can come in and talk to the students. African American students need to see someone professional similar to them.

When asked to describe her social experiences as an African American teacher at their predominantly White, rural school district, Mrs. Pope responded by saying:

I only had relationships with them at work but not outside of work. But now, some of the teachers were really nice and would try to get me to go out with them in the summer. But it was two or three were just like they had to tolerate you but I let them girls know I am here to stay and I ain't going nowhere. I'm not here to

make no friends or carry anyone home with me, I am here to do my job, and that

is teach these children.

She went on to say, "They didn't exclude me or anything. I mean that when they had

something, they would always invite me to come. It was my choice rather I went or not I

went. Mostly not."

When asked about her perception of similarities or differences, if any, between

African American and White teacher socialization at their school district, Mrs. Pope said,

"It was different because we all have our own little groups that we like to hang with."

Also, Mrs. Pope stated, "Sometimes we isolate ourselves."

When asked about her perception of racism at their district, Mrs. Pope claimed,

"It probably was, but I didn't really encounter it from anyone." Later, Mrs. Pope detailed

several accounts of racism or derogatory comments by students:

I had a problem with a student. A student rubbed me, and I said what are you

doing, and he said it would not come off. So, I rubbed him and said well yours

didn't either. Another student made the statement, I don't like Niggers, and I said

baby you don't like your momma [laughter], and he looked really funny at me.

They would have fired me if that had gotten out. One all White school wanted me

bad, but I would not go. Because some of the kids would call out niggers and the

teachers would not say anything. One teacher knew who had called me the nigger

and would not say anything about it and the principal made her send me an

apology letter, and I put it back in the mailbox return to sender. Now that was in a

county school.

When asked to describe her overall experience in pursuit of a successful career at their predominantly White, rural school district, Mrs. Pope responded, "I enjoyed my 40 plus years. I would not have stayed if I didn't."

Participant 4: Ms. Christian

Ms. Christian taught four years in a rural school district in Central Appalachia. After leaving the teaching profession, she became a well-known and respected social worker. Also, she has dedicated her life to helping others. Ms. Christian volunteers most of her time conducting Vacation Bible studies and spreading the gospel. She also graduated from an all-Black school and was the first Black to graduate from a Bible College in Washington, D.C. Also, Ms. Christian earned two Bachelor's degree.

When asked to describe her adaptation process, Ms. Christian replied:

Well, it was only three of us, and we got along really good. One of them was a White man, and he lived in the next county, and we got along like two peas in a pod. We pretty much had the same views of life. The first time we met, he asked me how I was on discipline, and I said I'm strict, and he said I am too, so we got along really good.

When asked to compare her adaptation experiences as African American teacher to their White counterparts, Ms. Christian responded, "there were no noticeable differences. However, Black teachers received the leftovers."

When asked about what advice she would offer future African American teachers regarding adaptation at a similar school district, Ms. Christian answered:

I would recommend that they get as familiar as they can with the staff. I would try to get to know them to see what their thinking was and we would adapt from

there. Also, to be familiar with the policies and the rules and make sure you keep

up with the because sometimes you may have to pull one of them off of the shelf

in there is a problem.

On the topic of her relationship with her district's superintendent/principal, Ms.

Christian had an advantage in regards to her relationship with the superintendent:

Yeah, I had a good introduction to him. Because my mother grew up with him. He

grew up as a poor boy. His folks were from over where my mother was from. My

mother was the reason he hired me because of their relationship. I had an

interview with the superintendent. And I got an idea of what was to be expected

of me. And that helped." As for her relationship with the principal ", he was the

superintendents 'Right Hand Man, and we had a good working relationship.

When asked to discuss how her relationship with other faculty contributed to her

persevering, Ms. Christian noted that she had only worked in her rural school district for

several years, but nonetheless "had a good working relationship, and that had no impact

on my retention."

When asked to discuss how she dealt with conflicts, Ms. Christian shared a

conflict that she had with a co-worker, explaining:

One colleague believed in evolution. He and I had an argument over that. It

shocked him when I told him I didn't believe in evolution; he said well what do

you believe, I said I believe the man was from dirt. And he pointed out five types

of dirt, I forget what they were, and I said no I am not talking about that kind of

dirt, I'm talking about that dirt out there and pointed to it. Now, this was on a

Friday, and over the weekend I got to thinking about it. I felt I needed to

apologize because I was pretty rough on the old fellow. I went back that Monday

with the intentions of apologizing, and the teacher came into the teacher's lounge

and said, Nancy, I want to apologize for what took place on Friday. And that

made me feel real bad. After everyone had left I approached him and told him I

too wanted to apologize, I'm not apologizing for what I said but how I said it.

When asked to describe her support system as an African American teacher at her

predominantly White rural school district, Ms. Christian said, "it was if I were ranking it,

I would say it was good."

When asked to discuss her strategies for adjusting to their district as an African

American teacher, Ms. Christian responded, "I was always the same, nothing different

stood out."

When asked to describe her social experiences as an African American teacher

at her predominantly White rural school district, Ms. Christian said, "It was to me it was

good fraternizes with them at work and off."

When asked about her perception of racism at her district, Ms. Christian shared a

story about a student:

> When thinking about the races, one day one of the White children told me such of
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> such called someone a nigger. So, I said ok, and we had a discussion about. So, I
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> went around the whole room and asked was so and so a nigger, and they would
>
> always answer no, but then I got to one little boy, and I asked him am I a nigger,
>
> and he said yes mam [laughter], And he was being honest with his belief.

When asked to describe her overall experience in pursuit of a successful career at her predominantly White rural school district, Ms. Christian enjoyed her time as a teacher.

Participant 5: Mrs. Wynette

Ms. Wynette taught 18 years in a rural school district in Central Appalachia. She quit K-12 to pursue a career at the local community college. She is currently a doctoral student and achieved her principalship.

When asked to describe her adaptation process, Ms. Wynette concluded:

I had to accommodate for many things. I could clearly see that I was not on a level playing field. I learned very quickly that my opinion was not really valued and I never was included in meetings or on boards. It was like I was really of no value, or at least that is how I felt. However, I wanted to be apart, so I included myself. I would offer my opinion, but they were always overlooked. However, I would speak my peace and go on about my business.

When asked to compare her adaptation experiences as an African American teacher to her White counterparts, Ms. Wynette answered:

I don't believe there is no comparison. They didn't have to make an effort to be included. Everything for me, I had to make a great effort. They were automatically picked to be on these boards or in certain groups. I had to always scrap and scrape to be on these committees. It was much easier for them. They had an acceptance that I did not. I was viewed as different. As far Whites, they had no adaptation because they were already a part of the privileged class. But as

for me, I was always on the outside looking in, from every aspect. However, they

had no adaptation; they were automatically accepted in the click.

When asked to discuss her perception of assimilating, acculturating, or separating

to adapt to her school district, Ms. Wynette replied:

Yeah, I had to sit while they discussed students for scholarships and I noticed

there were no Blacks being nominated. I would have to sit there and accept that. I

would have to smile and come to some kind of census with them. While they

would nominate a teacher's child, who may or may not be worthy of receiving a

scholarship. But, they knew I was going to ask, are there no Black children

worthy of a scholarship. Once I asked that I was shunned out of the conversation.

And once that got out, the other teachers that I would regularly talk to while on

hall duty would not be around. I would just smile and go on and kill them with

kindness.

When asked about what advice she would offer future African American teachers

regarding adaptation at a similar school district, Ms. Wynette expanded on her advice:

You have to stick in there. The fact that you are there shows the African

American teachers that they have the potential to be a teacher or anything else

they choose. You have to persist, and you have to do it graciously. There were

many times I wanted to get angry, but you can't get angry. You have to

understand the environment that you are in. You have to suppress a lot of things

and be a positive example for all children. You have to work with humanity. I

love the way President Obama, handle his eight years in office. Understand the

mentality of the environment you are in. They try to see you as an equal, but you

have to remember how most of them were raised. I think it becomes unconscienced. Some of it is deliberate but most of them it is unconscious. I would have liked to be more outspoken, but the more you speak out then you get pushed out and labeled the angry Black women or even as being prejudice and all your looking for is fairness. I would advise always to be fair and consistent. You have to enter the workforce knowing that you are going to encounter some inequalities, but you have to persevere. In all things try to position yourself to be in the right. Some of your White colleagues will take the low road, but you should always take the high road. That is how I lasted in education for almost thirty years as a teacher. I tried to move up but there was a ceiling that I was unable to break, but you may be the one to shatter it. Unfortunately, I was unable to in this area. As an African American in this region, you are extremely restricted. I was raised here, so I know who I am dealing with, I learned them as a child.

When asked about how she would advise a Central Appalachian, predominantly White rural school district regarding enabling African American teachers' adaptation, Ms. Wynette responded:

From my experience just include them, to make them feel a part of the staff. To include them let their achievements and words have value do not just offer a token position. Value their opinion. Make them a part of the planning of it. Don't just fill a quota. The feeling of being included is probably the most desired part of being human. One of the cruelest things one can do to an individual is not to value one's contribution to humanity. Include them. Diversity adds so much to the

learning environment, to me it is like not having salt for your food—can you

imagine not having salt for your food?

On the topic of her relationship with her district's superintendent/principal, Ms.

Wynette stated that she never really knew their superintendent because they were rarely

in his company. On the other hand, Ms. Wynette described her relationship and

experience with her principals as such:

> I had four separate principals the time I was in teaching. And the only time I was
>
> called into their office was if some parent had complained. It was usually if their
>
> child did not get an A or something like that. So, the relationship was really an
>
> antagonistic one.

She went on to describe one of her many encounters with one of her principals:

> I had run for the site base council several times, and I never did get voted in.
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> However, one year because of our minority enrollment we needed a minority to
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> serve and me being the only Black I got on the council. When I got on the
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> council, and we had to vote on issues the principal would come to see me and tell
>
> me how he wanted me to vote. I would tell him I would consider that, well, of
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> course, I always voted my conscious. I don't know if he went to anyone else or
>
> not. Usually, it was about money or power. I would always get a feel for the
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> parents and students on an issue, and that led me to many times going against the
>
> principal, and I knew that my vote was going to attract adverse ramifications.
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> Once I was on the site base, the principal, and I relationship was doomed. I taught
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> science, and I needed a budget, and my budget was almost always denied. So,
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> once you go against them or really not go against them but stand up for the

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children, you become the enemy. Actually he tried to turn the other faculty

against me. The next year they did not need a minority, and I was not on the

board. However, I thought since I did what I thought was a good job that I would

run for it. The principal instructed other faculty to not vote for me and two people

told me that, and I overwhelmingly lost. But, I was student centered, and so my

relationship with my principals was an antagonistic one.

On another occasion, she told of a time when:

I taught Anatomy and Physiology. I tried to be fair and consistent. The year I won

teacher of the year, I was so proud because to me that meant that all the children

loved me. They loved me because I was a good teacher. I mean people knew I

was hard but fair. I sponsored the academic team, beta club, and national honor

society. Those things require work; no one volunteers for those jobs. And I know

that is a hard class. So, that year I had a few students who normally received A's,

but Anatomy and physiology is a different kind of class, it is extremely hard. So, I

had several students who received B's and their parents I'd say about 8 or 9 were

upset. One little girl actually cried. One young man was cheating, and I had

brought him in, and I told him I have to give you a 0 on the test. Well, his father

went and rallied up the other parents who children were not gonna get an A. This

father came over to the principal's office with the other parents. Now, this had

been going on for a few days. So, one day I'm getting ready for class, and a little

girl from the office came up and said the principal wanted to see me. I ask the

teacher across the hall to keep an eye on my class. So, I walked in the principal

office, and there was a room full of parents. The principal knew this was coming,

but he wanted my demise. I came and welcomed all of them, what's going on. He allowed this father to stand over top of me and let that man talk to me bad. I tried to inform the father that I had the cheat note his son used and stapled it to his test but he was hearing none of that. He talked me like a dog. It was unreal, I wanted to cry, but something inside of me said don't cry don't you cry. Stay calm, the other parents watched as he belittles me, he said I did not know what I was doing, it was not like that before you came. That principal never said a word; he set me up for that. He wanted me to turn into the "Angry Black Women." I told the principal the grades will stand even if it cost me to my job. This one man was behind the whole thing. He said I will be watching you. And this is the same year I was voted teacher of the year. For the teacher of the year, they would always gather all faculty, staff, and students in the gym and have a marvelous assembly program. So, the principal called me in his office toward the end of the year and told me that we were not gonna be able to do that this year. I'm afraid the children will boo you, and we are not holding it in the gym. They held it in the cafeteria, and only the seniors who wanted to come came. Even the children who got the B's came. I accepted it, and I took it, but I was hurt. That was the most horrible year of my teaching and should have been my best year. Our academic team had won district, regional and went to the state championship. The principal would have been a good Klan's man, and he could have been as far as I know. He was a horrible man.

When participants were asked to describe how their relationship was different from their White counterparts, Ms. Wynette revealed there was no comparison.

When asked to discuss how the relationship with the superintendent/principal contributed to her persevering. Ms. Wynette said, "Not at all. Actually, they make you want to quit. Nothing about them encourages me to continue to teach. It was my love for children that kept me motivated to persevere. None of them promoted me."

When asked to discuss how her relationship with other faculty contributed to her persevering, Ms. Wynette said:

When I first started, I think it was a blessing from the Lord. I did encounter a teacher. She was the head of the biology department. She was very positive. She was a role model the way she taught. She was a Godly woman. She really did love the Lord, and I think her husband was a pastor. She would tell me how to make a syllabus, things I already knew, but she taught me how she wanted her department ran. And before she retired she went to the principal and told him she wanted me to be the department head. She told the principal I have thousands of dollars' worth of equipment and she will keep up with not the gentleman you have in mind.

When asked to discuss how she dealt with conflicts, Mrs. Wynette revealed a situation where she experienced conflict with a colleague:

I was friends with a group well not friends but acquaintances with a group of teachers, and we had taken some children on a trip somewhere. Two of the students on the trip were in an interracial relationship. The young White girl came over and asked a question and upon her leaving one of the White teachers said I could not believe she would date outside her race. So, I politely asked, didn't you marry outside your race? She was married to a foreign doctor. She did not speak

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to me the rest of the trip. She was exercising her privilege. She could marry whomever she wanted to, but this little White girl was different because she was dating a little Black boy.

When asked to discuss the significance, if any, of the presence of African American teachers at the predominantly White rural school district, Mrs. Wynette added:

I think I feel gravely short, but I still continue to try and do this. I think it important that they see someone like them teaching. I wanted it to be in every aspect of life a positive influence. The way I dressed, acted, talked. I wanted them to see Godly women and positive. Let's see a person with integrity. A lot of time I think I was silent when I should have spoken out. I would like to think they would like to be like me or even better than me. Look at her she went to college; she got a B.A., M.Ed. Look at how she lives. She was Black, and she did it. It gives them the hope that they can do it too. They are as good as other children. I hope they see something good in me that will give them hope. I want them to see they can be more than me. If I can just be a little spark to a better future.

When asked to describe her support system as an African American teacher at her predominantly White rural school district, Ms. Wynette explained it this way:

Well like I said I had that one lady who supported me. That was it, and when she left, I did not really have anyone. Well believe it, or not some of my students were my support system. When all that happened with the parents. The other students had my back. They kinda got on the other students. I only had one bi-racial student and one Black student. My greatest support came from my parents. My mother. The White mentor was a really good woman, and I think she saw that I

was a good teacher and wanted to help me and my students. My home, my mother was an educator, and she knew what I was going through.

When asked to discuss how the support system is different from or similar to the support system available for White teachers in her district, Ms. Wynette stated that:

From my experience, there was no comparison. And that is why we lose a lot of our minority teachers. If it is there, I was unaware of it. The White teachers may not need it because they don't have to deal with the isolation and other things that minorities have to deal with. They don't have to deal with the issues that Blacks have to. It is the good o'boy system. They don't have to confront some of the problems that teachers have.

When asked about her perception of the role played by the school/district in promoting African American teacher adjustment, Ms. Wynette answered:

None, easy answer. At least I didn't see it. If it was there, I didn't see it. If I wasn't the only one qualified, they would have let me go and gave it to their nephew or whoever. And by the time someone else qualified they couldn't get rid of me because I was tenured. I always felt like they really did not want me, they just tolerated me.

When asked to discuss her strategies for adjusting to her district as an African American teacher, Ms. Wynette said:

I would always tell myself who I am and why I here. Being a teacher is a calling, and you have to have special type of character/ attribute to be a good teacher. When you feel like throwing in the towel, ask yourself have you completed your purpose. I would self-evaluate myself. Stay focus on what I was a call to do. I ask

myself all the time how can I be a better teacher. My mother knew what I was

going to experience. And ask yourself am I finished yet. Some things I saw but I

ignored because it was wrong and scary to think that educators would behave that

way.

When asked about what information she would offer their school/district

regarding strategies to support African American teacher adjustment, Ms. Wynette went

on to say:

If I were a principal, I would reach out to the African American community and

find mentors like pastors, professors, or go outside the community to find African

American mentors for my teachers. We would have cultural diversity committee.

Let folks share their culture. Let it be known that all cultures are valued. To be

inclusive. It as if in these backwoods, no other culture exists. Bring in doctors

from other culture. I would promote diversity. In my classroom, I had a poster of

Kings and Queens from Africa, and Budweiser produced it. In the corner, it had

the Budweiser symbol, and the school wanted to take it down. I didn't I took a

piece of tape and covered the symbol. Because many of my Black students did not

know that they came from Kings and Queens. The principal asked me did I take

those posters down and I said no, but I did cover up the little Budweiser sign in

the corner. I felt that was an attack on my culture.

When asked to discuss policies or programs she would like to see in place to

support African American teacher adjustment in predominantly White, rural school

districts, Ms. Wynette stated:

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I like events at the school. I think there needs to be especially in this little

backwoods place, exposure for African American students to see up close Black

professionals. There are still some very serious prejudices here. They act as if the

holocaust which was bad is the only bad thing to happen in society.

When asked to describe her social experiences as an African American teacher at

her predominantly White, rural school district, Ms. Wynette offered her experience:

I didn't mix and mingle. I tried to get involved. The only thing I can remember is

a sewing group I belong to. It was a group of 5 teachers, and we would meet and

sew, but I knew two of them did not want me there. Three were nice and would

compliment me. I wasn't invited to many of their events. No party at their house. I

take that back one teacher did invite my mother and me to his house for dinner

and I never really knew why he invited me. Their children didn't play with my

son. They didn't come to my house, and I didn't go to theirs.

When asked about her perception of similarities or differences, if any, between

African American and White teacher socialization at their school district, Ms. Wynette

simply stated, "No comparisons."

When asked about her perceptions of African American teachers encountering

alienation and social isolation at the predominantly White rural school district, Ms.

Wynette recalled, "I would eat lunch many time by myself, and no one rallied around me,

and I didn't rally around them."

When asked about her perception of racism at her district, Mrs. Wynette

responded that "The principal would have been a good Klan's man, and he could have

been as far as I know. He was a horrible man."

When asked to describe her overall experience in pursuit of a successful career at her predominantly White rural school district, Ms. Wynette expressed that, "Not at all. Actually, they make you want to quit. Nothing about them encourages me to continue to teach. It was my love for children they kept me motivated to persevere. Non-promoted me."

Participant 6: Dr. Letterman

Dr. Letterman taught for three years in a rural school district in Central Appalachia. He currently holds the position of Full Professor and teaches math at a local community college. Dr. Letterman was born and raised here by his White mother and grandmother. He identifies as Black and belongs to the Kentucky Association of Blacks in Higher Education (KABHE) and wanted to participate in this study.

When asked to describe his adaptation process, Dr. Letterman recalled that "you never really get over that sense of being 'other.' Specially if you have encountered racism in your life prior to teaching."

When asked to compare his adaptation experiences as an African American teacher to his White counterparts, Dr. Letterman replied, "there is no comparison between the two." He finished by saying:

> The more "middle class" the surrounding persons are, the more comfortable I am. However, I never know if those people are just more polite and less vocal than the "lower class" people, or if they really accept me. Also, at my high school, out of about 800 students, only 3 or so would be African American. So Blacks were not just a minority, they were a microscopic minority.

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When asked to discuss his perception of assimilating, acculturating, or separating to adapt to his school district, Dr. Letterman noted:

I was the only African American teacher that I knew of in the county school system. I was certainly the only one at my school. There was an African American person in the cafeteria and one in maintenance, but I never had the experience of being in a social setting with individuals who were "like" me. I'd say African American teachers have to be on their best behavior and do a quality job, so they'll be accepted on the surface if not completely.

When asked about what advice he would offer future African American teachers regarding adaptation at a similar school district, Dr. Letterman replied:

Just be aware that students (and teachers) come from a variety of backgrounds. Some are accepting of people of color, and some aren't. You will never be able to tell entirely who accepts you based on race and who doesn't. The culture they come from is around them almost 24/7 most of their lives.

When asked about how he would advise a Central Appalachian, predominantly White rural school district regarding enabling African American teachers' adapting, Dr. Letterman began by stating:

They should make a concerted effort to recruit African American teachers. Maybe they could find incentives to get them to relocate here. Or, if not relocate, maybe they could offer incentives to African Americans from this area who want to teach here. Something like that would have to be done because otherwise, African Americans will remain by far in the minority here. They may increase very slightly in numbers but not in the quality of life in this region without ways to find

more than just minimum employment. They could recognize the value of minority

teachers by offering professional organizations where those teachers could meet

and development opportunities where they could learn more and talk about the

challenges of teaching in this area with its racial history. I mean, it's been within

my lifetime that I heard about crosses being burned in the county, and the Klan

having marched in London. Civil rights only happened in my lifetime, but you

can't legislate morality. Coming together professionally would help disseminate

information, adjust understanding, and provide connections for those African

American teachers.

On the topic of their relationship with their district's superintendent/principal, Dr.

Letterman never really knew the superintendent because he was warely in his company.

However, Dr. Letterman went on to describe his relationship with his principal:

I didn't have a good relationship with the principal at the school where I taught.

He acted like I didn't know how to teach, even though I put forth as much effort

as teachers who had been there a lot longer. I walked around the halls during my

planning period, and the older teachers would just be sitting there, with the

students doing work or sometimes not doing anything. I believe the principal's

reaction to me was based on race. They hired me in the first place because they

needed a math teacher quickly and I was handy. Plus, I usually interview pretty

well. I got the feeling that to be in good with the principal you had to be a football

coach or one of his friends. Also, if you're not an "alpha male" and come off like

you know everything, all self-assured all the time, people tend not to like you,

either. They tend to equate those types of personality traits with success or qualifications.

When asked to discuss how the relationship with the superintendent/principal contributed to his persevering, Dr. Letterman went on to elaborate:

I persevered despite the principal. I had a wife and two young children. I had to work. The county school system or the college were the only teaching opportunities in the county. I didn't want to try to relocate. This County was all I'd ever known. I knew I could teach, in spite of what the principal thought. Maybe I wasn't a natural, but like I said, I could teach just as well as some of the older teachers. If being a disciplinarian is the same as being a good teacher, let's just turn them all into military schools and hire a military officer to teach."

When asked to discuss how his relationship with other faculty contributed to his persevering, Dr. Letterman expanded on this sentiment, saying:

High school faculty didn't really have that much to do with me persevering, except sometimes when two or three of them would be nice to me, that helped. The same way, two or three students would treat me right and be especially nice to me, and that helped me stand the rest of it. The last year I was there I got to where I hated it and didn't want to go to work. If they hadn't laid me off, I would eventually have quit. They laid off new teachers every spring and hired back who they wanted for the fall.

When asked to discuss how he dealt with conflicts, Dr. Letterman did not recall any specific conflicts with anyone, not even the principal.

When asked to discuss the significance, if any, of the presence of African American teachers at the predominantly White rural school district, Dr. Letterman starting off by saying this about public schools:

Entrance into an almost entirely white culture, much of which is still not accepting of African Americans or anyone else of color. It is possible to get along to a degree with people who dislike you because of race, but some will always put you "in a box" because of their prejudice and understanding of who you are. This is not Lexington or Louisville. It's also not your stereotypical "hillbilly" town, either. There are people all across the spectrum. You can get along with most people if you don't walk around with a racial "chip" on your shoulder, regardless of their perspectives. The African American teacher has to have more on the ball in terms of realizing the context that they're in and trying to handle it in the best way. White people CANNOT know what it is like to be in the minority, especially in the overwhelming minority, unless they have lived, maybe even all their life, in a community or region where they are the minority. It's like when the comedian Richard Pryor went to Africa then somebody asked him how many Black people he saw there. He thought about it then said, "I didn't see any." It was the first time in his life that he'd been so immersed in a culture where he no longer felt "other."

When asked to describe his support system as an African American teacher at his predominantly White rural school district, Dr. Letterman replied, "It was non-existent. There was no race-based support. Most teachers were compartmentalized into doing their own thing, so other than a bare amount of professional camaraderie, there was no support system."

When asked to discuss how the support system is different from or similar to the support system available for White teachers in his district, Dr. Letterman stated:

There is no formal support system for African American teachers in the county schools. I don't even know if there are any African American teachers in any of the county schools. If there are, I'd say they're more likely to be associated with sports than anything else. White teachers benefit from being among people "like" themselves. That in itself is a support system. They may be judged on personality or qualifications but never on race. I'm ambivalent on Affirmative Action, if it goes to the point of passing over qualified candidates of one race in favor of candidates of another race (qualified or not), but then we have to decide whether we want to offer support systems for people of color, and before that, if we want to hire people of color to change perceptions and change our culture for the better.

When asked about his perception of the role played by the school/district in promoting African American teacher adjustment, Dr. Letterman started off by saying:

I'll say it in Appalachian: "They ain't nary'n." It isn't a factor because virtually none of them are African American, so it isn't an issue for them. I don't think it's a prejudiced choice; I just think they don't think of it. Of course, on the flip side, they could say they just want to accept those teachers of color through the normal professional channels. And as I said before, White teachers cannot feel the need for such things if they've never been in the minority and FELT the need for such things.

When asked to discuss his strategies for adjusting to his district as an African American teacher, Dr. Letterman explained:

At the high school, it was just trying to get along and deal with my "otherness" by myself, with no real support network. On the other hand, at the college, there is a support network there. The way my personality is, though, I tend to isolate myself a lot at times so I don't avail myself as much as I should of the opportunities that are there…through professional organizations and events, I mean.

When asked about what information he would offer his school/district regarding strategies to support African American teacher adjustment, Dr. Letterman added:

Realize that you have different people from diverse backgrounds. Not just region, but race, socio-economic status, cultural norms, and any number of other ways. Just because we occupy the same space doesn't mean we're on the same planet. Reach out to minorities in your midst. They have their own needs, and each brings to the table their own cultural and emotional makeup based on past experiences.

When asked to discuss policies or programs that he would like to see in place to support African American teacher adjustment in predominantly White, rural school districts, Dr. Letterman said:

For the county schools, an organization for African American teachers at the county level. Probably increased recruitment of African American teachers or the organization might not have enough members to call it an organization. Like I said, I don't even know if there are any African American teachers in the county school system. The system could start something so that the responsibility won't be on the teachers. But since the numbers are so small, and it's voluntary, there may not be many people involved at first. They'd probably do better with increasing recruitment first or at least at the same time.

When asked to describe his social experiences as an African American teacher at their predominantly White, rural school district, Dr. Letterman reported:

Just trying to fit into a culture that was partly mine, since I was raised by a white mother and grandmother, and partly wasn't, because I always felt like a stranger in the land since I'm biracial. I carry earlier experiences with me too, that color my perceptions of things. Like when I was a little kid, and I went with another kid to someone's house, and we were playing outside. He went inside for some reason, and I heard the woman ask him why he brought that "n" there. Without being briefed on the racial history of America, I somehow knew what that word and the rejection behind it meant. I didn't feel rejection in the county school system. I supposed I carry the sense of rejection with me, to a certain extent. There is more acceptance at the college level.

When asked about his perception of similarities or differences, if any, between African American and White teacher socialization at his school district, Dr. Letterman began by saying:

White teachers get the privilege of being among people "like" them, whether they realize it or not. Being an African American in the minority means being "unlike" most of the people around you. Unless those around you are committed to multiculturalism and tolerance, you never really feel that automatic acceptance due to race. Being the only African American teacher at a school means your socialization, if any, will be with those unlike you, at least racially.

When asked about his perceptions of African American teachers encountering alienation and social isolation at the predominantly White rural school district, Dr. Letterman responded:

In the county schools, I never felt purposely alienated by any particular actions, for the most part. My race and past experiences always leave me wondering who accepts me based on race and who doesn't. Which students come from families where racial epithets are common? What's their cultural background? Who is prejudiced but hides it well? That feeling is less prevalent at the college level, but the basic thoughts are still there.

When asked about his perception of racism at his district, Dr. Letterman answered that:

Public schools, and especially colleges, have policies in place to support multiculturalism and tolerance. I think things are better at the college level than at the public schools. I think any remaining racism would be covert, entrenched in certain individuals and embedded in the institutions or the culture. They should address why they don't have more minority teachers or students, and whether they are serving the ones, they have appropriately. They should teach their teachers and students that different doesn't necessarily mean "bad" or "evil."

When asked to describe his overall experience in pursuit of a successful career at his predominantly White, rural school district, Dr. Letterman replied:

I thank God I've had a good experience in higher education. Less so at the public high school. Colleges have a stronger tradition of tolerance than county schools. It tends to be enforced more at that level through policy and also in the traditional

academic culture. It's been an experience of being a round peg in a square hole, so to speak. As long as I live in Southeastern Kentucky, I will never be in the majority. I will never know what that's like, and majority Whites will never know what it's like to be me. But we can reach out to each other and try to make bridges and connections, learn from each other, and acknowledge that God has made us all different, our beliefs and experiences are different, and that should be embraced rather than ignored or denied.

Factors Affecting the Communicative Practices of African American Teachers

African American teachers frequently experience marginalization at predominantly White, rural schools, and thus develop communication strategies as a method of adaptation. As Orbe (1998) highlighted, recognizing and clarifying various communication strategies is a valuable way of understanding how dominant and non-dominant individuals communicate in society. Orbe's (1998) six factors detailed in chapter two helped guide the investigator's analysis of the participants' communicative practices.

Preferred Outcome

"Preferred outcome" refers to marginalized group members' conscious or unconscious decision to employ specific communication strategies in their relationship with dominant group members (DGMs). One of the essential factors that affects the practices that co-cultural group members use is the preferred outcome for their interaction. With that being said, NDGMs characteristically give some thought to how

their communication strategies affect their ultimate relationship with the hegemonic group members.

A preliminary investigation of the participants' experiences revealed an assortment of communicative practices NDGMs utilize while working in dominant organizational settings. The teachers justified their use of particular communication behaviors in terms of the influences for endorsing some individual strategies overs others. The participants built their communication framework based on joint considerations of the preferred outcome and appropriate communication approach, which gives credibility to the nine general orientations that NDGMs can utilize in mainstream organizations (see Table 2).

While the participants identified numerous communication approaches, they all effectively align with three basic orientations. The first option is that of a nonassertive assimilation orientation. A nonassertive assimilation orientation usually includes co-cultural communicative practices such as emphasizing similarities, non-confrontational and censoring self as a means of blending in with the dominant society (see Table 2). The second option is that of assertive assimilation, which attempts to restrict co-cultural differences and encourages blending into the dominant culture. On the other hand, this initial communication orientation employs a more assertive communication approach (see Table 2). The third option is that of aggressive assimilation. Unlike the previous two orientations, aggressive assimilation is perceived to be more self-promoting and hurtfully expressive. The aggressive assimilation orientation sometimes takes a confrontational stance in the effort to be like dominant group members (see Table 2).

Table 2. Communication Approaches

Practice	Brief Description
Emphasizing Commonalities	Focusing on human similarities while downplaying or ignoring co-cultural differences.
Developing positive face	Assuming a gracious communicator stance where one is more considerate, polite, and attentive to DGMs.
Censoring self	Remaining silent when comments from DGMs are inappropriate, indirectly insulting, or highly offensive.
Averting controversy	Averting communication away from controversial or potentially dangerous subject areas.
Extensive Preparation	Engaging in an extensive amount of detailed (mental, concrete) groundwork prior to interactions with DGMs.
Overcompensating	Conscious attempts—consistently enacted in response to a pervasive fear of discrimination—to become a "superstar."
Manipulating stereotypes	Conforming to commonly accepted beliefs about group members as a strategy to exploit them for personal gain.
Bargaining	Striking a covert or overt arrangement with DGMs where both parties agree to ignore co-cultural differences.
Dissociating	Making a concerted effort to elude any connection with behavior typically associated with one's co-cultural group.
Mirroring	Adopting dominant group codes in an attempt to make one's co-cultural identity less (or totally not) visible.
Strategic distancing	Avoiding any association with other co-cultural group members in an attempt to be perceived as a distinct individual.
Ridiculing self	Invoking or participating in discourse, either passively or actively, that is demeaning to co-cultural group members.
Increasing visibility	Covertly, yet strategically, maintaining a co-cultural presence within dominant structures.
Dispelling stereotypes	Countering myths of generalized group characteristics and behaviors through the process of just being one's self.
Communicating self	Interacting with DGMs in an authentic, open way; used by those with strong self-concepts.

Table 2 (continued)

Practice	Brief Description
Intragroup networking	Identifying and working with other co-cultural members who share common philosophies, convictions, and goals.
Utilizing liaisons	Identifying specific DGMs who can be trusted for support, guidance, and assistance.
Educating others	Taking the role of the teacher in co-cultural interactions; enlightening DGMs of co-cultural norms, values, etc.
Confronting	Using the necessary aggressive methods, including ones that seemingly violate the rights of others, to assert one's voice.
Gaining advantage	Inserting references to co-cultural oppression as a means to provoke dominant group reactions and gain an advantage.
Avoiding	Maintaining a distance from DGMs; refraining from activities or locations where interaction is likely.
Maintaining barriers	Imposing, through the use of verbal and nonverbal cues, a psychological distance from DGMs.
Exemplifying strengths	Promoting the recognition of co-cultural group strengths, past accomplishments, and contributions to society.
Embracing stereotypes	Applying a negotiated reading to dominant group perceptions and merging them into a positive co-cultural self-concept.
Attacking	Inflicting psychological pain through personal attacks on DGMs' self-concept.
Sabotaging others	Undermining the ability of DGMs to take full advantage of their privilege inherent in dominant structures.

Source: Orbe, M. P. (1998). From The Standpoint (s) of Traditionally Muted Groups: Explicating A Co-cuItural Communication Theoretical Model. *Communication Theory*, *8*(1), 1-26.

Field Experience

The impact of an individual's rearing is an essential consideration in the constant,

cyclical process of contemplating, choosing, and evaluating co-cultural communication

strategies. All the participants were born and raised in Central Appalachia. Furthermore, their entire educational and career pursuit was obtained within the region, with the exception of Ms. Christian obtaining one of her Bachelor of Arts in Washington, D.C. Across a lifetime of events, these NDGMs realized the necessity of utilizing certain tactics in different situations and thus enacted a variety of practices.

Abilities

The capacity to utilize multiple co-cultural communication strategies varies depending on specific individuals' characteristics and situations. Obviously, not all co-cultural group members will have the capability to enact certain strategies. Five of the six participants demonstrated the relevant skills necessary to enact different strategies. One of the participants appeared to lack the natural ability to engage in verbal abuse, personal attacks, or confrontational tactics. Moreover, most of the participants lacked the opportunity to network with other co-cultural group members, simply due to the demographics of their region.

Perceived Costs and Rewards

As a result of preferred outcome and situational context, NDGMs select their communicative practices based on perceived costs and rewards. Co-cultural group members assess the positives and negatives of a particular strategy; most of the time this procedure is guided by an individual's field of experience. Also, each communicative behavior is accompanied by benefits and weaknesses. Three of the participants seem to have received the ultimate reward - a long-lasting teaching career - and eventually retired from their predominantly White, rural school. However, regarding the remaining three, it

is worth noting that two of them pursued a successful teaching career at the local community college while one had an exemplary career as a social worker.

Communication Approach

Communication approaches can be assigned to three categories: nonassertive, assertive, or aggressive. Five of the six participants in this study could not be restricted to just one communicative approach. At some point in their career, three of the six utilized a non-assertive approach. A different set of three exhibited an assertive approach during periods of their careers. Only one displayed an aggressive approach to communicating.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

The researcher's initial goal for this dissertation was to shed light onto the dearth of African American teachers in predominantly White rural school district in Central Appalachia and to ascertain strategies employed by African American teachers acclimating in predominantly White rural school districts. Likewise, the study sought to identify policies and practices used by predominantly White rural school districts that support African American teachers' perseverance. Also, the researcher examined the role that professional relationships play in African American teacher persistence—in particular, those positive communication behaviors that lead to improved retention and reduced attrition. Given all this, the topic called for a thorough, in-depth, qualitative investigation, which inspired the study's chosen research method.

This study explored and described the lived experiences of African American teachers at a predominantly White rural school district in Central Appalachia. Specifically, it presented their perceptions regarding adaptation and perseverance in two school districts that has historically marginalized African American teachers. The researcher asked teachers to describe their relationships with administrators and colleagues, as well the role played by the school and surrounding district in creating a school climate that was welcoming to non-dominant group members. The participants in this study offered various perspectives regarding their experiences as African American teachers at majority White rural school districts: Half of them identified instances of isolation, alienation, or marginalization at the school level, while the other half reported

that they were accustomed to the culture and thus did not identify their experiences as unusual.

At the proposal phase of the study, I expressed a need to remove my own bias from the interviews that I would be conducting, as I, too, have been a substitute teacher in one of the school districts under study and had experienced many of the same issues as the participants. However, I was aware of my own experiences during my tenure in the school district and was thus able to distance myself from those experiences for a bias-free study. I was happy to notice that I did not comment or interject during the interviews. Also, the participants were much older and wiser than I was, so I lost myself in their descriptions.

Another area that called for reflection was my initial intent on contacting 10 administrators in Central Appalachia who employ African American teachers. I felt that White administrators in predominantly White rural school districts would want to provide referrals to valuable resources to gain a better understanding on how to recruit - and more importantly, retain - African American teachers. However, I did not receive a single referral or response from the administrators contacted. Thus, it remains unclear just how much importance the administrators of predominantly White rural school districts assign to having a diverse teacher population.

The sample in this investigation comprised three retired African American teachers who taught for 30, 32.5, and 43 years, and three African American teachers who taught for 3, 4, and 18 years before leaving the profession to pursue other careers. The fact that 10 Central Appalachian principals whose schools employ African American teachers did not respond to this study may indicate that these predominantly White rural

districts do not consider the shortage of African American teachers or a diverse teaching profession to be a problem. Perhaps as a result, the districts may have experienced high attrition, low retention, and a low number of African American teachers applying for positions in their district. Relatedly, the study concluded that White superintendents are consciously or unconsciously supportive of the veils of oppression. Meanwhile, the principals and White faculty in these districts remain purposefully negligent of the needs and issues that African American teachers confront as co-cultural group members at predominantly White school districts. Therefore, in reality, White superintendents, principals, and teachers in predominantly White rural school districts actions contradict democracy, acculturation, collaborative activism, inclusivity, and an empowering school culture/social structure. Regardless of the plethora of research that suggests that a diverse teaching workforce positively impacts all students.

This chapter synthesizes the literature on African American teachers' lived experiences in predominantly White rural school districts with the interviews of six former African American teachers. The researcher drew several conclusions based on an analysis of the transcribed data, which have been arranged according to the nine principal themes: adaptation; employment factors; support systems; communication factors; self-motivation; role and strategies of the school and district; recommendations for the school and district; advice for African American teachers in rural areas, and African American teachers' overall perceptions of their schools.

Principal Themes

Adaptation

    (1) Professional relationships and administrator support help African American teachers adapt to their predominantly White rural school district.

    (2) African American teachers adapt to a co-cultural school district better if they are enculturated in the Central Appalachian culture.

    (3) African American teachers who were influenced by a family member or role model who were educators adapt better in a predominantly White rural school.

    (4) African American teachers adapt better to a co-cultural school environment when they have an equity pedagogy and abide by a mission to help all children learn.

    (5) African American teachers who display autonomy adapt better in a predominantly White rural school district.

    (6) African American teachers who have a strong belief in an inclusive education adapt better in a predominantly White rural school district.

    (7) African American teachers who have equality embedded in their rearing adapt better at a predominantly White rural school district.

Employment Factors

    (1) The African American teachers' cultural capital greatly influences their decision to work at a predominantly White rural school.

    (2) Being intrinsically motivated influences African Americans decision to teach at a predominantly White rural school district.

    (3) Having a network in place which directly or indirectly connects African American teachers to the superintendent or a prominent member in their community.

(4) Being extended a contractual benevolence position.

(5) Being hired to create a false appearance of inclusive practices and a diverse school environment.

Support Systems

(1) African American teachers seek support from family members or other role models to persevere at their predominantly White rural school district.

(2) African American teachers report their support system as "good" when they earn the respect of the superintendent/principal.

(3) African American teachers' retention rate increases when they develop a professional relationship with their superintendent, principal(s), and colleagues.

(4) African American teachers perceive that the relationships they form with their superintendent, principal(s), and colleagues aid in their retention, especially when they develop mutual appreciation, respect, and sincerity.

(5) African American teachers employed at predominantly White rural school districts are encouraged to persevere when they perceive that they are valued and accepted.

(6) Retired African American teachers perceived that their principal assisted them in their careers.

(7) African American teachers rarely encounter other African American teachers in their school.

(8) African American teachers seldom reported having a mentor in their predominantly White rural school district.

(9) African American teachers did not recognize a structured support system in their predominantly White rural school district.

(10) African American teachers hardly ever interacted with colleagues outside of the school.

Communication Factors

(1) Trying to remove cultural differences, African American teachers rely on the assimilationist perspective.

(2) Trying to achieve a mutually beneficial collaboration with the dominant culture, African American teachers employ the accommodationist perspective.

(3) Distancing themselves from the dominant culture, African American teachers depend on the separationist perspective.

(4) Taking into account the needs of oneself and others, African American teachers often utilize assertive communicative practices.

(5) Being non-confrontational and putting the needs of others before their own, African American teachers apply the nonassertive communicative practices.

(6) When African American teachers are self-promoting and assuming control over the choices of others, they exploit aggressive communicative practices.

Self-motivation

(1) African American teachers employed at a predominantly White rural school derive intrinsic rewards from their work that encourage them to adapt and persevere.

(2) African American teachers employed at a predominantly White rural school have a positive perception of the profession.

(3) African American teachers knew from an early age that they wanted to be a teacher.

Roles and Strategies of the School and District

(1) African American teachers did not report any specific strategies that their school districts used to assist them in adapting or persevering.

(2) African American teachers who pursued other careers stated that race-based support from the school/district was non-existent.

(3) African American teachers who worked until retirement reported that strategies utilized by the school/district to assist African American teachers in adapting and persevering needs improvement.

Recommendations for the School and District

(1) African American teachers suggested that school districts could offer more engagement during Black History Month, as well as Black History classes.

(2) African American teachers recommended more books in the library about successful African Americans.

(3) African American teachers mentioned wanting more recognition and better incentives.

(4) African American teachers suggested that their school district reaches out to African American communities for mentors (e.g., pastors, professionals).

(5) African American teachers endorsed having a cultural diversity committee.

(6) African American teachers suggest that Predominantly White Rural School Districts make a concerted effort to recruit and retain African American teachers.

(7) African American teachers recommend that predominantly White Rural School districts offer a professional organization where African American teachers could meet and develop opportunities to meet and talk with other African American teachers in the region.

(8) African American teachers' campaign for predominantly White rural school districts to create a school culture where everyone is treated with dignity and respect, where the talents and skills of African American teachers are valued, and where diversity and inclusion are promoted attributes.

(9) African American teachers in predominantly White rural school districts promote equality and a diverse teacher workforce to increase academic achievement for all students, increase motivation and preservation, and provide an inclusive and adaptable service to everyone.

(10)   African American teachers' endorsement of a diverse teacher workforce into the fundamental values of a predominantly White rural school district can have a threefold effect: right for your school, good for faculty, staff, and administrators, and good for the communities served.

(11) African American teachers support creating a positive school climate where the principles of fairness, respect, equality, dignity, and autonomy are promoted and form part of the school's daily goals and behavior.

(12) African American teachers recommend the school and district fully support and promote inclusive strategies.

(13) African American teachers report that an all-inclusive teacher workforce that communicates its values and policies openly attracts a wider pool of African American faculty and talent.

(14) African American teachers found that predominantly White rural school districts that understand the needs of their African American teachers and make them feel valued and respected have greater success in the retention of African Americans.

(15) African American teachers advised that creating a culture change at school can bring benefits that spread much further than the confines of the school's walls.

(16) African American teachers offered that Undertaking a diversity review of your teacher workforce, creating an action plan to recruit and retain African American teachers, communicating the plan with teachers and put the plan into action.

(17) African American teachers advocate that predominantly White rural school district's core values must include a commitment to equality and a more diverse teaching workforce.

(18) African American teachers report that offering mentoring opportunities to new African American teachers would assist in their perseverance and adapting.

(19) African American teachers revealed that the review of policies and practices on a regular basis to ensure a friendly working culture.

Advice for Future African American Teachers in Rural Areas

(1) African American teachers have to be aware that faculty (and students) come from a variety of backgrounds that may or may not accept African Americans.

(2) African American teachers are a role model to all children, but especially African American ones.

(3) African American teachers have to persist and do it graciously.

(4) African American teachers cannot display anger or aggression.

(5) African American teachers have to suppress many feelings and thoughts.

(6) African American teachers are going to experience some inequalities, but ultimately have to endure.

(7) African American teachers have to stay abreast of policies and procedures.

(8) African American teachers have to remember their mission.

(9) Seek out some current or retired African American teachers for advice and guidance.

(10) Try to get along with administrators and co-workers and display your commitment.

(11) Being a teacher is a calling; thus, one has to have a particular type of character/ attribute to be a good teacher.

(12) Consider what one wants to accomplish and what the benefits will be.

(13) Think about what one says and how one says it.

African American Teachers' Overall Perceptions

(1) Most African American teachers revealed that they had a pretty good job and got along with everyone.

(2) One African American retired teacher reported that she enjoyed their 40-plus years or would not have stayed otherwise.

(3) Another African American teacher stated that they enjoyed their experience. For example, Mrs. Robinson stated: "No regrets got to do what I enjoyed doing and gain respect for doing it. I think my mission was a good one and I lived by it."

(4) Two African American teachers reported that they were not valued, but tolerated.

(5) One African American teachers described that his experience was "one of being a round peg in a square hole, so to speak. My last year if they did not fire me, I would have quit."

Limitations of the Study

The study was limited by the pool of available participants, restricted as it was to African American teachers in two predominantly White, rural school districts in Central Appalachia. While the participants had a broad range of teaching experience, their admissions cannot, in any case, be generalized to other teachers.

Obviously, the study would have benefited from new teacher-participants. However, research suggests that current African American teachers in predominantly White rural school districts are reluctant to participate in qualitative studies because of their fear of being identified. As it turned out, none of the ten principals who were contacted referred any current African American teachers for this study.

Moreover, the participants for this study were quite old, with an average age of 63. Younger teachers would have likely produced different perspectives. For example, how would younger teachers' training and maturity influence their ability to adapt and persist at a predominantly White school district relative to older African American teachers? Would their support systems be similar to or different from older, retired teachers? Would their communication approach(es) be different? What adaptation strategies might they select? These questions all need to be addressed in future research

on African American adaptation and persistence at predominantly White rural school districts in Central Appalachia.

Finally, the study data lacks a point of comparison with other teacher demographics. For instance, the researcher could have elicited the opinions of African American college professors in predominantly White community colleges in Central Appalachia and compared their experiences to those of the current study participants. This additional issue might be investigated in future research regarding African American professors employed at predominantly White rural community colleges.

Suggestions for Future Research

There is a definite need to continue research in this area. For one, scholars could obtain a larger sample of African American teachers in Central Appalachia, or even the entire Appalachian region, in order to determine whether they face similar struggles and employ similar communication strategies. Researchers might extend this idea to students, collecting data from successful African American students to identify their communication strategies at predominantly White rural school districts. Additionally, the present study could be replicated with a dual focus on current and retired African American administrators. More broadly, scholars could perform a comprehensive exploration of African American professionals working in predominantly White rural regions of Central Appalachia, which would improve our general understanding of their communication strategies.

Another possibility for research in this area would be to interview White teachers at predominantly White rural school districts and compare their communication strategies

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with those of African American teachers. Are they using the same strategies, and if so, are they achieving similar or different results? What factors drive their decision to employ certain strategies over others compared to what drives African American teachers?

Through such studies, researchers may identify barriers that lead to African American teacher attrition. Greater clarity in this regard might help administrators, regardless of race, better understand the effects of a positive school climate on teacher adjustment and perseverance. Furthermore, studies like these would benefit educators and students across the spectrum, as increasing the number of African American teachers in predominantly White rural school districts may improve co-cultural understanding, students' academic success, and culturally responsive teaching.

Conclusions

Due to their diminishing populations, many rural communities are preserving their heritage through school curriculum that revisits traditions and cultures of old. The blend of monoculture values, instructional practices, and curriculum development create a dominant form of racism in predominantly White rural school districts in Central Appalachia. Schools in predominantly White rural school districts need to invite different perspectives into their classrooms, to counter this racism. Regrettably, predominantly White rural school districts continue to demonstrate a lack of commitment to recruiting and retaining African American teachers whose backgrounds parallel those of their rapidly increasing number of students, especially in Central Appalachia. Findings revealed that predominantly White rural school districts do not have any specific

strategies in place to assist African American teachers in adapting or persevering. Even the African American teachers who retired reported that strategies utilized by the school/district to assist African American teachers in adapting and persevering needs improvement. Also, two of the three who left K-12 in this study reported that race-based support from the school/district was non-existent. Likewise, they indicated that administrators were not prepared to handle the issues that accompanied hiring African American teachers in predominantly White rural school districts. Similarly, two of the African American teachers who changed careers struggled to challenge components of racism and racial insensitivity which led to their feelings of isolation.

Why do African American teachers employ some communication strategies as previously outlined? The most common reason is "preferred outcome." For example, all of the participants in this study expressed the wish to be viewed by their administrators and colleagues as competent, intelligent, and approachable. All of them enacted some combination of strategies in order to achieve that goal.

Overall, the participants' responses indicate that, relative to their White counterparts, African American teachers confront entirely different issues in their attempt to adapt and persist in predominantly White rural school districts in Central Appalachia. As such, these school districts need to address issues of co-cultural relationships and adaptation while adopting strategies that can help African American teachers acclimate and persist.

The findings from this investigation substantiate the observations of other researchers, notably Alonzo-Osborne (2008), who studied why African American educators teach, and continue to teach, in rural Georgia school districts. Numerous

factors influence the communication of African American teachers in predominantly White rural school districts in Central Appalachia. Correspondingly, these factors directly affect the ways African American teachers communicate at predominantly White rural schools. Additionally, the ways those African American teachers communicate in a predominantly White rural school district(s) can be summarized as follows: positioned in a particular field of experience that directs their perceptions of costs and rewards related to their ability to engage in various communicative practices. Also, African American teachers will embrace communication orientations centered on their preferred outcomes and communication approaches appropriate the conditions of precise settings. Furthermore, this study shows that African American teachers most frequently utilize the accommodation strategy to adapt to the co-cultural environment, with the hope of being acknowledged and accepted by the dominant group.

The retirees from this study recognized that the type of community they were reared in, their acclimation to the rural lifestyle, and a supportive principal were factors influencing their decision to persevere at their predominantly White rural school district. Also, all the participants reported that they achieved greater autonomy by continuing their education and becoming more educated than most of their White counterparts. Thus, while the participants welcomed the support of their White colleagues, it was not mandatory for their success.

Three African American teachers who pursued other careers reported strained communications or limited communications with their principal and colleagues in their schools. Two of the three indicated that their districts completely lacked any support systems intended to help African American teachers adapt and persevere. These

admissions illuminate the continued need to develop a teaching force that is diverse to

reflect the broad range of nation's young people.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX

A: INFORMED CONSENT FORM

My name is Tony Sweatt, and I am a doctoral candidate at Eastern Kentucky University (EKU) researching the topic "The Lived Experience of African American Teachers at Predominantly White Rural Schools in Central Appalachia Utilizing Co-Cultural Adaptation." The purpose of the study is to add information that may improve the practices of Central Appalachian Predominantly White Rural School Districts (CAPWRSD's) which could lead to greater success culturally and socially for all teachers. I am conducting research using interviews to aid in improving the experiences of African American teachers in CAPWRSD's. The interviews will occur after school at the location chosen by the teacher. The interviews will be recorded and transcribed. Names will not be used in the transcription, and all statements will be kept confidential by the researcher. It will take 90 to 120 minutes of your time. The data from the interviews will be analyzed, and themes that emerge will be shared with the administration at CAPWRSD's for use in planning and improvements for recruitment and retention of African American teachers.

Participation in this research is strictly voluntary. You may refuse to participate. You can quit at any time. If you stop or refuse to participate, the benefits or treatment to which you are otherwise entitled will not be affected. You may withdraw from participation at any point in the process.

Your Signature below indicates your willingness to participate in this research.

Name (Please Print) _____

Date _____

Signature _____

If you have any questions about this study, you may contact Dr. Roger Cleveland at 859-622-6678 or roger.cleveland@eku.edu. If you have questions or concerns about the study and want to talk to someone independent of the research, you may call an IRB Administrator at 859-622-3636.

APPENDIX

B: INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

My name is Tony Sweatt. Thank you for participating in this study. The purpose of this study will be to investigate how African American Teachers perceived their day-to-day experiences and relationships at predominantly white rural school districts (PWRSD) and to signify how such viewpoints impact their retention in PWRSD. Your name and any other identifying information will be kept confidential. My interest in the subject has developed over the last 18 years or so of working in education. I would like the opportunity to discuss with you your experiences in a PWRSD to examine the school climate and how that impacted you on a daily basis. The information collected will be used for possible future publication as well as to complete my dissertation. If at any time you have a question let me know.

Here is a consent form which needs to be signed. The interview will be recorded for future transcription and analysis.

APPENDIX

C: IRB FORM

Institutional Review Board
Application for Expedited/Full Review

1. **Title of Project:**
   The Lived Experience of African American teachers at Predominantly White Rural Schools in Central Appalachia Utilizing Co-Cultural Adaptation.

2. **Principal Investigator/Faculty Advisor:**
   Principal Investigator Name: Tony E. Sweatt
   Department: College of Education - Educational Leadership and Policy Studies
   Email Address: tony_sweatt@mymail.eku.edu
   Mailing Address: 56 Johnathan DR Harlan, KY 40831
   Campus Phone #: 606-589-3214   Off Campus Phone #: 606-273-6513

   Faculty Advisor (required if PI is an EKU student): Dr. Cleveland

3. **Other Investigators:** Identify all other investigators assisting in the study. Attach additional pages if needed.
   Name: _____   Authorized to obtain consent? ☐YES ☐NO
   Responsibility in Project: _____
   Name: _____   Authorized to obtain consent? ☐YES ☐NO
   Responsibility in Project: _____
   Name: _____   Authorized to obtain consent? ☐YES ☐NO
   Responsibility in Project: _____
   Name: _____   Authorized to obtain consent? ☐YES ☐NO
   Responsibility in Project: _____

4. **Study Period of Performance:** upon IRB approval through 12/31/2018
   Note that research may not begin until IRB approval has been granted.

5. **Funding Support:** Is the research study funded by an external or internal grant or contract?
   ☒NO ☐YES
   Funding Agency: N/A
   Copy of funding application narrative attached? ☐YES (required if study is funded)

6. **Risk Category:**
   ☒Not greater than minimal risk. Minimal risk means, "The probability and magnitude of physical or psychological harm that is normally encountered in the daily lives, or in the routine medical, dental, or psychological examination of healthy persons."
   ☐Greater than minimal risk, but of direct benefit to individual participants
   ☐Greater than minimal risk, no direct benefit to individual participants, but likely to yield generalizable knowledge about the subject's disorder or condition
   ☐Research not otherwise approvable which presents an opportunity to understand, prevent, or alleviate a serious problem affecting the health or welfare of participants

7. **Type of Review:** ☐Full Review (skip item #8 below) ☒Expedited Review (complete item #8 below)

8. **Expedited Review Categories:** If the proposed study represents not greater than minimal risk, and all activities fall within one or more of the categories below, the study is eligible for expedited review. Please check all applicable categories of research activities below.

   1) ☐ Clinical studies of drugs and medical devices only when condition (a) or (b) is met.
      (a) ☐ Research on drugs for which an investigational new drug application (21 CFR Part 312) is not required. (Note: Research on marketed drugs that significantly increases the risks or decreases the acceptability of the risks associated with the use of the product is not eligible for expedited review.)
      (b) ☐ Research on medical devices for which (i) an investigational device exemption application (21 CFR Part 812) is not required; or (ii) the medical device is cleared/approved for marketing and the medical device is being used in accordance with its cleared/approved labeling.

   2) ☐ Collection of blood samples by finger stick, heel stick, ear stick, or venipuncture as follows:

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(a) ☐ From healthy, nonpregnant adults who weigh at least 110 pounds. For these subjects, the amounts drawn may not exceed 550 ml in an 8 week period and collection may not occur more frequently than 2 times per week; or

(b) ☐ From other adults and children considering the age, weight, and health of the subjects, the collection procedure, the amount of blood to be collected, and the frequency with which it will be collected. For these subjects, the amount drawn may not exceed the lesser of 50 ml or 3 ml per kg in an 8 week period and collection may not occur more frequently than 2 times per week.

3) ☐ Prospective collection of biological specimens for research purposes by noninvasive means. Examples: (a) Hair and nail clippings in a nondisfiguring manner; (b) deciduous teeth at time of exfoliation or if routine patient care indicates a need for extraction; (c) permanent teeth if routine patient care indicates a need for extraction; (d) excreta and external secretions (including sweat); (e) uncannulated saliva collected either in an unstimulated fashion or stimulated by chewing gumbase or wax or by applying a dilute citric solution to the tongue; (f) placenta removed at delivery; (g) amniotic fluid obtained at the time of rupture of the membrane prior to or during labor; (h) supra- and subgingival dental plaque and calculus, provided the collection procedure is not more invasive than routine prophylactic scaling of the teeth and the process is accomplished in accordance with accepted prophylactic techniques; (i) mucosal and skin cells collected by buccal scraping or swab, skin swab, or mouth washings; (j) sputum collected after saline mist nebulization.

4) ☐ Collection of data through noninvasive procedures (not involving general anesthesia or sedation) routinely employed in clinical practice, excluding procedures involving x-rays or microwaves. Where medical devices are employed, they must be cleared/approved for marketing. (Studies intended to evaluate the safety and effectiveness of the medical device are not generally eligible for expedited review, including studies of cleared medical devices for new indications.) Examples: (a) Physical sensors that are applied either to the surface of the body or at a distance and do not involve input of significant amounts of energy into the subject or an invasion of the subject's privacy; (b) weighing or testing sensory acuity; (c) magnetic resonance imaging; (d) electrocardiography, electroencephalography, thermography, detection of naturally occurring radioactivity, electroretinography, ultrasound, diagnostic infrared imaging, doppler blood flow, and echocardiography; (e) moderate exercise, muscular strength testing, body composition assessment, and flexibility testing where appropriate given the age, weight, and health of the individual.

5) ☐ Research involving materials (data, documents, records, or specimens) that have been collected or will be collected solely for non-research purposes (such as medical treatment or diagnosis). (Note: Some research in this category may be exempt from the HHS regulations for the protection of human subjects. 45 CFR 46.101(b)(4). This listing refers only to research that is not exempt.)

6) ☒ Collection of data from voice, video, digital, or image recordings made for research purposes.

7) ☒ Research on individual or group characteristics or behavior (including, but not limited to, research on perception, cognition, motivation, identity, language, communication, cultural beliefs or practices, and social behavior) or research employing survey, interview, oral history, focus group, program evaluation, human factors evaluation, or quality assurance methodologies. (Note: Some research in this category may be exempt from the HHS regulations for the protection of human subjects 45 CFR 46.101 (b)(2) and (b)(3). This listing refers only to research that is not exempt.)

8) ☐ Continuing review of research previously approved by the convened IRB as follows:
(a) ☐ Where (i) the research is permanently closed to the enrollment of new subjects; (ii) all subjects have completed all research-related interventions; and (iii) the research remains active only for long-term follow-up of subjects; or
(b) ☐ Where no subjects have been enrolled and no additional risks have been identified; or
(c) ☐ Where the remaining research activities are limited to data analysis.

9) ☐ Continuing review of research, not conducted under an investigational new drug application or investigational device exemption where categories two (2) through eight (8) do not apply but the IRB has determined and documented at a convened meeting that the research involves no greater than minimal risk and no additional risks have been identified.

9. **Background:**

   a. **Provide an introduction and background information for the study and provide a discussion of past research findings leading to this study. Cite literature that forms the scientific basis for the research.**

Over the past 65 years, the percentage of African American Educators in the U.S. has declined while the public school population has become more diverse (Lash & Ratcliffe, 2014). Historically, the teaching profession for African American was a means of upward mobility. In the 1950s, nearly half of all African-American professionals in the United States were teachers (Cole, 1986; Hudson & Holmes, 1994; Stuart, Meier & England, 1989). In 2012, Kentucky had only 4.5 percent minority teachers in proportion to 13 percent minority students (Strange et al., 2012). Furthermore, in the 1953-1954 school year, 6.8 percent of the teachers were African American, and in the 2007-2008 school year, the percentage dropped to 3.7 percent (Strange et al., 2012). In other words, there were more African American teachers in the 1950s than in 2007 proportion to White teachers.

In recent years, there has been an increase of studies on the importance of African American teachers in the K-12 public school system. Nearly 1 million school teachers in K-12 public schools are located in rural areas (NCES, 2011-12). According to Bireda and Chait (2011), minority students make up 40.7 percent of the public school population, nationally. In over 40 percent of public schools, there is not a single teacher of color (Bireda and Chait, 2011). This is a drastic increase considering that in 2005, Kochuk stated nearly 33 percent of U.S. public schools had no minority teachers. In comparison to the national K-12 student enrollment, Kentucky African American students make up 10.7 percent and their White counterparts comprise of over 80 percent (KDE, 2013). Nationally, White teachers make up 81.9 percent, and African American teachers cover 6.8 percent (NCES, 2011-12). In Kentucky, White teachers include 96 percent of the total population of teachers in Kentucky while minorities consist of 4 percent (KDE, 2013). In some rural areas, Caucasians comprise an overwhelming majority of 98 percent of the teacher population (Brown & Butty, 1999). Therefore, the vast majority of rural students will not be taught by a minority teacher during their K-12 school experience (Duarte, 2000; Gursky, 2002).

While the number of African-American teachers has never fully recovered from the dismantling caused by the Brown v. Board decision, U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan (2010) and Richard Riley (1998) both stressed the necessity to develop a diverse teaching force to teach our children. Nearly half of all K-12 public schools in Kentucky are located in rural areas, and only nine other states have a larger percentage of rural students (Strange et al., 2012). Therefore, research must be conducted to identify how predominantly White rural school districts and African American educators' can increase a co-cultural environment, strategies to promote African American teacher adjustment, and support systems. Eventually, results from this study will add to the body of literature concerning African American teachers teaching in predominantly White rural public schools. Findings from this study can be influential in assisting African American teachers in creating a co-cultural environment, developing strategies to promote African American teacher adjustment, and increasing support systems.

Many factors are contributing to the shortage of African American educators in the K-12 Public Schools Districts, especially in rural areas. The most prevailing ones appear to be a decline in college students majoring in education, attrition rate of new teachers, more lucrative careers (Simon, 2005), the feeling of isolation, neglect, and lack of a good support system (Mullinix, 2002). Researchers of diversity in the K-12 Public School System have focused on the experiences of racial minorities and challenges of group cohesion among teachers (Epstein, 2005; Harvey & Harvey, 2005). Also, research suggests the need for more culturally and linguistically diverse teacher in the K-12 public school classroom (Baber, 1995; Boutte, 1999; Sleeter, 2001; Nieto, 2003). The findings from this study will provide rural school administrators, policymakers, and researchers with valuable information to tackle minority teacher recruitment and retention efforts.

African American students', are enhanced by the experiences, expectations, and teaching practices that African American teachers bring to the classroom (McCray et al., 2002). Studies of African American teacher's pedagogies indicate that their practices support the importance of education and its relationship to academic, political, social, and economic accomplishment and advancement of African American (King, 1993; Ladson-Billings, 1995). Minority teachers are needed for many reasons. Gordon (1994) suggested several reasons why minority teachers are required including the low academic performance of minority students, the inability or unwillingness of middle-class teachers to teach students from low-income minority families, the passion of minority teachers to educate minority students, the need for all students to experience a multiethnic teaching force, and the necessity of a sincere and diverse representation of ideas and abilities in an educational force that contributes to the development of America.

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10. Research Objectives:
   a. **List the research objectives.**

   The purpose of this inductive, theory-building, and descriptive multiple-case study is to examine factors inflluencing African-American teachers' decision to work in a predominantly white rural school in Central Appalachia. This research study will involve an interview utilizing open-ended questions to obtain African American teachers experiences while working in a predominantly white rural school. U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan (2010) and Richard Riley (1998) both stressed the necessity to develop a diverse teaching force to teach our children. In addition, this study will focus on how individuals that are traditionally marginalized utilize specific communication strategies in the dominant societal structure, in an attempt to adapt and persevere. Results will reveal personal perceptions from African Americans viewpoints, including opinions about both work and home settings.
   Specifically, the research questions answered by this study will be as follows:
   1. What are the perceptions of African American teachers regarding adaptation at predominantly White rural schools in Central Appalachia?
   2. What is the African American teachers' perception of support systems available to them at predominantly White rural schools in Central Appalachia?
   3. How do relationships develop between African American teachers and colleagues at predominantly White rural schools in Central Appalachia?

11. Subject Population:
   a. **What criteria will be used to determine the *inclusion* of participants in the study?**

   The participants will be African American teachers with one or more years of teaching experience in Central Appalachian predominantly White rural public school district.

   b. **What criteria will be used to determine the *exclusion* of participants in the study?**

   Any Teacher not identified as African American or who does not or has not taught in a Central Appalachian predominantly White rural public school district.

   c. **Anticipated Number of Participants** *(maximum):* 5 to 8 interviews

   d. **Age Range of Participants:** 22 and above

   e. **Gender of Participants:** ☒ Male ☒ Female or ☐Gender not relevant to study

   f. **Ethnicity of Participants:** African American or ☐Ethnicity not relevant to study

   g. **Health Status of Participants:** _____ or ☒Health status not relevant to study

   h. **Which of the following categories of subject will be included in the study? Please check all that apply.**
   1. ☒Adult Volunteers
   2. ☐College Students age 18 and older
   3. ☐Minors (under age 18) – attach Form M
   4. ☐Pregnant Women (other than by chance)
   5. ☐Fetuses/Neonates
   6. ☐Hospital Patients
   7. ☐Patients at Inpatient Mental Health Facilities
   8. ☐Decisionally-Impaired Individuals – attach Form I
   9. ☐Institutionalized Decisionally-Impaired Individuals – attach Form I
   10. ☐Prisoners – attach Form P
   11. ☒Other – Please Describe: African American Teachers who teach or have taught in Central Appalachian predominantly White rural public school district.

12. Project Location:

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a. Where will the study take place?

South East Kentucky

b. **If the study will take place at a location other than EKU, attach a letter from an authorized representative of the organization granting permission to use facility for research purposes.**
☐ EKU only ☐ Letter(s) attached

c. **Will any data be collected through organizations other than Eastern Kentucky University?**
☐ No ☒ Yes, complete the following:
  ▪ Will personnel of the organization be involved in the data collection process or have access to data after collection? ☒ No ☐ Yes - If yes, list personnel on page 1, include copies of CITI completion reports, and define role here: _____

13. Recruitment of Participants:

a. **How will prospective participants be identified for recruitment into the study?**

A purposeful sampling will be utilized in this study. The demands of this study require that I target African American teachers who have taught or currently teaching in a Central Appalachian predominantly White rural public school district.

b. **Describe the recruitment procedures to be used with potential participants.**

I initially identified several former African American teachers who taught in a Central Appalachian predominantly White rural public school district. In addition, the researcher will implement a snowball sampling to gain the required number of participants. Also, a recruitment letter soliciting participation will be sent via email to each potential participant.

c. **Recruitment materials to be used:** Check all that will be used and attach copies: ☐None
☐Advertisement, ☐Flyer, ☐Telephone Script, ☐Verbal Recruitment Script, ☒Cover Letter, ☐Other: Interviews

14. Ensuring Voluntary Participation

a. **Who will be responsible for seeking the informed consent of participants?**

The principal investigator

b. **What procedures will be followed to ensure that potential participants are informed about the study and made aware that their decision to participate is voluntary?**

An inform consent form along with a cover letter will be provided to all participants selected for interviews which will be signed by the participant and the interviewer. The signed consent form will be kept under lock and key. Three years after the conclusion of the study, the informed consent forms will be destroyed by shredding.

c. **How will consent be documented?**

The signed consent form will be used for documentation for the interview.

d. **What consent documents will be used in the study? (Attach copies of all).** ☒Informed Consent Form, ☐Parent/Guardian Permission Form, ☐Child/Minor Assent Form, ☒ Oral Script, ☐Other:

15. Research Procedures

a. **Describe in detail the research procedures to be followed that pertain to the human participants.** Be specific about what you will do and how you will do it. If applicable, differentiate between standard/routine procedures not conducted for research purposes from those that will be performed specifically for this study.

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This research project relies primarily upon participant perceptions using qualitative data. An inductive, theory-building, and descriptive multiple-case study will be utilized. According to Denzin and Lincoln (1994), this method "focuses on the socially constructed nature of reality, intimate relationships between the researcher and what is studied, and the situational constraints that shape the inquiry" (p. 4). Case study methods include systematically collecting adequate data about an individual, social setting, event, or group to permit the researcher to understand how it operates or functions (Berg, 1998). The population for this study will include African American teachers who teach or have taught at a predominantly white rural school in Central Appalachia.

A letter will be sent or read to each participant explaining the study, proposed uses for data. Permission to conduct this study will be obtained by submitting applications to the Eastern Kentucky Institutional Review Board (IRB). A recruitment letter, an informed consent form will be emailed/mailed to each participant. Data collection will end the summer semester of 2016.

The recruitment letter will identify the researcher's name, role, institution, and the name and purpose of the project. Participants will be informed of the confidentiality of their responses, benefit of participation. Information on participant withdrawal, data security, and researcher contact information will also be included.

Data analysis will be conducted using a standardized interview, all of the questions will be phrased to obtain both negative and positive responses, and to include rationales for the reply. Themes and patterns within the individual accounts will be developed. The initial questions will ask participants to respond to their decision to pursue a teaching career in a predominantly white rural school district in Central Appalachia. The second set of questions will relate to the teachers' perception of the support systems available to their district. The third set will address their perceptions of relationships that developed with their principal and colleagues at their school. The fourth set will focus on their perceptions of the strategies the school and district utilize to help African American teachers adapt to the environment. The fifth set will ask the teachers to describe their perceptions of their overall experiences as an African American teacher in a predominantly white rural school district.

16. Potential Risks

    a. **Describe any potential risks**—physical, psychological, social, legal, or other.

        The interviews conducted as part of this study are expected to be equivalent to the risk involved in daily living.

    b. **What procedures will be followed to protect against or minimize any potential risks?**

        All research related materials will be kept by the researcher for three years in a locked storage area. Electronic files will be stored on password protected computers. Printed materials will be stored in a locking file cabinet or office when not in possession of the researcher. At the end of three years, all written/printed materials will be shredded. All electronic files will be deleted at the end of the same period.

    c. **How are risks reasonable in relation to the anticipated benefit to participants and in relation to the importance of the knowledge that may reasonably be expected to result?**

        The benefits of the study are worth the potential risk. Although, steps have been taken to protect the identify of the participants.

    d. **Will alternative choices be made available to participants who choose not to participate?**
        ☒No   ☐Yes, Describe: _

17. Incentives and Research Related Costs

    a. **Will incentives be offered to participants?** ☒ No   ☐ Yes, complete the following items:
        1) What incentives will be offered? _____
        2) If monetary compensation will be offered, indicate how much the participants will be paid and describes the terms of payment. _____
        3) Describe the method of ensuring that the incentives will not compel individuals to agree to participate in the study. _____
        4) Describe how the incentives will be funded. _____

b. **Will there be any costs to the subjects for participating?** ☒ No ☐ Yes: Describe any costs that would be the responsibility of the subjects as a consequence of their participation in the research. _____

18. **Research Materials, Records, and Confidentiality**
   a. **What materials will be used for the research process?** Include a description of both data collected through the study as well as other data accessed for the study.

   The researcher will utilize Fifty-four interview questions to assess the teachers' perceptions of co-cultural relationships, the influence the relationship had on adaptation, and whether the ability to adapt affected their persistence. At the completion of each interview, the researcher will transcribe the recordings verbatim and ask the participant to read the transcripts for confirmation or clarification. Each interview will be considered as one case, and all case studies will be conducted uniformly. After each case, the researcher will utilize a cross-case analysis to develop a sketch of the co-cultural relationships, adaptation strategies, and germane information related to persistence. Additionally, a matrix will be prepared to view parallels and similarities in the responses.

   b. **Who will have access to the data?** If anyone outside the research team will have access to the data, provide a justification and include a disclaimer in consent documents.

   The researcher will have acess to the data, along with the dissertation chair. Data provided will not have participant names or other individually identifiable information attached.

   c. **Describe how and where research records will be stored.** Note that all research-related records must be maintained for a period of three years from the study's completion and are subject to audit. Following the completion of the study and throughout the records retention period, student research records must be maintained by the faculty advisor who signs the application.

   Interview audio recording will be kept on a password protected computer. Any and all hard copies collected for the study, including participants confidentially agreement will be kept in a locked file cabinet in Tony Sweatt's office.

   d. **How will data be destroyed at the end of the records retention period** (i.e., shredding paper documents, deleting electronic files, physically destroying audio/video recordings)?

   All files will be deleted from the computer and hared copies will be shredded at the end of 5 years.

   e. **Describe procedures for maintaining the confidentiality of human subjects data**.

   All identifialbe information will be removed from the data with pseudonym replacing participant names. The matching lookup file will be kept on a password protected computer.

19. **Application Components** *(Check all items that are included)*:
   A completed application package must include the following:
   ☒ Application Form
   ☒ CITI Training Completion Reports for all investigators, key personnel, and faculty advisors
   ☐ If applicable: Form M: Research Involving Minors/Children
   ☐ If applicable: Form P: Research Involving Prisoners
   ☐ If applicable: Form I: Research Involving Decisionally-Impaired Individuals
   ☐ If applicable: Form W: Research Involving Wards of the State
   ☐ If applicable: recruitment materials (i.e., advertisements, flyers, telephone scripts, verbal recruitment scripts, cover letters, etc.)
   ☒ If applicable: Consent form (required in most all cases), assent form (for subjects who are minors), and parent/guardian permission form (if subjects are minors)
   ☒ If applicable: Instrument(s) to be used for data collection (i.e., questionnaire, interview questions, or assessment scales)
   ☐ If applicable: grant/contract proposal narrative (required if study is funded)
   ☐ If applicable: letter(s) granting permission to use off-campus facility for research
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20. Principal Investigator Statement:

I certify that this document fully discloses the involvement of human subjects in this research study and that human subjects will not be involved in any other way. I agree to follow the approved protocol in the conduct of this study and to abide by EKU Policy 4.4.12: Protecting Human Subjects in Research (http://www.policies.eku.edu/academic/human_subjects/4.4.12_protecting_human_subjects_in_research_bor_1.11.pdf).

I agree:

A. *to accept responsibility for the scientific and ethical conduct of this research study;*

B. *to obtain prior approval from the Institutional Review Board before implementing any changes to the research protocol or the study's documents, including those approved for recruitment, consent, and data collection;*

C. *to immediately report to the IRB any serious adverse reactions and/or unanticipated effects on subjects which may occur as a result of this study;*

D. *to maintain records related to this protocol for a period of three years following the project's completion;*

E. *to adhere to IRB reporting requirements, including annual continuing reviews and filing the final report.*

Tony Sweatt
_____
Name   Signature   Date

21. Department Chairperson's Approval: (If the PI is also the Department Chair, the Dean or equivalent must sign.)

I have reviewed this application and attest to the scientific merit of this study and the competency of the investigator(s) to conduct the project.

James R. Bliss
_____
Name   Signature   Date

22. Faculty Advisor's Approval: (required if PI is an EKU student)

I have reviewed this application and attest to the scientific merit of this study and the competency of the investigator(s) to conduct the project. I understand that, as faculty advisor, I am responsible for guiding work on this project to ensure that the research protocol and EKU Policy 4.4.12: Protecting Human Subjects in Research (http://www.policies.eku.edu/academic/human_subjects/4.4.12_protecting_human_subjects_in_research_bor_1.11.pdf) *are followed. I understand that I am responsible for maintaining records related to this study for a period of three years from the study's completion. I understand that, as faculty advisor, I am responsible for ensuring that reports are filed with the IRB in a timely manner and agree to file reports on behalf of the student researcher if necessary.*

Roger C. Cleveland
_____
Name   Signature   Date