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Voices from the Marginalized: The Experiences Black Employees have on Search Committees and the Role of Institutional Racism

Jacqueline Drummer
Rowan University

VOICES FROM THE MARGINALIZED: THE EXPERIENCES BLACK EMPLOYEES HAVE ON SEARCH COMMITTEES AND THE ROLE OF INSTITUTIONAL RACISM

by

Jacqueline Drummer

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Dissertation Chair: MaryBeth Walpole, Ph.D., Professor, Department of Education Leadership, Administration, and Research (ELAR)

Committee Members:
Dr. Monica Reid Kerrigan, Ed.D., Professor, Department of Education Leadership, Administration, and Research (ELAR)

Dr. Steven M. Rose, Ed.D., President, Passaic County Community College

Dedications

My dissertation is dedicated to my life partner and number one champion, Douglass E. Anderson, my children Shakema, Hassan, Shareef, and Joy who have been great motivators and supporters, and my grandchildren Simone and Jawaan who cheered me on. I am so very proud that you all are successful and have found your path in life. My mother, Jessie Tillman was kind, smart, strong, and resilient survived many life challenges and hardships but never complained or lost faith. My father Curtis E. Tillman, was a kind and generous man, and an entrepreneur who worked hard every day to provide for his family.

My ancestors, without their strength, courage, and perseverance I may not exist or have the opportunity to accomplish my life goals. I give homage to their extraordinary fortitude in the face of unimaginable and inhumane conditions imposed on them. And still, we rise!

Abstract

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Mary Beth Walpole, Ph.D.
Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership

The history of Black people across the globe is marred by structural racism created by colonialism. Structural racism is deeply embedded in the American culture and academia is not excluded from this phenomenon. The research demonstrates that the problem of racism is not only prevalent in four-year academic institutions but also exists in two-year colleges. Our academic institutions are a microcosm of the broader society whereby we bring our worldviews, biases, and beliefs with us into the workplace. When these views are negative towards marginalized groups, actions can be adverse and impact the experiences of these demographics.

My qualitative single case study reveals a need to illuminate the experience of Black administrators serving on search committees at Traditionally White Community Colleges (TWCCs). Based on my literature review and demonstrated by my findings, the experiences of Black professionals at a TWCC who served on a search committee describe an environment of institutional racism that impacts their experiences. Sharing my findings could help this TWCC in their aspirations of becoming a more diverse and inclusive institution, and encourage other TWCCs to review their search committee practices for biases and make the appropriate changes. In addition, my findings can add to the gap in the research on the experiences of Black administrators serving on search committees at TWCCs.

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Introduction

Structural Racism

A Legacy of Racism

The United States and racism have a very, very long history; a history that includes various covenants of exclusion and discriminatory practices against Black people. These exclusionary practices have no limits, are entrenched in every system, and are generational (Desmond & Emirbayer, 2015; Goodman et al., 2019; Kendi, 2017; King, 2021; Reskin, 2012; Smedley & Smedley, 2018). This racial discrimination is deep-seated in Historically White Colleges and Universities (HWCUs) and adversely impacts the experiences of Black employees (Bonilla-Silva & Peoples, 2022; Burke & Robinson, 2019; Jackson et al., 2014; Nagin et al., 2022; Wilder, 2014). Since higher education institutions were traditionally founded to educate and employ White people and excluded Black people from entering these establishments except as servants, Black people were forced to open their own academic institutions or take legal actions to attend Whites only postsecondary education institutions (Fuentes & White, 2016; Nagin et al, 2022; Obas, 2018). Overall, Black people in the U. S. did not gain consistent access to HWCUs until the second half of the 20th (Fuentes & White, 2016; Nagin et al, 2022; Obas, 2018). This racialized history is the foundation for the enduring Whiteness in academia and for the biases that impact the possibilities for Black people to secure employment opportunities at these institutions (Carr, 2016; Sensory & DiAngelo, 2017). Like their White peers, Black professionals educate themselves to have meaningful careers. They forge ahead with hope and aspirations to contribute to the greater good by

sharing their knowledge, skills, and talents in the academic arena. However, as it is within the greater society, a double standard reinforced by race and racism looms consistently over Black people, dimming their potential and chances for opportunities that are often designated for White people (Augoustinos & Reynolds, 2012; Bonilla-Silva & Peoples, 2022; Dovidio et al., 2017).

When we look at the origins of Black people in this nation and follow their treatment history, the history confirms the denial of rights that were bestowed upon White people. From the Reconstruction Era to the present day, repression has been a constant in the lives of Black people. Black people were initially excluded from all of the major enactments of the New Deal Era, including the Social Security Act, the National Labor Relations Act, and the Fair Labor Standards Act (Kijakazi et al., 2019; Perea, 2014). Although Black people have defended this country by fighting in every war from the colonial period to date in which this country was involved, they are still discriminated against. Black Americans who fought in these wars, particularly World War II, were denied benefits, especially benefits from The Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944, better known as the G.I. Bill, a law that provided a range of benefits to White servicemen, such as money for college, training, workforce development programs, and low-cost mortgages (Meschede et al., 2022; Perea, 2014; Smithsonian American Art Museum, 2015). These benefits also paved the way for the creation of the middle class and the suburbs where White people enjoy a better quality of life, whereas, Black people are designated lower class, redlined from these neighborhoods, and relegated to neighborhoods that offer less quality of life, widening the income and wealth gap

between Black and White people (Gottschalk, 2019; Meschede et al., 2022; Smithsonian American Art Museum, 2015; Perea, 2014).

It is evident that Black people have been marginalized, subjugated, oppressed, discriminated against, and unfairly racialized (Desmond & Emirbayer, 2015; Goodman et al., 2019; Glaude, 2016; Kendi, 2017). These types of chronic stressors place a tremendous burden on Black people and can be life-changing as described by post-traumatic slave syndrome (DeGruy, 2016). Many studies have shown that racial stress, socioeconomic deprivation, the opportunity gap, and other traumatic experiences affect Black people (Alexander, 2020; Anderson, 2017; Goodman et al. 2019; Jones, 2002; Washington, 2008). And yet, Black people remain steadfast in confronting these challenges and commit themselves to persevere while navigating sometimes hostile or unwelcoming spaces that are inhibiting and counterproductive to their success (DeCuir-Gundy et al, 2018; Hollis, 2016; Mena & Vaccaro, 2017; Zambrana et al, 2016).

Some scholars have provided an in-depth analysis that chronicles the history of the founding of America and the legislation of race. These scholars present factual evidence that race is a social construct without any biological foundation and that fabricated racial categories have no biological attributes (Desmond & Emirbayer, 2015; Goodman et al., 2019; Reskin, 2012). It is evident that the history of the founding of America is deeply rooted in genocide, enslavement, Jim Crow laws, and other sadistic accounts of human rights violations, subsequently creating a legacy of oppression, subjugation, discrimination, and other atrocities suffered by Black people (De Gruy, 2016; Goodman et al., 2019; Kendi, 2017; Smedley & Smedley, 2018). The colonizing settlers instituted this social and political exploitation for hierarchal purposes and to

ensure intergenerational supremacy and privilege for the White race. Many scholars continue to report the enduring permanent adverse effects of state-sanctioned racism on the Black diaspora, and how racial categories and cultural ranking dictated by race and class determine positionality in society (Glaude, 2016; Goodman, et al., 2019; King, 2021; Ladson-Billings, 2016). Race is an important social construct because it establishes a person's identity, position in society, socioeconomic status, and political power (Glaude, 2016; Goodman, et al., 2019; Kendi, 2017). The construction of race is significant because this creation plays a major role in shaping our interpretations of individual and group differences as well as our ability to form social and cultural networks and relationships (Bhattacharya, 2017; Bourdieu, 2018; Consuella, 2016; Glaude, 2016; Goodman, et al, 2019). The perceptions we hold about race provide a basis to justify the marginalization of Black people based on our concept of inferiority and superiority. Although race is a social concept, the reality of racism is embedded in every aspect of Black life through dehumanizing laws and biased policies that have exacerbated inequality (Goodman, et al, 2019; King, 2021). This overarching system of racism is evident economically, academically, politically, and structurally in the lives of Black people.

Institutional Racism

The history of racism and its effects on the Black diaspora includes enslavement and segregation, White racial hate-filled violence and terrorism, police brutality, inequality in the justice and political systems, lack of healthcare and medical exploitation, poverty and poor housing, and an education debt (Alexander, 2020; Anderson, 2017; Bonilla-Silva & Peoples, 2022; Geronimus, 2023; Glaude, 2016; Goodman et al. 2019;

Jones, 2002; Ladson-Billings, 2006; Reskin, 2012; Skloot, 2010; Washington, 2008; Williams, 2008). Since the forces of racism are ever-present, and all institutions in the U.S. are impacted by these forces and all deserve analysis, it is important to comprehend the many ways that White domination has impacted the lives of Black people and created racial inequities that are reproduced in every sector of society through prejudice and racial biases that are endured regularly by Black people. However, the focus of this study is on institutions of higher education because institutions of higher education sometimes like to think that they are immune from systemic racism but that is not the case. The empirical evidence demonstrates that racial inequalities including persistent employment discrimination in higher education institutions continue and essentially create a culture and climate that subsequently compromises the experiences of Black employees leading them to feel marginalized, as well as negated from upward mobility and the ability to gain tenured faculty positions (Flaherty, 2020; Gold et al., 2010; Jackson et al., 2014; Pickett et al., 2021; Whitford, 2020). The numbers from The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), (2020) unequivocally demonstrate that employment discrimination in higher education persists, indicating that 74% of full-time faculty at public four-year postsecondary institutions are White and approximately 77% of full-time faculty at public two-year postsecondary institutions are White. Additionally, across two-year and four-year postsecondary education institutions in 2017, roughly 80% of the administrators were White and typically in higher-ranking positions with higher salaries than Black administrators (Bichsel et al., 2018a). Moreover, of the chief student affairs and student life officer positions, 75% are White professionals, and 80% of the chief human resources officers are White professionals. These numbers clearly show

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discrimination in the hiring and promotion of Black professionals, leading to a lack of opportunities and the glass ceiling effects, which fosters feelings of being devalued and unwelcomed (Jackson et al., 2014; Whitford, 2020).

Therefore, it is imperative to explore the racial discrimination prevalent in higher education institutions to illuminate the racial disparities that exist and how the legacy of racism has profound implications for those classified as the Black race. The hegemonic legacy of race and racism has created a double standard in higher education whereas Black employees at Historically White Colleges and Universities (HWCUs) are caught in a vicarious predicament from the perception of inferiority that the dominant White culture can hold about them, promoting attitudes and behaviors that inhibit Black employees from a full campus experience, including adverse search committee experiences, biased hiring practices, limited career mobility, and denial of tenured faculty positions (Gold et al., 2010; Hakkola & Dyer, 2022; Levin et al., 2015; McCray, 2017; Whitaker, 2019). Black employees report feeling unwanted and unwelcomed at HWCUs (Flaherty, 2020; Levin et al., 2015; Pittman, 2012; Smith et al, 2012; Whitford, 2020). They feel unwanted because they are viewed as unequal in their knowledge and abilities and unwelcomed because they can be perceived as threats to White employees who feel entitled to these positions (Flaherty, 2020; Pittman, 2012; Smith et al, 2012). There are widespread views held by large numbers of White people that Black people as a race simply lack the ability and qualifications to hold important positions in academia, particularly positions in which they are entrusted with making important decisions, especially with the teaching of White students (McCray, 2017; Thompson, 2020). This institutional praxis of discrimination creates barriers that negatively impact Black

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people's ability to obtain positions of power and authority at HWCCs as well as Traditionally White Community Colleges (TWCCs).

Racism at HWCUs continues the perpetual cycle of social inequality that relegates Black people to second-class status through discrimination in hiring practices, marginalization from tenured faculty positions, a lack of promotional opportunities, and limited prospects to secure senior-level positions (Gold et al., 2010; Hanebuttle, 2018; Levin et al., 2015; McCray, 2017; Webster, 2019; Whitaker, 2019; Wijesingha & Ramos, 2017). These institutions were originally created for Whites only, but through the civil rights movement of the 1960s that helped to enact federal laws that prohibit discrimination against people of color, Black folks finally gained entry to these institutions (Fuentes & White, 2016; Nagin et al, 2022; Obas, 2018). Although the laws changed prohibiting discrimination, the adverse racism perpetuated by some people in power, organizations, and institutions has not been eradicated. As such, lingering racialized practices and policies that were instituted to exclude Black people continue the exclusionary practices of underrepresented groups. This exclusion is apparent in the hiring practices, the lack of opportunities, and the inconsequential career advancement that Black people contend with to date (Gold et al., 2010; McCray, 2017; Wijesingha & Ramos, 2017). However, in recent years, there has been some improvement, with a growing number of opportunities for Black employees to achieve a few senior-level administrative positions and tenured faculty positions, perhaps in part due to interest convergence whereby, the dominant White group's interest converges with the minoritized group's interest (Barnett, 2020; Chun & Evens, 2015; Dorsey & Chambers, 2014; Lewis & Shah, 2021; Levin et al., 2015; Taylor, 2016; Wolfe & Dilworth, 2015).

Additionally, some HWCUs are implementing diversity initiatives in response to calls from critical stakeholders to diversify the administrative and faculty ranks (Bhopal, 2022; Lewis & Shah, 2021; Luke, 2019; Pickett et al., 2021). Because of the enduring cycle of structural racism that impacts equity for minoritized groups, the current infrastructure at HWCUs is not sufficient to support the equity challenges that they can have. Therefore, a diversity initiative, a dedicated framework with deliberate intentions to improve the policies and practices of the institution, fosters a rigorous effort to hire minoritized individuals, and improve the workplace experiences and outcomes of underrepresented groups. Diversity initiatives are geared to employ innovative ways to eliminate pervasive discrimination and disadvantage of target groups and create an environment of inclusion and equity (Bhopal, 2022; Lewis & Shah, 2021; Luke, 2019; Pickett et al., 2021).

As a result, there has been a concerted effort to improve upon opportunities available to Black professionals, but more still needs to be done to ensure that diversity initiatives continue to be fulfilled (Barnett, 2020; Pickett et al., 2021; Patton et al., 2019; Smith, 2020). More needs to be done because, according to the data, Black professionals remain woefully underrepresented in America's institutions of higher education. Nationally, Black professionals in senior-level administrative positions account for less than 8% of the positions, compared to their White counterparts who hold 80% of the positions (CUPA-HR, 2020). In addition, Black faculty account for 7% of the full-time positions while White faculty account for 74% of the full-time positions (Colby & Fowler, 2020; NCES, 2020). These numbers demonstrate tribal behavior at HWCUs stemming from institutional racism that maintains a historical bias against Black professionals seeking to secure senior-level positions and full-time faculty positions

(Bonilla-Silva & Peoples, 2020; Chun & Evens, 2015; Gaffney, 2018; Glaude, 2016; Levin et al., 2015; Luke, 2019; NCES, 2020). This in-group loyalty of tribalism within the White dominant group in postsecondary institutions can be weaponized against Black professionals subsequently sidelining them from opportunities because of the institutional racism that has prescribed generational entitlement and privilege for White people. Now that some institutions are implementing measures to counteract these inequities, these allegiances are being challenged. While there has been some improvement in the area of equity, White women have benefited the most from affirmative action initiatives and other inclusion initiatives at postsecondary education institutions, enabling them to achieve senior-level positions in higher education more often than people of color thus facilitating their career goals and economic success (Taylor, 2016; Dorsey & Chambers, 2014). Even though these initiatives were implemented, White males at the most senior leadership levels are still the norm in academia, symbolic of the White patriarchal power structure that is representative of the broader social system, a socio-political system where the power and influence are held by White males (Gaffney, 2018; Goodman et al., 2019; Lederman, 2022).

While a small percentage of Black professionals have attained senior-level positions at HWCUs as a consequence of the institutions' diversifying their ranks, this small step toward equity has not yielded a substantive influx of Black professionals holding senior leadership positions. As stated above, diversity initiatives are intended to increase the inclusion of racially underrepresented groups by implementing practices that seek to break down the racial barriers that exclude them. However, the scholarly research tells us that these initiatives, although helpful, have not necessarily achieved the goal of

leadership equity for Black professionals in some of the most senior-level positions that White professionals maintain (Bhopal, 2022; Lewis & Shah, 2021; Luke, 2019; Pickett et al., 2021). Arguably, the goal of ascension to leadership equity held by Black professionals is not shared by those in power at HWCUs. And despite the incremental gains within thirty years, the data reveals that the percentage of Black professionals that have achieved senior-level positions at HWCUs is minor (Gagliardi et al., 2017; NCES, 2020; Snowden, Jr., 2019; Whitford, 2020). In 1986, 91.9% of the nation's college and university presidents identified as White. In 2016, 83.2% of all college and university presidents identified as White, while 16.8% of the presidents identified as people of color; women of color represented 5% and men of color represented 12% (Broad & Ferguson, Jr., 2012; Gagliardi, et al, 2017; Kim, 2013). The racial and ethnic composition of all senior higher education administrators in 2016 was 86% White, 7% Black/African American, 3% Latinx, 2% Asian, and 1% other (Bichsel & McChesney, 2017). If the leaders at these institutions want to effect change, they must hire Black professionals into senior-level roles to develop the leadership pipeline (Finkel, 2022; Levin et al., 2015; Wrighten, 2018). Doing this will provide opportunities for future Black professionals to succeed since the current strategies alone are not adequate in securing the goal of hiring Black professionals in senior-level positions (Pickett et al., 2021; University and College Union, 2016; Wrighten, 2018). It may be advantageous for institutions to implement more aggressive diversity training and racial bias training on campuses as part of their strategic plan, and empower change leaders who see and acknowledge the inequities between Black and White employees and who will act to ensure equal opportunities for all employees (Fullan, 2020; Fradella, 2018; Levin et al., 2015; Pickett et al., 2021).

These change leaders (Fullan, 2020; Pickett et al., 2021) must understand how racism (Goodman et al., 2019) and White privilege (Kendall, 2012; McIntosh, 2003) reinforce opportunity hoarding (Glaude, 2016) and the professional reproduction (Sule', 2014; Vodenko et al., 2019) of White people in senior leadership positions through disenfranchising Black people. Change leaders must be mindful of racism and advance equity by implementing the right metrics and processes that will expand the same access to opportunities that White employees possess to Black employees and prohibit opportunity hoarding and professional reproduction to build a more equable workforce. Glaude (2016) contends that opportunity hoarding exemplifies how White people are granted access to better opportunities because society values White people more than Black people. And professional reproduction illustrates how White privilege is utilized to prevent Black people from obtaining positions that White people customarily secure because Black people are devalued, and are thus undeserving (Kendall, 2012; McIntosh, 2003; Sensory & DiAngelo, 2017; Sule', 2014; Vodenko et al, 2019).

Black higher education employees have shared their frustration with the inability to achieve tenure and promotion because of institutional racism that continues to marginalize historically underrepresented populations (Flaherty, 2020; Jackson et al, 2014; Levin et al., 2015; O'Meara et al, 2014; Whitford, 2020). This is reflected by the lack of Black deans, the scarcity of Black faculty in full-time tenured positions, and the normalcy of the lack of a Black person holding the position of president or vice president at HWCUs (Finkel, 2022; Haynes-Burton, 2007; Hollis, 2016; Moody, 2012; Joseph, 2020; Rodriguez, 2015). This troubling situation is a consequence of systemic racism which continues to be an underlying issue fostering a lack of racial diversity at HWCUs.

Strategic hiring practices in higher education can give the illusion of inclusion through the calculated hiring of Black professionals in positions of lesser authority and power; since Black employees traditionally and continuously are concentrated in lower-level positions in their profession compared to their White peers (Bichsel et al., 2018a; University and College Union, 2016). Some scholarly studies on postsecondary institutional hiring practices suggest that once the diversity hiring goal is met, the department and/or division ceased recruitment of minoritized candidates although additional vacancies remain (Gardner et al.; Wilson, 2019) revealing how these actions have led to the failure of leadership equity impeding the Black experience in academia, contributing to the lack of representation, and inhibiting equity advocacy for Black professionals (Jackson et al, 2014; Lewis, 2016; Wrighten, 2018).

Black employees report a lack of mentoring and support for career development compared to their White peers, leading to difficulties in gaining senior-level promotions (Frazier & Bazner, 2022; Johnson, 2015; Laverick, 2016; Lewis, 2016; Mondisa, 2014; Moody, 2012). Black faculty report the tenure and promotion processes are ambiguous, making it difficult to get tenure. Some of the workplace issues are rooted in the legacy of anti-Blackness and the systemic racism that is baked into the system through the institution's culture and climate, all-White tenure committees, microaggressions, and microinvalidations, the unequal distribution of work, and the lack of support from White colleagues for advancement (Briggs, 2017; Campbell-Whatley et al., 2015; Colella et al, 2017; DeCuir-Gunby et al., 2018; Sue & Spanieman, 2022). These problems make Black faculty question whether they are wanted or valued. These disparities minimize the importance of Black faculty and can erode their value and cause forced isolation (Marx &

Ko, 2019; Zambrana et al, 2016). Until HWCUs recognize the vital role that Black

faculty play in the evolution of these institutions' progress and longevity, Black faculty

will continue to be marginalized and underrepresented. The lived experiences and

leadership of Black faculty can aid in reaching diversity goals, recruiting historically

underrepresented student populations, ensuring positive academic experiences for

students, providing culturally sensitive curricula, sharing diverse knowledge and skills,

and supporting Black students in ways that White faculty may not be able to. In addition,

Black faculty can help disrupt the harmful racial stereotypes, dangerous rhetoric, and

exclusionary propaganda that can prevent them from being an esteemed part of the

institution (Banks, 2016; Bernal & Villalpando, 2016; Gabriel, 2019; Leask, 2015; Levin

et al., 2015). Black educators cherish the opportunity to mold future generations for

global success, and as the literature points out, all students including White students

benefit from having faculty of color (Banks, 2016; Gabriel, 2019; Llamas et al., 2021).

It is evident that although Black people have the credentials to compete for

leadership positions, they remain vulnerable to racialized discriminatory practices that

commonly marginalize them from securing these positions (Hakkola & Dyer, 2022;

Jackson et al., 2014; McCray, 2017; Whitaker, 2019; Wolfe & Dilworth, 2015). The

literature indicates that White people are more likely to be hired, occupy senior-level

positions, have more opportunities for advancement, and are apt to be paid higher wages

and bonuses in comparison to Black people (Bayer & Kerwin, 2016; CUPA-HR, 2020;

Darity et al., 2018; Donovan & Bradley, 2019; Gottschalk, 2019; Jackson et al., 2014;

Nelson & Vallas, 2021; Patten, 2016; Rodgers, 2019; University and College Union,

2016; Whitaker, 2019). White employees characteristically report to a White supervisor

who can advocate for promotion opportunities to advance their careers (Burke & Robinson, 2019; Whitaker, 2019). Consequently, Black employees experience this culture as one of who you are and who you know, more so than what you know, an example of the social and cultural capital networks that promote social mobility for White employees while marginalizing Black employees (Bhattacharya, 2017; Bourdieu, 2018; Glaude 2016; Kallschmidt & Eaton, 2019; Lobnibe, 2018; Spaulding, 2010). White employees have more progression opportunities, whereas Black employees normally do not, partly because they lack the social and cultural capital networks that are inherently rooted in this race-based culture (Bhattacharya, 2017; Bourdieu, 2018; Consuella, 2016; Glaude, 2016).

These resources and others provide a window into why Black people do not get hired in leadership positions (Gold et al., 2010; Hakkola & Dyer, 2022; Liera & Hernandez, 2021; McCray, 2017). Although racism is the underlying cause, racism encompasses many attitudes and actions beyond the notion of entitlement. While entitlement is a major cause, those who buy into the depravity of the White supremacy culture believing that White people are superior and Black people are inferior can bring this worldview into the workplace. If they are serving on search committees to hire for positions, these people can adversely impact the chances of a Black candidate achieving the position even if they are the most qualified candidate because those with racist ideologies can formulate reasons to disparage and disqualify the Black candidate (Hakkola & Dyer, 2022; Liera & Hernandez, 2021; McCray, 2017). Racism coupled with fears of replacement can bring about the mindset of a zero-sum game or the belief that hiring a Black person takes away an opportunity from the entitled White person (Ariz &

Aviel, 2019; Dwyer & Gigliotti, 2017; Gaertner & Dovidio, 2014). This ideology can obstruct the Black candidate's chances of acquiring the position.

Community Colleges

Community colleges are different in many aspects from four-year colleges and universities, from their open-access admission policies to the type of students that traditionally enroll at community colleges, the types of curricula being taught, and the lower cost compared to four-year colleges and universities (Beach, 2011; Cohen, 2014). Students who enroll in community college tend to be older, first-generation, and may work full-time or part-time. Between 2017-19, the national data estimates that the average age of community college students is 27 years old; 30% are first-generation with the majority being Latinx, 62% of full-time students and 72% of part-time students work (American Association of Community Colleges, 2022). Since the demographics of TWCCs are rapidly changing, it would behoove these institutions to create inclusive strategies to support these demographics if they want to remain relevant.

Over the past few decades, community college enrollment of minoritized students appears to have increased, yet the hiring of racially diverse employees has not (Cross & Carmen, 2022; Davis & Fry, 2019; Levin et al., 2015; Robinson, et al., 2013). The data demonstrate that in the 2020 academic year, community colleges were more diverse in their student population showing that nationally the majority of students enrolled for credit were racially minoritized students with 27% Latinx, 7% Asian, 12% Black, 1% Native American, 4% two or more races, 4% other or race unknown, 1% nonresident foreigner, and 44% White (American Association of Community Colleges, 2022). However, this diversity is not reflected in their employee population which shows that

nearly 77% of the faculty are White, and over 73% of the administrators are White (Davis & Fry, 2019; U. S. Department of Education, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System, 2016). Although several community colleges are considered Latinx-serving institutions with the largest number of enrolled students of this demographic, studies on community college faculty argue that White faculty continue to account for most postsecondary teaching positions across the ranks. In 2020, nearly three-quarters of all full-time faculty were White, 78.8% full professors, 74.3% associate professors, 70.0% assistant professors, and 74.0% instructors (U. S. Department of Education, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System, 2016; Robinson, et al., 2013).

While further studies on community colleges show that students benefit in an array of ways when their faculty, advisors, mentors, and deans broadly reflect their backgrounds and experiences, community colleges are still negligent in hiring faculty and administrators of color (Llamas et al., 2021; Robinson, et al., 2013). This lack of diversity starts with indifferent leadership, inauthentic institutional hiring practices, issues with the search committee process, and when Black candidates are employed they often encounter a lack of professional development that limits career advancements and upward mobility (Gold et al., 2010; Hakkola & Dyer, 2022; Levin et al., 2015; McCray, 2017; Whitaker, 2019). TWCCs should realize the opportunities in diversity and adopt responsive policies and practices that are essential to support racially diverse populations on its campuses, beginning with implementing best practices that interrogate policies and practices that reinforce Whiteness, challenging any rigid mindset that does not support pluralism, and changing procedures that convey a message of non-belonging to students and employees.

The Role of the Search Committees

Some of the scholarly literature reveals that search committees can be the main culprit in denying Black candidates' opportunities because the search process can be riddled with latent racial codes and other implicit racial biases and prejudices (Bennett & Walker, 2018; Flaherty, 2020; Pittman, 2012; Smith et al, 2012; Whitford, 2020), sending clear signals to the Black candidates that the reproduction of the White status quo remains the goal in hiring limiting the recruitment of Black employees (Gold et al., 2010; Hakkola & Dyer, 2022; Levin et al., 2015; McCray, 2017; Whitaker, 2019).

The fundamental role of a search committee is to identify, evaluate, and recommend the most qualified candidate based on the job description for employment through a recruiting process. The committee is made up of current employees who examine the credentials of the candidates through an interview process utilizing job-related questions and may include a teaching demonstration for faculty candidates (Dutt-Ballerstadt, 2022; Grier & Poole, 2020; Liera & Hernandez, 2021; Mc Cray, 2017; Sensory & Di Angelo, 2017). The search process is required to be inclusive, fair, and equitable, and follow anti-discrimination laws to provide an opportunity for racially underrepresented candidates to participate (McCray, 2017; Sensory & Di Angelo, 2017; White-Lewis; 2020). However, the search committee can be ineffective in fulfilling the charge to diversify the employee ranks due to subjectivity and prevailing actions of the bad actors on the committee. These actions of bad actors can exclude candidates that are deemed less acceptable than those that resemble the White search committee members (McCray, 2017; Sensory & Di Angelo, 2017; White-Lewis; 2020).

As previously mentioned, search committees are contributors to the lack of diversity in many ways, including tribalism, ineffective leadership, the lack of racial diversity in the committee composition, biases among committee members, adversity to racial diversity, and inadequate implicit bias training (Hakkola & Dyer, 2022; McCray, 2017; Sensory & Di Angelo, 2017). Some of the research also indicates that a zero-sum game mindset from the cognitive flaws of some committee members increases the resistance to diversity in the faculty and administrative ranks because some members imagine that the gain of Black employees changes the dynamic of the institution and therefore may result in the loss of their privilege or power (Ariz & Aviel, 2019; Dwyer & Gigliotti, 2017). These attitudes and behaviors can have a disparate racial effect on hiring preventing the diversifying of the employee ranks and revealing a lack of commitment to diversity.

These behaviors can intimidate Black employees serving on the search committee and they may feel powerless to confront their colleagues because they are in the minority. Many times, when Black employees are on search committees they are in the minority since there are so few Black employees at the institution and they feel that they are the token to provide the impression of inclusion (Hakkola & Dyer, 2022; Lewis, 2016; McCray, 2017; Settles et al, 2019). Being in this inequitable position may lead Black employees to decline to serve on search committees. This decision can be detrimental to diversifying the labor force. And it could encourage Black employees to seek employment at institutions that they believe are inviting and welcoming to Black professionals (Belanger & Gorecki, 2019; Samad et al., 2022).

Problem Statement

Employment Disparities

Although institutional racism in the academic setting is nothing new, as evidenced by the plethora of research expounding on the impact of institutional racism on the experiences of Black employees at four-year HWCUs (Brooks et al., 2013; Hakkola & Dyer, 2022; Jackson & O'Callaghan, 2014; Kayes, 2006; Ramdeholl & Jones, 2022; University and College Union, 2016), less is known or written about the experiences of Black employees in the TWCC context and potential impacts of institutional racism. Sadly, Black professionals are regularly dealing with racial microaggressions, challenges to their scholarship, subtle comments regarding their credentials, overt tokenism, alienation and isolation, and feeling unwelcome (Campbell-Whatley et al., 2015; De Gunby et al., 2018; Galloway, 2020; Gardner et al., 2014; Gasman, 2016). As a result, an exploration of the search committee process, the experiences of Black employees on search committees, and factors that can adversely impact the experiences of this demographic is warranted.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative research case study is to explore the experiences of Black employees in the TWCC context regarding their search committee experiences and the dynamics potentially inhibiting them from participating on search committees. Central to my research study is the examination of race, racism, and White privilege, and how these phenomena contribute to Black professionals' experiences (Gaffney, 2018; Goodman et al. 2019; Kendall, 2012; Leonardo, 2016; McIntosh, 2003). I argue that racialized practices perpetuate a double standard in the TWCC setting that impacts Black

employees' experiences. This argument is based on scholarly research that examines the racial hierarchy in postsecondary education institutions and the data from multiple studies outlining the disparities in the senior administrator ranks at TWCCs, which show how White people hold the vast majority of the senior administrators' positions (Bichsel et al, 2018a; Espinosa et al., 2019; McChesney, 2018; NCES, 2020; U.S. Department of Higher Education, 2016). However, since most of the research focuses on four-year HWCUs, this study focus is Colonial Community College, a TWCC in the northeast. Focusing on a TWCC provides an opportunity to understand how institutional racism impacts the experiences of Black employees on this campus and aids my goal of contributing to the existing body of research.

This study aims to investigate the search committee experiences of Black employees at Colonial Community College to see if the patterns of racism that exist at four-year HWCUs for Black professionals are occurring at TWCCs. Therefore, it is imperative that when the experiences of Black employees on search committees at Colonial Community College are studied, they are studied holistically to provide a true understanding of what these employees are experiencing to support the institution and the students. In addition, it is essential to describe how or whether these efforts to support students and the institution are recognized or ignored because their contributions are not valued equally to those of White employees. These explicit racialized behaviors and practices that regularly disenfranchise Black employees sustain a climate of inequity that diminishes the value of Black employees, and their experiences, and may damage their trust and confidence with their employer or in their employment (Campbell-Whatley et al., 2015; Flaherty, 2020; Whitford, 2020; Whitaker, 2019; Williams, 2019).

Research Questions

This study has three research questions as listed below.

1. What is Colonial Community College's formal search committee structure?

2. What have been Black professional employees' experiences serving on search committees?

3. To what extent have Black professional employees experienced racial bias in search committee practices at Colonial Community College?

Context of Study

Colonial Community College (CCC) is a public TWCC in the northeast and utilizes a semester-based academic calendar to offer more than 90 degrees and certificates to a diverse population of students. In Fall 2020, the student headcount was approximately 7,100 students, of which 47.0% were White, 24.0% Latinx, 11.0% Black, 8.0% Asian, 7.0% race unidentified, 2.4% identified as two or more races, 0.3% Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, and 0.2% American Indian/Alaskan Native. According to institutional data, in 2020 there were 101 White full-time faculty and 22 full-time faculty of color, 236 White adjunct faculty and 57 adjunct faculty of color, and 371 non-faculty employees (including non-work study student workers) of which 247 were White and 124 were people of color. Out of the non-faculty employees, a small number of this demographic are Black administrators. While four-year HWCUs are still struggling with improving diversity within their ranks, various studies indicate that there have been some improvements in hiring Black professionals in the TWCC sector (Aiello, 2020; Hughes, 2015; Robinson et al., 2013). However, just because some TWCCs may have had more success in hiring Black professionals, it does not change the history of these higher

education institutions nor confirm that the experiences of Black professionals at TWCCs are better than those at four-year HWCUs (Robinson et al., 2013).

Since community colleges traditionally cater to marginalized and underrepresented populations, and as the broader societal demographics change towards a more racial and ethnic composition it is anticipated that the postsecondary enrollment rates in higher education institutions will reflect this change (Hussar & Bailey, 2018; Snyder et al, 2018). Snyder et al (2018) state that, approximately 40% of all undergraduate students in the fall of 2015 were non-White; 19% were Latinx, 14% were Black, and 7% were Asian/Pacific Islander. Hussar and Bailey (2018) project that between 2015 and 2026, postsecondary enrollment rates of non-White Latinx, Black, and Asian/Pacific Islander students are expected to increase by 26%, 20%, and 12%, respectively, compared to 1% for White students. Therefore, it would be advantageous for TWCCs to affirm the worth of Black employees' by investing in them, recognizing their human capital, and acknowledging their voices and experiences. Some may argue that TWCCs are more racially diverse than four-year HWCUs. (Galloway, 2020; Kopko & Crosta, 2016; Robinson et al., 2013; Senie, 2014). However, the chronic problem of racism and prejudice still exists at these institutions creating a double standard that facilitates professional reproduction (PR), a practice that characteristically secures opportunities for White employees, while inhibiting Black employees from the same opportunities (Sensory & DiAngelo, 2017; Sule', 2014; Vodenko et al, 2019).

Qualitative Case Study

For this study, I will utilize a qualitative case study research method. A case study is an empirical inquiry within a bounded system that allows for the investigation of a

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phenomenon in its environment (Creswell & Poth, 2017; Denzin & Lincoln, 2017; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). A bounded system is a single entity, a single unit, or a single element; such as a person, a group, a program, or an institution. That allows the investigator to explore the "what, why, and how" questions concerning the impact of the phenomenon on the unit of analysis "the who or the what" in a closed system (Bricki & Green, 2007; Cypress, 2015; Swanborn, 2010). A qualitative case study method generally aims to understand the experiences and perceptions of individuals through systematic inquiry that examines the phenomenon, through the unit of analysis in the bounded system (Hallberg, 2013). For example, what is the impact of institutional racism (the phenomenon) on the experiences of Black employees (the unit of analysis) at a TWCC (the bounded system)? This type of qualitative case study research methodology offers effective techniques that will enable me to gain a holistic understanding of the impact of the complex phenomenon while providing answers to specific qualitative questions (Hallberg, 2013; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

Theoretical Framework

Critical Race Theory (CRT) is the theoretical framework best suited to pair with a qualitative case study method that investigates the phenomenon of the legacy of race and racism. The tenets of CRT confront the systemic and historical conditions of structural racism, created through the practices of the racism machine (Gaffney, 2017), by raising questions about the influence of race, class, and gender, and their intersections using a legal, social, and cultural lens. The conceptual framework of CRT helps to expose, examine, and critique how society is structured through laws, practices, and policies that entitle the dominant White culture while marginalizing people of color from the same

equity in society (Brayboy, 2021; Delgado & Stefancic, 2017; Taylor, 2016). Utilizing

the theoretical framework of CRT enables the investigator to provide a descriptive

analysis of the social construction of race and racism and its colonial-settler roots that are

endemic to society perpetuating harm and intergenerational trauma to marginalized

groups (Brayboy, 2021; DeGruy, 2016; Taylor, 2016).

Definitions of Terms

Black People: a social construct indicating racialized classification for various

populations of people with mid to dark pigmentated skin who are descendants through

one or both parents, from Africa, the Caribbean, the Middle East, and Latin America

(Kalunta-Crumpton, 2020).

Black Diaspora: a term that covers a broader community of Black, Indigenous, and

People of Color who have been scattered across the globe through voluntary or non-

voluntary resettlement (Kalunta-Crumpton, 2020).

Genotype: the complete inherited genetic set of materials that is the composition of an

organism (Booker et al., 2021; Klug et al., 2019).

TWCCs: Traditionally White Community Colleges.

HWCUs: Historically White Colleges and Universities.

Institutional Racism: a systemic and systematic structuring of biased and prejudicial

practices, policies, rules, treatments, and behaviors that are established within an

institution that discriminates against the Black diaspora (Gaffney, 2017; Gee & Hickens,

2021).

Opportunity Hoarding: the systemic racialized structures in place to ensure that White people are granted access to better opportunities because society values White people more than Black people (Glaude, 2016).

Phenotype: the physical outward observable expression of an organism's genotype (Booker et al., 2021; Klug et al., 2019).

Professional Reproduction: the process of reproducing whiteness in leadership positions through embedded structural networks of favoritism and White privilege to sustain White dominance (Sensory & DiAngelo, 2017; Sule', 2014; Vodenko et al, 2019).

Race: a non-biological social construction that is manmade to categorize humans based on their phenotype created by the colonial settlers for stratification of groups in society to establish and justify White domination over those who are deemed non-White (Booker et al., 2021; Goodman et al., 2019; Saini, 2019; Smedley & Smedley, 2018).

Racism: a system of oppression through an assigned value to individuals and groups of individuals that excludes, exploits, and limits opportunities based on their race (Desmond & Emirbayer, 2015; Goodman et al., 2019).

Structural Racism: systems of oppression that are interconnected institutions with mechanisms that function through racialized practices that maintain intergenerational White supremacy globally (Gaffney, 2017; Gee & Hickens, 2021).

Underrepresented Groups of Color/Underserved Populations: are populations vulnerable to systems of oppression created by race, racism, and White privilege that adversely impact their livelihood and existences (Brayboy, 2021; Delgado & Stefancic, 2017; Goodman et al., 2019; Taylor, 2016).

White Privilege: the willingness to benefit from injustice amid a racialized system of inequality that bequest inherent advantage, rights, favoritism, and immunity for no apparent reason other than having White skin (Kendall, 2012; McIntosh, 2003).

Organization of the Dissertation

In Chapter Two, the literature review develops the problem statement under investigation, constructs the argument being researched supported by a synthesis of scholarly materials, and includes the theoretical framework. Chapter Three reviews the methodology, starts with a brief introduction and reiterates the purpose of the study, and outlines the research design, methodologies, research questions, and theoretical proposition. This is followed by the context of the study, data collection and analysis, ethical considerations, implications of the study, limitations, and a summary. Chapter Four contains the Presentation of the Research (Results) consisting of the results or findings from the study based on the data collected and analyzed. Finally. Chapter Five presents the Summary, Implications, and Conclusions (Discussion) completing the research study with a summary of the study, a summary of the findings and their conclusions, implications of the findings, recommendations for current actions and future studies, reflections, and conclusion.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

Race and Institutionalized Racism

Historically White Colleges and Universities

      An Environment of Racial Inequity. America's colleges and universities have a shameful history regarding the marginalized treatment of Black people in higher education institutions. From their inception, most colleges and universities in America were structured to provide education and opportunities to the White colonial settlers and their descendants and to exclude Black people from these benefits (Nagin et al., 2022; Wilder, 2014). Since America was a slave nation, the establishment of Historically White Colleges & Universities (HWCUs) was a direct result of European colonization that served as a critical tool to educate their own and for the expansion of the White colonial-settler power structure to create intergenerational wealth (Fuentes & White, 2016; King, 2014; Stein, 2017; Wilder, 2014). HWCUs were erected on land stolen from the Indigenous Americans and the physical structures were built with free forced labor from enslaved Africans stolen from their homeland (Nagin et al., 2022; Stein, 2017; Wilder, 2014). Universities throughout this nation participated in the economy of slavery and benefited from it. Particularly in the south, colleges and universities owned and used enslaved Black people not only to build these institutions, but to also maintain the campuses and to service the students, faculty, and administration (Nagin et al., 2022; Wilder, 2014). Black people were never meant to have access to these universities in the capacity of educators or students. These racialized spaces are walls built of racial privilege that help bolster the imperialistic powers of White people through the

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curriculum, programs, rituals, institutional symbols, cultural and professional reproduction, and everyday practices that reinforce White supremacy ideologies (Bonilla-Silva & Peoples, 2022; Brunsma et al., 2017). HWCUs were essential in creating and propagating racial ideologies through race-based science that argued for the enslavement of Black people, teaching that Black people are inferior and justifying their exploitation and marginalization (Bonilla-Silva & Peoples, 2022; Goodman et al, 2019). This intention to make Black people inferior is a colonial legacy of HWCUs that continues to perpetuate racism in American institutions today that disenfranchises Black people. However, due to the generational struggles of Black people for visibility, inclusion, and equity, through great sacrifice, protest, and legal fights, the 1964 Civil Rights Act legally ended segregation in public places and banned employment discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, or national origin as stated by Title VII of the act which created the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) (National Archives, 2022). This act enabled more Black people to gain access to employment opportunities and granted access to Black students seeking admission to these academic institutions. Although gains were made by way of the Civil Rights Act, the legacy of HWCUs remains one of inequality when it comes to equity and the inclusion of Black people (Bonilla-Silva & Peoples, 2022; Brayboy et al., 2015; Hurtado & Ruiz-Alvarado, 2015). Therefore, while navigating a system that was not created for Black people, the struggle endures for the possibility that current and future generations will experience equity and inclusion at HWCUs and beyond.

This literature review provides an overview of race, racism, opportunity hoarding, professional reproduction, the institutional culture and climate, the academic search

committee, recruitment and retention, progression and promotion, and Critical Race Theory (CRT) to provide insight regarding the cause and effect on Black employees' experiences in higher education. The pathologies of race, racism, and White privilege perpetuate inequitable conditions for employees of color (Anderson, 2017; Goodman et al., 2019; Kendall, 2012; McIntosh, 2003), and these racialized factors negatively impact the ability of Black employees to secure positions of equity in higher education institutions and perpetuate the cycle of racism that relegate Black people to a second-class status through discriminatory hiring practices, a lack of progression and promotion, and very few opportunities to secure a senior-level position at HWCUs (Bendick, Jr. & Nunes, 2012; Bonilla-Silva & Peoples, 2022; Lewis et al., 2019; Whitaker, 2019). White supremacy (Gillborn, 2016), a hegemonic culture, systematically creates and maintains practices that exclude Black people from senior leadership positions at HWCUs.

Race

A significant amount of scholarship explains the concept of race and its detrimental effects on humankind and establishes how the concept of race has infiltrated all aspects of human life, creating a system of classifying individuals and groups of individuals using their skin phenotype (Booker et al., 2021; Goodman et al., 2019; Smedley, 2019). Scholars have established that this manmade system of grouping human beings into categories is based on physical traits and characteristics not on a person's genotype (Desmond & Emirbayer, 2015; Goodman et al., 2019**;** Saini, 2019; Smedley, 2019). Scientific evidence confirms that there is no biological basis for racial categories; however, scientific evidence supports patterns of human variation based on geographic origins (Booker et al., 2021; Goodman et al., 2019; Klug et al., 2019; Smedley, 2019).

The evidence substantiates that this manmade construction of race was created for social, economic, and political reasons; to establish a social and cultural construct for hierarchal purposes instituted by the colonizing Europeans to ensure the intergenerational supremacy and privilege for those deemed superior based on race (DiAngelo, 2018; Emirbayer & Desmond, 2015; Gaffney, 2018; Goodman et al., 2019; Hannah-Jones, 2021; Kendi, 2017; King, 2021). By design, the creation of race established a pseudo-superior race with a legacy of intergenerational privilege for European Americans, and pseudo-inferior races with a legacy of marginalization for people of color, particularly African Americans (De Gruy, 2017; DiAngelo, 2018; Emirbayer & Desmond, 2015; Gaffney, 2018; Goodman et al., 2019; Hannah-Jones, 2021; King, 2021; Smedley, 2019). Although science has ascertained that race is a social construction and not a biological characteristic, the impact of race and racism is real (Booker et al., 2021; Goodman et al., 2019; Klug et al., 2019; Saini, 2019). The impact of race on Black employees at HWCUs is felt through the institutional patterns that reinforce deep-seated practices that are not easily dismantled. There are many barriers that Black employees experience when vying for senior leadership positions. One barrier is the perception held by the White power structure that Black people are not equipped to do the job as well as they can (Brunsma et al, 2017; Davis & Maldonado, 2015; Whirl et al., 2020). This devaluing of Black professionals' abilities is a long-held belief that is rooted in learned racist doctrines of colonial rule and passed down generationally (Glaude, 2016; Jones et al., 2020; Kendi, 2017; King, 2021). And Black employees experience this assault on their professionalism and humanity routinely (Carr, 2016; James, 2021; McCray, 2017).

Race, a colonial settlers' construct, has deliberately become the primary identifier of most people of color in the United States (Gaffney, 2018; Helms, 2020; Smedley & Smedley, 2018; Wilson et al., 2017). However, for White people, this is not the case because being White is considered the standard against which everyone else is judged. Although White people tend to not think of themselves in racial terms (DiAngelo, 2018; Gaffney, 2018; Helms, 2020), the reality is that the construction of race creates conditions that disenfranchise those who are not considered White, resulting in circumstances that impact Black individual experiences in society and the workplace (Fedor, 2014; Glaude, 2016; Goodman et al., 2019; Pincus, 2019). The lived experiences of the impact of Whiteness on Black people at HWCUs are palpable (Bowden & Buie, 2021; Jackson et al, 2014; Lang & Yandell, 2019; Sensory & DiAngelo, 2017). This impact of Whiteness creates the condition of a second-class status through a hierarchical caste system that limits the opportunities for Black people (DiAngelo, 2018; Kendi, 2017; Wilkerson, 2020). Higher education institutions are said to be liberal environments in which faculty and staff are open-minded, progressive thinkers, and social intellectuals, professing to value diversity, inclusion, and equity in its many forms (Lee & McCunney, 2021; Whitford, 2020). This may be true until there is a demand to diversify the ranks of faculty and senior-level positions with Black people. Then these so-called liberal-minded professionals can show hostility toward the Black candidates making them feel like unwelcomed guests (Smith et al, 2012; Whitford, 2020).

Systemic Racism

All systems reproduce racism: the media, housing, economic system, justice system, healthcare, employment, and education (Banaji et al., 2021; Geronimus, 2023;

Goodman et al., 2019; Ladson-Billings, 2016; Sklott, 2010). Since academia does not exist in a vacuum, it is only logical to assume that the same forces are present within higher education. Historically, America's colleges and universities were built on a Euro-centered power structure with doctrines that can be discriminatory in nature and marginalizing in practice to Black people (Bonilla-Silva & Peoples, 2022; Hurtado & Ruiz-Alvarado, 2015; Pickett et al., 2021). These philosophical values are expressed through racialized practices that impact the experiences of Black employees at HWCUs (Bonilla-Silva & Peoples, 2022; Pickett et al., 2021; Smith et al., 2012). Practices that are rooted in institutional racism guide the attitudes, behaviors, and actions of the White dominant culture, which in turn disenfranchise Black employees from the same opportunities and equity experienced by their White contemporaries (Carr, 2016; DiAngelo, 2018; Glaude, 2016). Bonilla-Silva and Peoples (2022), maintain that the reality of systemic racism works against building a diverse and inclusive higher education environment because of the embedded hierarchical racist paradigms that currently exist in our society. These hierarchical paradigms are entrenched in White supremacy principles that perpetuate the imperialistic ideologies of the White dominant culture while propagating the presumption of the inferiority of Black people (Gillborn, 2016; Leonardo, 2016)**.**

Opportunity Hoarding

Opportunity hoarding is yet another way that the White dominant group at HWCUs marginalizes Black people from equal opportunities to obtain senior-level positions. As the beneficiaries of privilege, White people may be unconscious of this behavior because of their entitled perspective (Carr, 2016; DiAngelo, 2018). Therefore,

they could be oblivious to the fact that their actions are disadvantaging minoritized groups; nevertheless, the outcome of their actions continues to perpetuate White advantages every day (DiAngelo, 2018; Glaude, 2016). Glaude (2016) argues that White people have the power and means to monopolize resources. They engage in what is called "opportunity hoarding" by ensuring that the best resources, such as education, housing, jobs, and capital are secured for them. And they implement ways to continue to maintain these resources for themselves while depriving Black people. The behaviors and actions that facilitate opportunity hoarding perpetuate the conditions for inequity on the campuses of HWCUs, which continues the enduring cycle of institutional racism that marginalizes people of a certain hue through exclusion and devaluing, which disenfranchises them from obtaining positions of equity (Barnett, 2020; Bonilla-Silva & Peoples, 2022; DeCuir-Gunby et al., 2018). No one says "I'm not hiring you or promoting you because you're Black". They just say "you're not qualified for the position."

Black employees with stellar credentials, knowledge, and experience qualify for various positions in higher education. However, they can experience opportunity hoarding at every level. This is supported by the disproportionate number of White administrators (top-tier and below), White faculty, and in some cases Classified Staff at HWCUs (CUPA-HR, 2020; NCES, 2020; NCES, 2022). Nationally, Black employees make up less than 10% of higher education professionals, according to the survey data from the College and University Professional Association for Human Resources. The annual survey includes demographic information for mid-level to senior-level college employees including president and vice president positions, demonstrating that White

employees account for more than three-quarters of all higher education professionals (CUPA-HR, 2020). Black professionals in senior-level administrative positions account for less than 8% of the positions, compared to their White counterparts who hold 80% of the positions (CUPA-HR, 2020; Whitford, 2020). Black faculty account for 6% of the full-time positions while White faculty account for 74% of the full-time positions CUPA-HR, 2020; Whitford, 2020). The survey results show that Black professionals are woefully underrepresented in administrative and faculty positions, particularly positions with the highest salaries. And when Black professionals hold administrative positions they are paid less than their White peers. Also, the classified staff positions at HWCUs hold the highest percentage of Black employees and these positions have the lowest salaries and the lowest salary equity (CUPA-HR, 2020; Whitford, 2020). This data substantiates the marginalizing of Black people in gaining administrative and faculty positions at HWCUs and recommends that HWCUs bolster their efforts to recruit and retain Black administrators and faculty and improve pay equity for this demographic (CUPA-HR, 2020; Whitford, 2020). Being a part of this marginalized group compromises one's campus experience, widens the salary and equity gaps, and perpetuates opportunity hoarding. Opportunity hoarding amplifies the messages that surround individuals, reiterating that they are not welcomed or valued, although they have followed the playbook for success and are accomplished by the standards of academia and society (Glaude, 2016; Wolfe & Dilworth, 2015). The reactionary forces of White privilege are maintained at HWCUs by negating Black individuals as viable contenders for certain positions because of their ascribed race and the assigned value of

that race, continuing the persistent cycle of racism and opportunity hoarding (Desmond & Emirbayer, 2015; Glaude, 2016; Liera & Hernandez, 2021; Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2017).

Professional Reproduction (PR)

For decades scholars have written in detail about the phenomena of social and cultural reproduction and its influence on society, whereas, those in dominant positions aid those who are similar to them through social and cultural networks to achieve upward mobility (Bhattacharya, 2017; Bourdieu, 2018; Glaude, 2016; Serna & Woulfe, 2017). Comparably, in hiring practices, individuals tend to hire those who are similar to themselves, perpetuating professional reproduction (Bendick, Jr. & Nunes, 2012; Garran et al., 2022; Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2017; Sule', 2014; Vodenko et al, 2019). With the White power structure predominately in the positions to hire and promote, White people have the advantage of perpetuating PR, and they do. Thus, this type of institutional racism is White privilege that prevents Black people from obtaining positions characteristically reserved for White people because White people are valued more than Black people (Bendick, Jr. & Nunes, 2012; Bonilla-Silva & Peoples, 2022; Glaude, 2016; McIntosh, 2003). This subtle contempt for Black people allows discriminatory practices to go unchallenged and inhibits Black people from obtaining positions of equity, relegating them to lower-level positions. This is evident by the biased employment selection process that impacts the recruitment, retention, and promotion of Black employees (Bendick, Jr. & Nunes, 2012; Hakkola & Dyer, 2022; McCray, 2017). It is obvious that when employers are seeking to recruit, retain, and promote employees, organizations that are laden with actors who practice PR habitually marginalize Black

employees from equal opportunities (CUPA-HR, 2020; Pickett et al., 2021; Sule', 2014; Vodenko et al., 2019).

The irony of this practice is that ethnic and racial diversity enhances an organization's success. The research shows that when people of diverse backgrounds and cultures work together it expands intellectual and cultural engagement, increases cultural competency, improves student attainment and student success, improves the economic success of the institution, and enhances the overall campus experience for employees and students alike (Benitez et al., 2017; Patton et al., 2019; Wells et al., 2016). In essence, PR is harmful to us all, allowing unexamined fears and identity politics to promote racialized practices that shape the policies and practices of an institution through a biased vetting process. Therefore, unpacking the practice of PR at HWCUs enables stereotyped preconceptions to be challenged and the embedded racial inequities that are exclusionary to be disrupted.

Racism in Higher Education

Institutional Culture and Climate

A Culture of Bias. As previously stated, higher education cannot be discussed in isolation from the social conditions surrounding it because academia is not immune from the social injustice that impacts us all. Racialized practices are a historical legacy of the American culture, which created the cultural, economic, political, and class distinctions that divide us; thus, making the struggle for racial equity in higher education a draconian process because of the perceptions that frame the cognitive views that the White dominant culture holds about Black people (Hurtado & Ruiz-Alvarado, 2015; Marx & Ko, 2019; Smith et al., 2012). These cognitive frames create a culture of chronic

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disparities that influence the institutional climate at HWCUs. This climate is characterized by patterns of inequity that reflect the existence of a system rooted in a Jim Crow doctrine that is echoed by the experiences of Black employees (Edwards & Thomas, 2010; Smith, 2022). A colonial-like culture rooted in an ethos of race-based favoritism, White supremacy, and White privilege has centralized power and advantages for those deemed part of the White dominant culture (Gilborn, 2016; Kendall, 2012; Leonardo, 2016; McIntosh, 2003).

Many HWCUs have language that suggests a culture of mutual respect and inclusion. Bhopal (2022), suggests that HWCUs have assumed language that implies their institution's dedication to diversity to indicate their commitment to employees of color. However, this language does not necessarily reflect equity, revealing how their institutional climates can contradict the institutions' language. This contradicting language demonstrates how these institutions "talk the talk, but do not walk the walk" espousing inclusion, but in actuality sustaining a climate of inequity that compromises the integrity of the institution, impacting the students, the institution's reputation and brand, and the institutions' ability to solicit a racially, ethnically, diverse workforce (Barnett, 2020; Brayboy et al., 2015; Lang & Yandell, 2019; Saurmobe et al., 2017).

There is mounting empirical evidence from several national educational association reports, higher education researchers, and anti-racism educators advocating the creation of a more equitable, inclusive, and welcoming climate on college campuses (Barnett, 2020; Battalora, 2013; Christopher, 2022; Colby & Fowler, 2020; Gaffney, 2018; Kendi, 2017; King, Jr. et al., 2016; Law, 2017; Pickett et al., 2021; Tate & Bagguley, 2018). However, Black employees still report adverse experiences from an

unwelcoming culture and climate shrouded in racism and White privilege that impacts the cultural sensitivity of the organization, and further marginalizes Black employees (Block & Noumair, 2017; Burke, 2017; Dobbin & Kalev, 2016; Eagly, 2016; Golom, 2018; Wolfe & Dilworth, 2015; Zambrana et al, 2017). This cultural insensitivity can be expressed through stereotypes held about Black people that stigmatize them and prevent them from equal opportunities (Van Laar et al., 2019). As Van Laar et al., (2019) point out, cultural stigmatization and stereotyping is a type of victim-blaming to justify the exclusion of an underrepresented population. This behavior can occur through comments, attitudes, and conduct that imply that Black people are less qualified than White people. These stereotypes devalue, marginalize, and exclude Black people from routes to success in their professions and careers (Casad & Bryant, 2016; Glaude, 2016; See, 2018).

Lack of Inclusivity. Because of the distinct underrepresentation of racially underserved groups at HWCUs and the historical underrepresentation of Black employees in senior-level positions; some HWCUs have created a diversity or inclusion initiative to correct these issues (King, Jr. et al., 2016; Patton et al., 2019; Phillips, 2019). The general concept and goals of diversity or inclusion initiatives are to increase the number of historically underrepresented racial groups of color at HWCUs and to hire these employees in senior leadership positions. Law (2017), argues that the higher education sector has introduced race equity initiatives and has witnessed the further development of institutional equity and diversity policies; a toolkit to build anti-racist universities. Although the implementation of the diversity or inclusion initiative has had some success in the hiring of Black employees in various areas at HWCUs, Black

employees remain significantly underrepresented in the faculty ranks and senior-level positions (Sekaquaptewa et al, 2019; Smith & Mayorga-Gallo, 2017).

Another tool that some HWCUs are utilizing to improve the climate on their campus is a climate survey. Campus climate surveys surrounding the issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion are being utilized to take the temperature of the campus climate (Aiello, 2020; Campbell-Whatley et al., 2015; Hurtado & Ruiz, 2012). These surveys are primarily a reaction from the college's top-tier leadership to employees and students of color expressing their experiences of an environment of exclusion and inequity. The survey examines several issues related to how constituents experience the campus and provides insight into what policies and practices shape the experiences of this demographic, particularly, since many Black employees and students feel unwanted and unwelcomed from their interactions on campus (Pickett et al., 2021; Smith & Mayorga-Gallo, 2017; Tate & Bagguley, 2018). This equity and inclusion climate survey tool has the potential to provide a truthful and much-needed assessment of informative data obtained from the perspective of the college constituents that can give insight into areas where the institution lacks diversity, cultural competency, and cultural sensitivity, and inform about experiences of discrimination, bigotry, and exclusion. These queries can illuminate the relevance of adopting new and innovative ways to make the campus more equitable and welcoming for people of color (Aiello, 2020; Campbell-Whatley et al., 2015; Hurtado & Ruiz, 2012). Some of the findings from the survey results included hiring a Director of Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion (DEI) and using the data to guide future efforts and prioritize efforts to improve DEI on campus providing relevant DEI training to help understand the experiences and perceptions of community members;

including DEI goals in the college mission, goals, values, and the strategic plan; and utilizing the outcomes to benchmark success. An honest analysis and a willingness to implement constructive changes can create an environment that aligns with the institution's mission statement that espouses a diverse environment of inclusion where everyone can feel welcomed, safe, valued, and respected (Bonilla-Silva & Peoples, 2022; Campbell-Whatley et al., 2015; Pickett et al., 2021).

When one examines the data from *The Administrators in Higher Education Annual Report* (2017-18) that details the number of administrative professionals employed at colleges and universities nationally, the survey reflects that the vast majority of individuals in administrative positions were White (Bichsel et al., 2018a). The report includes responses from 50,800 individuals in approximately 200 senior-level administrator positions at more than 1,174 institutions in the Northeast, south, west, and Midwest regions. In 2016, 83.2% of the presidents in higher education were White with 58.0% being White men, while 16.8% identified as people of color with the demographic breakdown showing 7.9% Black, 3.9% Latinx, 2.3% Asians, 1.4% individuals of more than one race, 0.7% American Indian or Alaska Native, and 0.6% Middle Eastern or Arab American (Gagliardi et al., 2017). This number has not changed much in three decades, as the data shows that in 1986 White individuals occupied 91.9% of all college and university president positions (Gagliardi et al., 2017). Roughly 86% of the administrator positions were held by White individuals, 6% Black, 5% Latinx, 2% Asian, and less than 1.0% respectively for American Indian or Alaska Native and Middle Eastern or Arab Americans (Bichsel et al., 2018a). In some of the administrator positions, which are considered professional positions, a little over one in five academic affairs professionals

identified as a race or ethnicity other than White amounting to approximately 22.1%, and slightly more than one in four student affairs professionals identified as people of color amounting to 26.5% (Bichsel et al., 2018a).

Administrator positions are not the only area where there are large disparities in the hiring of Black professionals. The data on faculty positions also demonstrate how Black professionals are disparaged. The Bichsel et al., (2018) survey data and the Espinosa et al., (2019) report along with the data from the U. S. Department of Education, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (2016) study verifies that in public four-year colleges and universities, White faculty occupies the majority (70.6%) of the full-time faculty positions while faculty of color occupies a minority (29.4%) of the full-time positions (Figure 1).

Figure 1

Full-Time Faculty at Public Four-Year Institutions

Full-Time Faculty at Public Four-Year Institutions

Asian 11.3
Black 5.1
LatinX 4.4
White 70.6
Other race or ethnicity 8.6
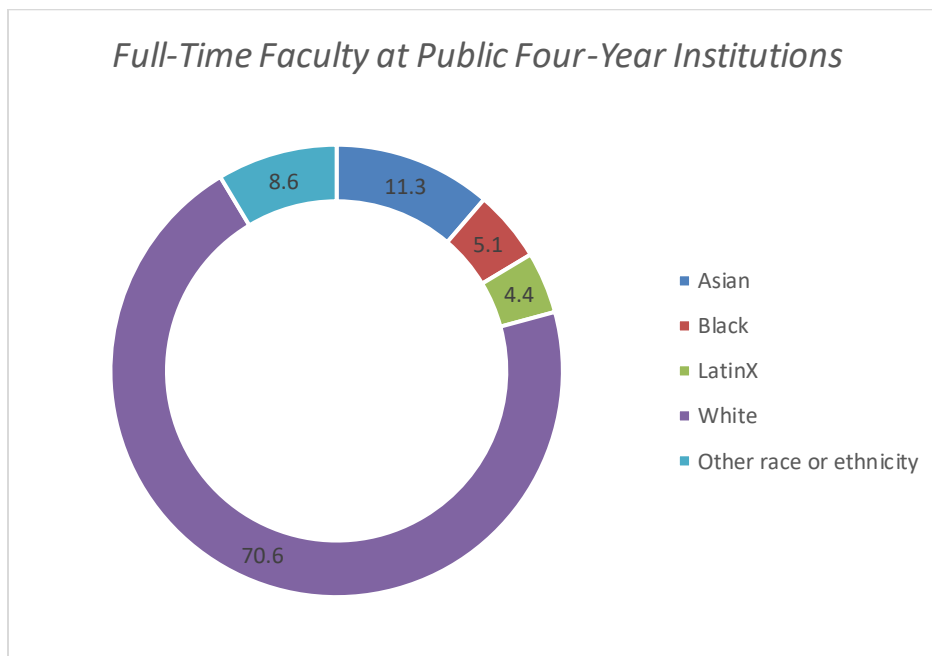
Comparatively, in 2016 there were over 122,000 full-time faculty at public two-year higher education institutions and White faculty (76.8%) occupied the vast majority of the full-time faculty positions, while faculty of color occupied the minority (23.2%) of the full-time positions (Figure 2) (Bichsel et al., 2018; U. S. Department of Education, Integrated Postsecondary Education System, 2016).

Figure 2

Full-Time Faculty at Public Two-Year Institutions
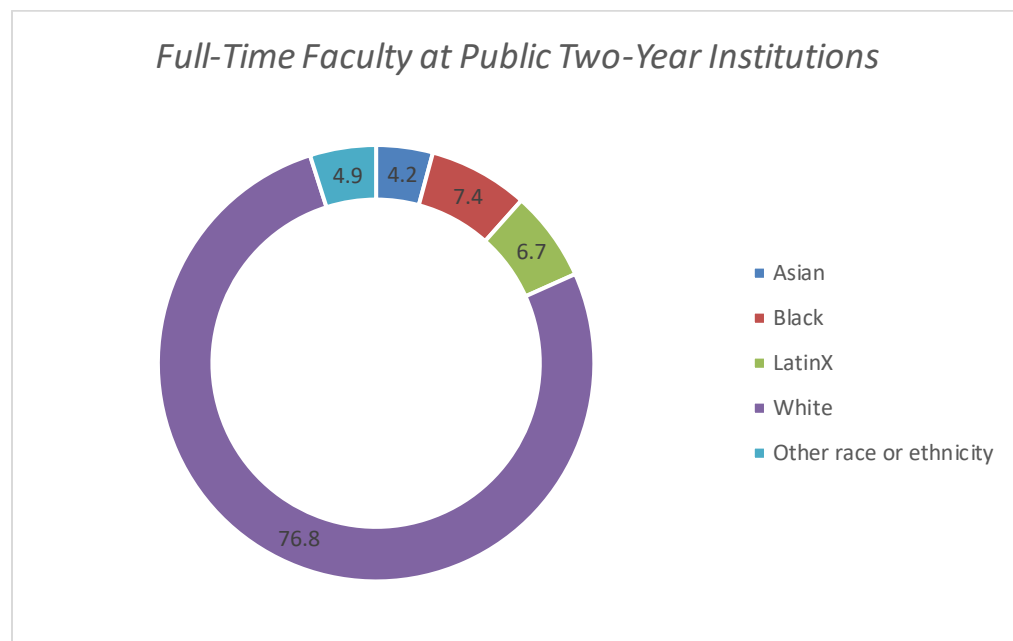
The data for the four-year and two-year public institutions of higher education shows that there is only a small fraction of difference in the amount of White faculty at these institutions. Although the data shows that there are more faculty of color at public four-year institutions of higher education, probably because they are larger, change is still

needed in the hiring practices at both entities to give Black faculty equal opportunities to secure faculty positions.

In the Fall of 2020, there were 1.5 million faculty at degree-granting postsecondary institutions, 56 % were full-time and 44% were part-time (NCES, 2020). According to The National Center for Education Statistics (2020), the demographics across the faculty hierarchy reveal that nearly three-quarters of all full-time faculty were White, 78.8% full professors, 74.3% associate professors, 70.0% assistant professors, and 74.0% instructors, lecturers, and faculty with no academic rank, illustrating that over three decades the number of White faculty continue to monopolize not only full-time faculty positions but faculty positions across the ranks (Figure 3). These numbers clearly show that there is an inherent problem with institutions of higher education's lack of hiring Black people in faculty positions that White people traditionally secure because racism is baked into the system and is endorsed by those in power (Bonilla-Silva & Peoples, 2022; Brunsma et al., 2017). Public institutions of higher education are not alone in their inadequacy to hire Black professionals. The research reveals that racism is reflected within most institutions of higher education to some degree as demonstrated by the NCES (2020) data that outlines faculty in positions by rank, race, and ethnicity in degree-granting postsecondary institutions.

Figure 3

Full-Time Faculty, by Rank and Race and Ethnicity: Fall 2020

Full-Time Faculty, by Rank and Race and Ethnicity: Fall 2020
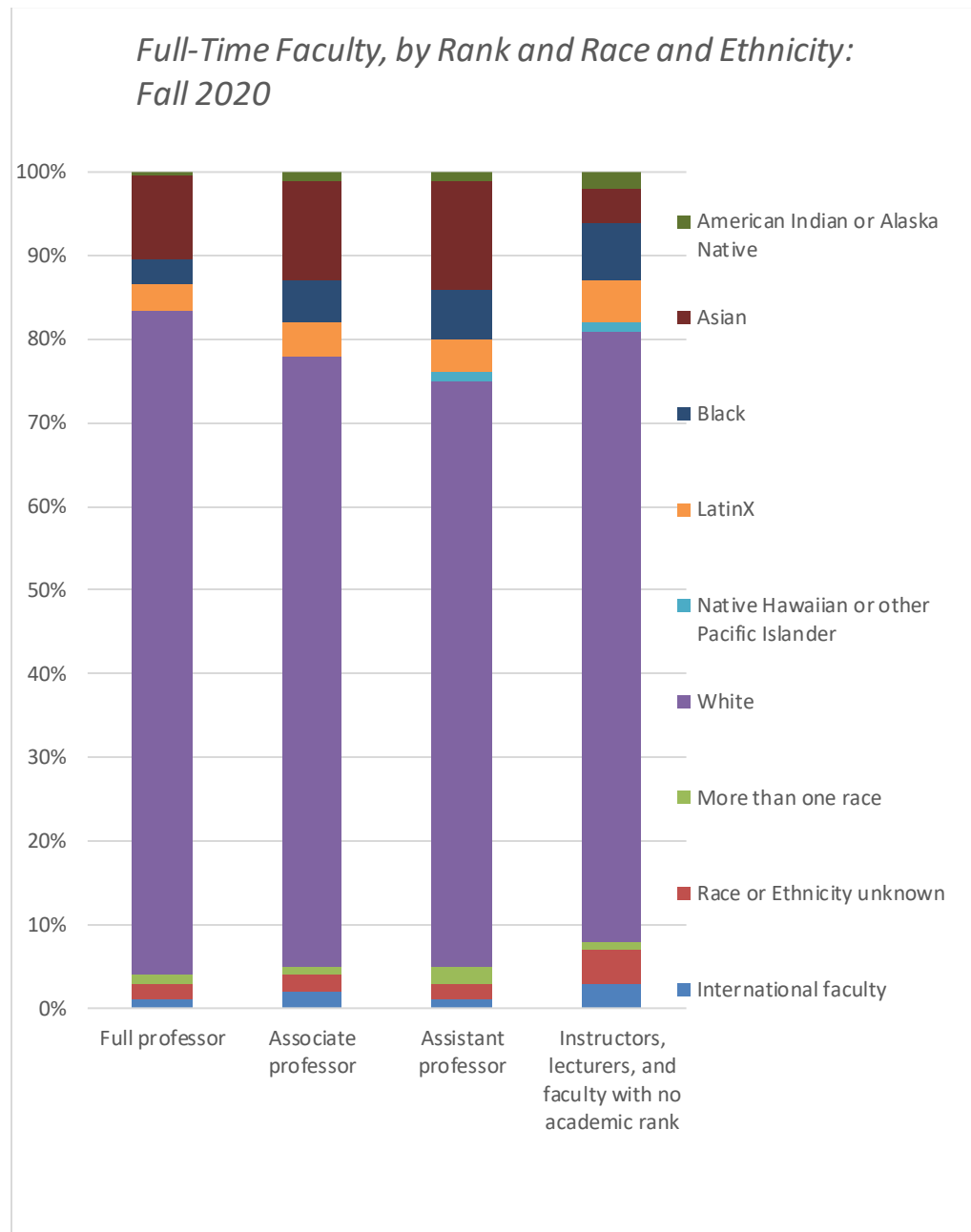
This is not an accident, it is by design, and it is the result of the exclusionary history of higher education and White privilege that is the legacy of this nation. While

White people still hold the vast majority of these positions, Black people continue to make inroads, although small, in gaining opportunities amid some opposition.

The aspirations of Black people can sometimes trigger White rage, the subtle contempt, and hegemony expressed by the dominant White culture when Black people actively demand equity and challenge the status quo, unmasking how the dominant culture feels threatened and exposing the fears they harbor of losing their advantage (Anderson, 2017; DiAngelo, 2018). Black folk's ambitions can elicit White fragility, a defense response born out of a sense of superiority and entitlement that the dominant group displays through their visceral discomfort and anxiety, and a desire to maintain White racial control to protect their unearned privilege (Anderson, 2017; DiAngelo, 2018). These responses strengthen confirmation bias that influences and supports discriminatory beliefs, values, and actions of the dominant White culture and harness group solidarity that reestablishes White supremacy equilibrium as the collective opposes any challenges to the status quo (Anderson, 2017; DiAngelio, 2018; Michel & Peters, 2020). Such attitudes and behaviors maintain the racial dynamics within the racial hierarchy in which White people see themselves as entitled to and deserving of, more than Black people deserve, which can breed inequality in racial diversity in the administrative and faculty ranks. This inequity maintains the historical legacy and the contemporary challenges of racism, perpetuating a system of discrimination, White privilege, and aversive racism that plague every sector of society and have harmed the Black diaspora for generations (Dovidio et al, 2017; Kendall, 2012; McIntosh, 2003). This powerful resistance to racial equity through subtle racism can occur during the search committee process while recruiting for positions, in the retention of current

employees, and in merited promotions, adversely impacting the opportunities and upward mobility for Black people (Anderson, 2017; DiAngelio, 2018; Mc Cray, 2017).

The Academic Search Committee

The Employment Selection Process

The hiring process provides a way to analyze the perceptions held by the White dominant culture in power at HWCUs, and can demonstrate how the experiences of Black employees' serving on academic search committees can differ greatly from their White peers because of the racial configuration that usually dominates the search committees (Dutt-Ballerstadt, 2022; Grier & Poole, 2020; Liera & Hernandez, 2021; Mc Cray, 2017). Typically, search committee members are current faculty and staff, and since they are majority White, the search committees are mainly White, and can be biased in their worldviews, holding negative views about people of color (Bendick, Jr. & Nunes, 2012; Flaherty, 2017; McCray, 2017; Sensory & Di Angelo, 2017). These committee members can collectively use their White privilege to prevent Black people from obtaining employment, particularly at the most senior levels and in the faculty ranks (Hakkola & Dyer, 2022; Kendall, 2012; McCray, 2017; McIntosh, 2003). Gaertner and Dovido (2014), indicate that individuals bring their personhood, experiences, and cultural histories into every aspect of their life, including the hiring and employment process. Our experiences help form our worldview, which can be tainted with unrecognized biases and assumptions that play a powerful role in maintaining the status quo. Black employees have experiences of being the token person of color on the search committee, experiences of having their candidate's vote not matter, and experiences of being on the committee for compliance reasons (Dutt-Ballerstadt, 2022; Grier & Poole, 2020; Lewis, 2016;

Sensory & DiAngelo, 2017; Settles et al., 2019). Having a Black employee serving on the search committee can give the optics of a diverse institution that values inclusion and supports equity for all employees, thus, giving the illusion of inclusion to justify in the minds of the stakeholders and critics that all is well at the institution (Flaherty, 2021; Smith & Mayorga-Gallo, 2017).

Some of the Black employees who serve on search committees have had experiences so troubling that they have decided they may never serve on another search committee (Dutt-Ballerstadt, 2022; Grier & Poole, 2020). They compared their experience of witnessing Black candidates being interviewed by their White colleagues to what they felt when Nicole Hannah-Jones, one of the most respected investigative journalists in the country and a Pulitzer Prize-winning writer for The New York Times Magazine, was denied tenure by the Board of Trustees at the University of North Carolina. Ever since her awarding-winning publication of *The 1619 Project*, A history of slavery and the making of America was released to the public on the four hundredth anniversary of the beginning of American slavery (New York Times, 2019), she has been scrutinized, ostracized, vilified, and demonized for her powerful writings on American history that some White supremacy groups across the country do not want to be revealed (Mays, 2021). So, instead of obtaining a tenured position, which her White predecessors received, she was granted a five-year appointment which she declined. This discriminatory behavior displays the hypocrisy and the White supremacy at HWCUs that harm Black professionals through a double standard based on racism (Dovidio & Gaertner, 2017; Whitaker, 2019; Wijesingha & Ramos, 2017; Zambrana et al, 2016). This wrongful denial of tenure, although not surprising, is perceived by many Black

people as an attack on another Black professional with obviously outstanding credentials (Lee & Leonard, 2018). The argument for the denial of tenure was that Nicole Hannah-Jones's background was not a traditional academic type (Dovidio & Gaertner, 2017). However, her academic type was good enough to teach at the institution in a non-tenured role. It is also ludicrous that her alma mater would treat her, an acclaimed writer who returned to give back to the community that mentored her, in such a derogatory manner.

Black people saw this biased treatment as a modern-day, White supremacist assault on a Black woman who has displayed on the global stage the legacy of the pathology of White racial supremacy and imperialism. This comparison is concentrated on the treatment of Black women particularly, from times of Black enslavement in the United States. Scholars have documented the derogatory, aggressive, and belittling emotional and psychological treatment that Black women of that time consistently endured at the hands of White supremacists through the denial of tenure (DeGruy, 2017; Desmond & Emirbayer, 2015; Goodman et al., 2019; Skinner-Dorkenoo et al., 2021). Although this example may seem extreme to some White people, the post-traumatic slave syndrome that continues to impact Black folks' lives is real (DeGruy, 2017). And this enduring legacy coupled with current dehumanization is the reality for Black people. Therefore, when Black professionals serving on search committees at HWCUs experience bad actors' prejudicial and contemptuous treatment of Black candidates, it impacts the Black employee's experience and pathologizes the entire search process (Desivilya et al., 2017; Dutt-Ballerstadt, 2022; Liera & Hernandez, 2021; McCray, 2017).

The Faculty Searches

The search process, supposedly a democratic process, starts with forming a search committee for interviewing candidates. For a process to be democratic, equality and fairness have to reign (Shutz & Viczko, 2016). However, the experiences of Black employees are that, most commonly, the majority of the committee members are White employees (Bendick, Jr. & Nunes, 2012; Flaherty, 2017; McCray, 2017; Sensory & Di Angelo, 2017). In the case of a faculty search, White faculty dominate the search committee in all aspects of the process (Hakkola & Dyer, 2022; McCray, 2017; Sensory & Di Angelo, 2017). They have a majority of search committee membership, the majority vote, and power (Desivilya et al., 2017; Dutt-Ballerstadt, 2022; Flaherty, 2017; Gasman, 2016; Liera & Hernandez, 2021). Furthermore, White faculty members can use their collective power to intentionally stack the deck by forming search committees with colleagues who look like them, think like them, and act like them (Gasman, 2016; Grier & Poole, 2020; Sensory & Di Angelo, 2017).

When faculty stack the deck, candidates often report that members of the search committees are not diverse, are not well informed about the mission to recruit underrepresented faculty of color, or are not interested in hiring underrepresented faculty of color (Flaherty, 2021; Gasman, 2016; White-Lewis, 2020). Members of the search committee use their collective White privilege to select candidates who resemble them, the candidate who fits and whose scholarship and research will not challenge the existing paradigm (Kendall, 2012; McIntosh, 2003; White-Lewis, 2020). Furthermore**,** Black employees serving on search committees at HWCUs have witnessed behaviors from their White colleagues demonstrating that they are more interested in selecting a candidate

with a personality fit instead of a candidate with the required credentials (McCray, 2017; White-Lewis; 2020). One reason for this lack of commitment to hiring Black faculty is the perception of the inferiority of the Black candidate; entitling the White candidate to the position (Desmond & Emirbayer, 2015; Farmer & Farmer, 2020; Gasman, 2016; Marx & Ko, 2019; Sensory & Di Angelo, 2017). Search committee members may think that to hire a Black candidate, the standards need to be lowered or that they need to meet a quota; moreover, recruiting faculty of color takes away opportunities for White faculty (McCray, 2017). This proposition is based on the concept of the zero-sum game, which implies that for every job a racial minority obtains, a White person loses or never gets one. In essence, the gain of a Black faculty member is somehow the loss of a White faculty member (Ariz & Aviel, 2019; Dwyer & Gigliotti, 2017).

These myths and stereotypes are most often invoked to veil deeply held beliefs of the candidates' inferiority, and can critically impact the experiences of the Black employees serving on a predominately White search committee (Bowden & Buie, 2021; Farmer & Farmer, 2020; Davis & Maldonado, 2015). Since Black employees often internalize these racial biases and because they may have experienced some form of racial discrimination they may feel powerless to defend the Black candidate (Okechukwu et al., 2014; Ruggs et al., 2013; Sue & Spanieman, 2020). Being the minority member(s) of the search committee, Black employees feel that by speaking out they are jeopardizing their livelihood; they worry that they will be ostracized, that racialized acts will be perpetrated against them, and that they will not have the necessary support to take a stand against the majority White employees serving on the search committee (Atay, 2017; Grier & Poole, 2020).

Case studies illustrate that no matter how diverse the candidate pools are, they do not necessarily result in diverse hires because of the intentional and unintentional actions of the institutional, departmental, and search committee cultures that can undermine the goal for faculty diversity (Liera & Hernandez, 2021; McCray, 2017; Sekaquatewa et al., 2019; White-Lewis, 2021). Black employees serving on predominately White search committees, although they may have a seat at the table, often feel their voices are oppressed because, by design, they are consistently the minority and not part of the exclusive club (Atay, 2017; Bowden & Buie, 2021). Being in this inequitable position, the Black employees serving on these search committees cannot influence change or interrupt the entrenched patterns of racism that are emblematic of the search committee structure.

While it is clear that there are several factors involved in the issue of diversifying faculty, to achieve greater success, the search processes must change (Griffin, 2019; Smith, 2020; Tate & Bagguley, 2018). Committee members' efforts must be sincere in counteracting the absence of aggressive hiring strategies that can contribute to the underrepresentation of faculty of color (Arday & Mirza, 2018; Colby & Fowler, 2020; Fradella, 2018; Smith, 2020). In addition, the search processes must ensure an unbiassed distribution of power among all committee members to prevent marginalizing Black employees to second-class status on the search committee (Brown University, 2020; Desivilya et al., 2017; Hakkola & Dyer 2022). Therefore, to improve upon the academic search process at HWCUs, the institution's mission and values regarding hiring decisions need to be sincere, acknowledged, and implemented (Brooks-Immel, 2016; Brown University, 2020; King, Jr. et al., 2016; Liera & Hernandez, 2022).

Black employees serving on predominantly White search committees have observed the lack of enthusiasm for Black candidates from their White peers (McCray, 2017; Hakkola & Dyer, 2022). There is evidence that when the Black candidate has the best credentials, has satisfied the job criteria, and aced the interview, the White members of the search committee can still find something deficient with the Black candidate to advance the White candidate, or they modify the job requirements to fit the qualifications of the White candidate (Dovidio et al., 2017). Dovidio et al., (2017) have termed this behavior as "aversive racism" which impacts the search committee deliberations and is consistent with a double standard, search committee members who are influenced by the aversive racism paradigm could clandestinely and subtly change the most significant qualifications for a job (Dovidio et al., 2017). For example, if the job requirements ask for a high level of education and the Black candidate meets that requirement, the search committee members that are adhering to aversive racism will instead require extensive skills training. Whereby, if the White candidate has more extensive skills training than a higher level of education, the biased search committee members will deem that skills training is more valuable and relevant. As such, the aversive racialism on the search committee will trump the other committee members and utilize their White privilege to ensure that the White candidate is hired without acknowledging the racial bias that dominated their decision-making process in their selection.

Black employees serving on predominantly White search committees have observed these types of explicit racial and in-group biases, which are commonplace at HWCUs (Gaetner & Dovido, 2014; Han, 2018; Molenberghs & Louis, 2018). James et al., (2021), call this type of behavior "the power dynamic," (p. 1226) whereas those

viewing the candidates through a zero-sum lens, extreme sociopolitical beliefs, and other biased attitudes towards the minority candidates, will allow their prejudices to override rational decision making on the selection of a qualified candidate. Although their educated White peers have academic degrees, achievements, and reputations, their racialized actions, actions resulting from implicit, and sometimes explicit, racial bias taints the search and hiring process (Beattie & Johnson, 2012; Bendick, Jr. & Nunes, 2012). It is a major reason why there has not been much progress in the hiring of Black faculty (McCray, 2017). Although college campuses are slowly working towards diversifying their labor force, diversifying faculty remains one of the areas that lack true enthusiasm and dedication for diversity (Griffin, 2019). This lack of success supports the theory that employers cannot only be covert in their prejudice but they have the power and the means to act on their prejudice and adversely impact the minoritized candidates (Colella et al., 2017; Quillian & Midboen, 2021).

The Administrators' Search

The faculty sector of course is not the only area where discriminatory hiring practices inhibit the ability of Black professionals to obtain employment at HWCUs. Black administrative professionals can experience racialized hiring practices too, although they may not experience discriminatory practices at the same level as faculty of color for a variety of reasons (McCray, 2017; Turner et al., 2017; Wolfe & Dilworth, 2015). Inequity in administrative positions is also problematic. Black employees serving on the predominantly White search committees for administrative positions can have the perception that, as with the faculty search process, the institution is not adequately pursuing Black professionals for senior-level administrative positions. They may view

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this practice as one of the ways that the institution limits its numbers when it comes to hiring Black employees (Brooks-Immel, 2016; Wolfe & Dilworth, 2015). Concealing the unexamined implicit biases of the White employees on the search committees creates conditions that sideline Black administrative professionals from being recruited and securing employment, particularly at the senior levels (Bendick, Jr. & Nunes, 2012; Chun & Evans, 2015). Those in power ignore the crucial role that both search committees and institutional culture play in the recruitment and retention of diverse faculty and staff (Bendick, Jr. & Nunes, 2012; McCray, 2017; Pickett et al., 2021).

Black employees identified one of the most widely held stereotypical assumptions that they experience serving on a predominately White search committee, regarding Black candidates, that is that they cannot successfully perform the duties of the position because they have not traditionally been in these types of positions (Davis & Maldonado, 2015; McCray, 2017). There is a misconception that African Americans do not perform well in administrative positions because these positions are considered nontraditional positions for African Americans (Davis & Maldonado, 2015; Hadden, 2010; McCray, 2017). Although the research contradicts this assumption, and Black administrators have risen to the occasion despite the odds imposed upon them by institutional racism, this misperception of the inferiority of Black people persists, relegating them to lower-level positions (Davis & Maldonado, 2015; Graham, 2015; Wolfe & Dilworth, 2015). This occurs because of the White dominant in-group's prejudicial beliefs that Black professionals' aptitude, skill-set, and abilities are not equal to those of White professionals (Gaertner & Dovidio, 2014; McCray, 2017; Wolfe & Dilworth, 2015). Black employees serving on predominately White search committees share their

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disenchantment with the lack of accountability for the marginalization of Black candidates. Black employees have the experience that equity is not embraced by the institutions' leadership; it is not communicated effectively through the ranks from the top down and is not respected by those on the search committees (Hakkola & Dyer, 2022; McCray, 2017).

Black employees' experience serving on predominately White search committees can be very different from that of their White colleagues. Windzio (2020) asserts that human nature manifests in ways that make us feel secure with those most like us. And those members of a search committee who have the power to dominate the search process will most likely select the applicant who favors them. Black employees may have the experience of being unwanted guests serving on the search committees; because their voices can be stifled and unappreciated, their contributions may not be respected or valued, and they can typically be negated in the search process (Liera & Hernandez, 2021; Smith et al, 2012). Those with powers, traditionally White and male, have a legacy of wielding their power and privilege to control and manipulate the situation to their advantage, which discriminates against candidates of color (Mountford-Brown, 2022). And these discriminatory behaviors and dynamics continue to persist today in discounting particular groups. Other negative experiences of the Black employees include feeling blatant disrespect for their views, not being taken as serious search committee members, not being able to participate fully because of the unwelcoming environment, and dealing with the preferential treatment that their White search committee members receive (Brooks-Immel, 2016; Zambrana et al., 2016). Black employees, in general, suspect that their participation on the search committee constitutes tokenism (Brooks-

Immel, 2016; Dutt-Ballerstadt, 2022; Lewis, 2016; Settles et al., 2019). These blatant disrespectful behaviors towards them reinforce the institutional and systemic racism that is problematic in the workplace ranging from recruitment and hiring to progression and promotion, influencing Black employees' involvement on campus and negatively impacting their experiences at the institution (Chun & Evens, 2015; Prince & Siegel., 2019).

Issues Impacting Recruitment and Retention of Black Employees

Recruitment

Several HWCUs have recently implemented diversity initiatives to increase racial diversity on their campuses (U.S. Department of Education, 2016; Patton et al., 2019; Phillips, 2019). Although diversity is productive in acquiring variety on many levels, it does not necessarily produce diversity in racial groups unless the aim is to actively recruit underrepresented racial groups. If the institution's intention is successful recruitment and retention of employees, then the institution must begin with relevant employment planning (Barrick & Parks-Leduc, 2019; Towns, 2019). Thus, if the goal is to recruit underrepresented racial groups, the institution and the search committee(s) must be sincere in their efforts (Belanger & Gorecki, 2019; Towns, 2019). However, if those responsible for recruitment are not sincere and deliberate in their efforts to recruit underrepresented populations of color in positions of equity, it will not happen (Pickett et al., 2021; Settles et al., 2019; Snell et al., 2016). For example, when Human Resources (HR) advertise for faculty or senior-level administrative positions they should advertise these positions in publications that underrepresented professionals frequent, market these positions in non-mainstream publications, and target professionals from post-doctoral

programs at Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), and other minority-serving institutions. Research demonstrates that Black applicants may consider the likelihood of unfair treatment in the application process and therefore apply to institutions where they believe they may face less discrimination or no racial discrimination (Belanger & Gorecki, 2019; Colella et al., 2017; Stockstill & Carson, 2021). This is an example of why sincere hiring practices are imperative in the successful recruitment of Black professionals (Kelly et al., 2017; Mertz, 2011; Towns, 2019). The evidence strongly suggests that if the institution is serious about recruiting and retaining Black professionals in positions of equity, it will institute actionable best practices in its recruitment process (Kelly et al., 2017; Mertz, 2011; Towns, 2019). Black employees' perceptions are that the gatekeepers at HWCUs have been remiss in applying best practice strategies in recruiting Black candidates for tenured faculty positions and senior-level employment; thus, allowing racial discriminatory hiring practices to prevail. These practices of racial discrimination can occur at the recruitment and hiring stage before an individual has an opportunity to demonstrate their potential because of discriminatory organizational factors that segregate certain populations into certain jobs depending on their racial identity (Fradella, 2018; Pickett et al., 2021; Tate & Bagguley, 2018). These factors include but are not limited to, occupational sorting, dead-end positions, and opportunities with pay inequity (Daly et al., 2017; Kalleberg & Mouw, 2018).

Retention

Diversity does not equate to equity unless it is grounded in fairness and impartiality. Therefore, when an institution seeks to diversify its workforce, equity in all that it encompasses must be paramount to avoid discrimination (Barnett, 2020; Bhopal,

2022). Inequity is a common theme among the experiences of Black employees regarding job opportunities, promotions, and salaries compared to their White counterparts (Neumark, 2018; Ren 2022). The inequity results from the powerful White dominant group's motivation to maintain the status quo and their privilege or limit the opportunities for individuals from different racial, ethnic, or gender groups (Neumark, 2018; Ren, 2022). When examining workplace discrimination, supervisor ratings, wage disparity, and organizational factors are the primary dynamics impacting the experiences of Black employees (Ruggs et al, 2013). Furthermore, there is racial bias and discrimination in the supervisor ratings of Black employees, suggesting that Black employees with similar credentials can be evaluated more stringently than White employees (Ruggs et al., 2013; Samad et al., 2022). The evaluations of Black employees' performance can be influenced by factors unrelated to actual performance, impacting promotion decisions and retention, prompting employees who are feeling disparaged and disregarded to leave the organization.

This type of unfair evaluation of Black professionals employed at HWCUs not only compromises their career progression but also impacts their ability to garner higher wages and salaries, which continues the pay ratio gap that is indicative of institutional racism (Jackson et al., 2014; Patten, 2016; Whitaker, 2019). Although the wage gap among racial and ethnic groups has narrowed in some cases over the years, large racial disparities in wages in the U.S. remain. For example, the average median hourly wage for Black people is less than their White counterparts (Daly et al., 2017; Donovan & Bradley, 2019; Patten, 2016). This is reflected in the median annual wealth of Black families in the U.S. which is $17,000; less than one-tenth that of the median annual wealth of $171, 000

of White families (Beyer, 2020; Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2022). Although disparities in wages have decreased over time, wage disparity is still significant across racial groups (Donovan & Bradley, 2019; Gottschalk, 2019; Nelson & Vallas, 2021; Patten, 2016; Ruggs et al., 2013). According to various studies conducted, there can be a 20% - 30% wage disparity that exists across racial groups (Donovan & Bradley, 2019; Semega et al., 2020; Shrider et al., 2021). Furthermore, a study conducted by Darity et al., (2018) found that Black employees earned on average significantly less than White employees. This reflects differences in starting wages among ethnic groups, which are exacerbated over time because raises are often incorporated into an employee's base salary. These discriminatory practices may be responsible for a detrimental loss in earnings over a decade due to compound wage losses (Darity et al., 2018; Donovan & Bradley, 2019; Gottschalk, 2019; Li & Koedel, 2017; Semega et al., 2020; Shrider et al., 2021). These figures demonstrate how the wealth gap has grown between Black and White employees over the last fifty years.

There are additional mechanisms designed to perpetuate income inequality operating both within and between occupations that constrain the opportunities available for upward mobility for Black employees at HWCUs (Nelson & Vallas, 2021). They range from occupational sorting that disproportionately concentrates Black people in lower-paying occupations to wage disparity, with Black people receiving lower wages. These types of racialized practices persist in pay inequity and can have far-reaching consequences, such as lower lifetime pay, wealth inequality, and economic insecurity (Darity et al., 2018; Goetitlich, 2019; Gottschalk, 2019; Rodger, 2019). This social engineering has historical underpinnings that point to practices of both systemic and

systematic barriers in the workplace that reinforce deeply entrenched racial dynamics in

how wealth is accumulated that continue to permeate important spheres of everyday life

for Black people (Bayer & Kerwin, 2016; Darity et al., 2018; Gottschalk, 2019). It is

estimated that it would take centuries before Black people can achieve economic parity

with their White counterparts, if ever (Darity et al., 2018).

Another issue is cognitive colonization, which can influence recruitment and

retention, progression and promotion, and wage compensation from those wielding the

power of social dominance to discriminate against Black people (Aiello et al, 2018;

Grusky, 2014; Quillian & Midboen, 2021). Despite the laws prohibiting employer bias

based on race and other life-altering characteristics, racial discrimination remains a

problem in the workplace (Bendick, Jr. & Nunes, 2012; Kennedy, 2015; Quillian &

Midboen, 2021; Whitaker, 2019). Black employees' experience of differential treatment

due to racial discrimination and White privilege impacts their experiences and retention

at HWCUs (Kendall, 2012; Leonardo, 2016; McIntosh, 2003). According to the research,

there is reportedly a higher rate of workplace racial discrimination and harassment

experienced by minoritized groups than experienced by White employees (Henning et al.,

2017; Inman et al., 2020; McCord et al., 2018; Okechukwu et al., 2014). These reports

show that 24% to 44% of ethnic minority employees have had at least one unwanted or

unwarranted harassment and/or discriminatory experience at work within a 12-month

period (Illing et al., 2016; Lloyd, 2021). Some studies show that organizational factors

have a greater effect than individual factors in determining the frequency and severity of

discrimination; because these racialized systems are designed to benefit the self-

designated superior group and disenfranchise those who are designated lower status,

inferior groups (Lloyd, 2021; Reskin, 2012). Therefore, until the White dominant culture decolonizes a cognition that promotes discriminatory actions, the inequity will continue and so will the struggle for equity (Bhattacharya, 2016; Persky, 2018).

Issues Impacting Progression and Promotion

Hiring Practices

Strategic hiring practices at HWCUs can give the illusion of inclusion through the calculated hiring of Black employees in positions of lesser authority and power; since Black employees at HWCUs traditionally and routinely are concentrated in lower-level positions in their profession compared to their White peers (Flaherty, 2021; Quillian & Midtboen, 2021; University and College Union, 2016). The illusion of inclusion is reflective of the lack of Black deans, the scarcity of Black faculty in full-time tenured positions, and the normalcy of the lack of a Black person holding the position of president or vice president at HWCUs (Flaherty, 2021; Jackson et al., 2014). This lack of representation at the aforementioned levels can contribute to the lack of equity advocacy for Black employees regarding their professional progression and promotion opportunities. Black employees report a lack of mentoring and support for career development compared to their White peers, leading to difficulties in gaining senior-level promotions (Johnson, 2015; Mondisa, 2014).

Faculty

Black people and other minoritized individuals from underrepresented groups of color who achieve a faculty position experience specific barriers to obtaining promotions and tenure compared to their White counterparts (Jones et al., 2015; Kelly et al., 2017; O'Meara et al., 2014). These employees have identified and reported multiple issues in

the workplace that create barriers to promotion and progression as it relates to their efforts to secure tenure within a problematic tenure process (Wijesingha & Ramos, 2017; Sekaquaptewa et al., 2019; White-Lewis, 2021). Additional obstacles that Black faculty must contend with are the institution's culture and climate, scrutiny of their research, a lack of mentoring and support, and subtle forms of discrimination (Jones et al., 2015; Kelly et al., 2017; Mondisa, 2014; Settles et al., 2019; Wijesingha & Ramos, 2017; Zambrana et al., 2016; Zimmerman et al., 2016). In addition to the difficulty of the promotion and tenure process for Black faculty, they also must contend with academic and workplace bullying (Frazer, 2011; Young & Stewart, 2015). These behaviors and actions have served to limit Black faculty in their ability to attain tenure and promotion because unexamined assumptions made by the White dominant culture can subjectively guide the tenure process (Jones et al., 2015; Kelly et al., 2017; Settles et al., 2019; Wijesingha & Ramos, 2017; Zambrana et al., 2016; Zimmerman et al., 2016).

Faculty and the Curriculum

Racism and White supremacy have led to the gross misrepresentation and marginalization of Black people domestically and globally and are reflected in the teachings in our academic institutions (Desmond & Emirbayer, 2015; Gillborn, 2016; Goodman et al., 2019; Kendall, 2012; McIntosh, 2003). This philosophy has led to the apartheid of the curricula that are taught through a Eurocentric worldview, which can exacerbate the marginalization of students and faculty of color at HWCUs (Bernal & Villalpando, 2016). Bernal and Villalpando (2016) assert that the apartheid of knowledge and the traditional ways of teaching have been reinforced through a Eurocentric epistemological dominant perspective from centuries of the misperception of knowledge

that Black people are inferior, by negating the contributions of Black people, and misrepresenting Black people when they are rarely included, even though Black people have created and contributed to so many things embraced by the world.

This White power structure further reinforces the notion that being White is more valuable and important than being Black since being White affords more status and greater power and privilege for those who are White (Desmond & Emirbayer, 2015; Glaude, 2016; Skinner-Dorkeno et al., 2021). This xenophobia contributes to the lack of Black faculty in higher education and tenured positions, which impacts curriculum development. However, more compelling is the argument that all students are better educated and better prepared for leadership, citizenship, and professional competitiveness in multicultural America and the global community when they are exposed to diverse perspectives in the classroom (Banks, 2016; Benitez et al., 2017; Brignall & Van Valey, 2017; Tharp, 2012). Nevertheless, Black faculty at HWCUs still experience difficulties and challenges in diversifying and internationalizing the curricula because of the history and traditions of these institutions, even though many HWCUs have a mission and vision statements that espouse diversity and equity (Gabriel, 2019; Leask, 2015). The contradiction in their actions demonstrates how the social and political category of race is deeply rooted at the institutional level at HWCUs perpetuating social reproduction (Bhattacharya, 2017; Serna & Woulfe, 2017).

Administrators

Black administrators often are the first Black person in an administrative position at an HWCU, since the position was most likely created for, and traditionally held by a White person (Whirl et al, 2020; Wolfe & Dilworth, 2015). Being the first to break this

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barrier comes with its own racialized challenges (Jackson et al., 2014; Wolfe & Dilworth, 2015). White colleagues can see the Black employee hired as a symbolic move to satisfy affirmative action policies and institutional quotas, or for interest convergence reasons (Dorsey & Chambers, 2014; Kelly et al., 2017; Litowitz, 2016; Patton et al., 2019; Taylor, 2016; Wolfe & Dilworth., 2015). These reasons are sometimes factual. For example, if it is beneficial for the institution to hire or promote a Black professional to a senior-level position since past practices of biased behaviors negated Black people from these senior-level opportunities, and the students, critical stakeholders, and other concerned groups are calling for diversity at this level, then it would be advantageous for the institution to either hire or promote an eligible Black administrator to this position, demonstrating the institution's commitment to diversifying their ranks (Kelly et al., 2017; Patton et al., 2019; Wolfe & Dilworth., 2015). When the first Black person achieves a position traditionally held by a White employee, expectations can be high and sometimes unrealistically high from both peer groups, Black and White colleagues alike. Not only can Black employees be saddled with higher expectations than their White peers, but they can also be seen as representing all Black people, and can be blamed for anything that goes awry during their tenure, regardless of whether it is their fault or not (DeCuir-Gunby et al., 2018; Zambrana et al., 2016).

Black administrators at HWCUs usually lack the power or authority to make significant decisions because they are typically in junior roles (Jackson et al., 2014; Wolfe & Dilworth, 2015). These junior roles customarily report to the senior administrator who is characteristically White and has the power and authority to make administrative decisions, a positioning that has not changed much in years (Bichsel &

McChesney, 2017; Jackson et al., 2014; Wolfe & Dilworth., 2015). Black professionals continue to remain seriously underrepresented in administrative roles, particularly at HWCUs in the Northeast. The data for higher education indicates that in 2016, Blacks were in 7% of administrative roles compared to 86% of Whites in such roles, which includes positions as top executives, administrative officers, division heads, department chairs, deans, and associate deans (Bichsel & McChesney, 2017). This data supports the previously compiled data by Wolfe and Dilworth (2015) which documents that although currently there are more Black professionals as top administrators in HWCUs, there are still very few chief executives who are Black and only a slightly larger number serve as deans. This comparative data serves as evidence that the historical pattern of marginalizing Black administrators in higher education contributes to maintaining negative experiences for Black employees.

Black administrators' experiences are often a result of being in "dead-end positions" that do not have the same trajectory as the positions that their White counterparts achieve (Burke & Robinson, 2019; Lewis, 2016; Thompson, 2016). These administrators also experience situations where their authority is challenged or usurped, they are slighted and discounted; and are flagrantly disregarded in processes where their position requires their input (Brooks-Immel, 2016; Chun & Evens, 2015; Mena & Vaccaro, 2017; Wolfe & Dilworth, 2015). Although their White peers may not recognize that their actions are discriminatory, their actions contribute to significant stress, frustration, and emotional turmoil that diminishes the Black employees' experience (De Cuir-Gundy et al., 2018; Inman et al., 2020). This tendency to confine Black employees to predominately low-level administrative positions at HWCUs restricts Black employees

from participating in relevant decision-making processes at the institution (Lewis, 2016; Wolfe & Dilworth, 2015).

Although some Black employees have achieved a minimal authority administrative level position, perhaps as a result of interest convergence, whereby, Black people are afforded these positions when they serve the larger interest of the White power structure; overall, these powerless positions give the appearance that the institution practices equity in their hiring (Litowitz, 2016; Taylor, 2016). However, Black employees in these positions do not necessarily have the authority or power equal to that of their White counterparts (Skinner-Derkenoo et al., 2021; Thompson, 2016; Wolfe & Dilworth, 2015). The leadership position that Black employees acquire can originally be a lower-level administrative position or downgraded before they attain the position. For example, when the White employee held the position, the position was an executive director position; however, when the Black employee achieved the position, the position was downgraded to a director position, and likely to a mid or lower-level director position (Lewis, 2016; Wolfe & Dilworth, 2015). Black employees in White spaces who have garnered a senior-level administrative position are usually in powerless positions with little authority, and these token positions in the academy filled by Black professionals are useful to demonstrate the institution's openness to diversifying the ranks (Lewis, 2016; Settles et al., 2019).

Theoretical Framework

This study attempts to highlight the experiences of Black employees by applying the counter-storytelling framework of Critical Race Theory (CRT) to understand the pervasiveness of institutional racism within the academic context (Brayboy, 2021;

Ladson-Billings, 2016; Solorzano & Yasso, 2016). As it is imperative to engage in research efforts designed to make the experiences of Black employees in the HWCU setting more visible, this study will utilize case study methodology as a research method. The case study methodology (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015; Parker & Lynn, 2016) is a valuable method to use with CRT because it allows for a critical focus on how a phenomenon can impact an entity. The narrative framework of CRT informs the lived experiences of the individual through a counter-storytelling approach that is interpretive to gain an insightful understanding of the human experience. (Ladson-Billings, 2016; Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). The case study methodology enables the researcher to investigate the integral relationship of a cultural, political, or historical phenomenon through the interpretive lens of the individuals' human interaction with the phenomenon.

Critical Race Theory

Critical Race Theory (CRT) is a scholarly approach rooted in the legal analysis used to understand race and racism in the United States. CRT scholars use five major tenets to apply a critical lens that examines the unjust laws and policies of America's social systems that perpetuate White supremacy, inequality, and the disenfranchisement of people of color. The five major tenets of CRT are focused through the lens of (1) the notion that racism is ordinary and not aberrational, (2) the idea of an interest convergence, (3) the social construction of race, (4) the idea of storytelling and counter-storytelling, and (5) the notion that White people have been recipients of Civil Rights Legislation (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017; Litowitz, 2016). CRT developed out of legal scholarship in response to the growing discontent that founders Derrick Bell and Alan Freeman had with Critical Legal Studies (CLS) and its inability to effectively address

race and racism in its critique of the United States system of law (Bell, 1995; Hiraldo, 2019; King, 2021; Ladson-Billings, 2016; Solorzano & Yosso, 2016). CRT emerged during the Civil Rights Movement and the Vietnam War Era, and from the Legal Realism Movement (LRM), which emphasized the adverse social and political context that civil rights leaders such as Martin Luther King, Jr., John Lewis, Malcolm X, Rosa Parks, Fannie Lou Hammer, Angela Davis, Cesar Chavez, and many others were challenging (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017; Taylor, 2016). CRT challenges racial oppression, the demoralizing and dehumanizing of Black people, the marginalization of the Black diaspora, and the status quo by using a form of counter-storytelling to analyze the conditions that render marginalized people to a second-class status based on race. Counter-storytelling, cultural law, and other necessary contextual knowledge are used to convey the history and lived experiences of those in the minoritized group status (Ladson-Billings, 2016; Brayboy, 2021). These and other contextualized information are critical since those in power have all but excluded the Black diaspora from accounts, and race science has dehumanized the Black diaspora, therefore, it is vital to give the dispossessed a voice (Goodman et al., 2019; Saini, 2019). For that reason, CRT scholars use various means to document the accounts of Black people including parables, cultural law, stories, counter-stories, poetry, chronicles, and revisionist histories to illustrate the irony of how much of the Civil Rights doctrine has been inadequate in its ability to force change that equates to equity for the dispossessed (Brayboy, 2021; Ladson-Billings, 2016).

CRT evolved as a tool for scholars to speak up and out against the lagging commitment of the traditional Civil Rights legislation in the United States and its

inadequacy to dismantle inequality (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017; King, 2021; Parker & Lynn, 2016; Solorzano & Yosso, 2016; Taylor, 2016). Although the language of equality is drafted into the laws and policies implemented at the time, equity is not practiced. Therefore, CRT substantiates the need to adequately examine and address race and racism in America's structural systems, scrutinize the intersection of race and citizenship and how these concepts are constructed to benefit White people, and critique the unrelenting effects of structural racism in society (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017; King, 2021; Ladson-Billings, 2016). Even though the physical signs of discrimination have been taken down; i.e. "for Whites only and Colored only", the system of discrimination continues.

The United States' political, legal, social, economic, and educational systems are based on White supremacy principles that grant White people certain capital and social privileges, from which Black people and other people of color have been traditionally excluded (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017; Glaude, 2016; Gillborn, 2016; King, 2021; Ladson-Billings, 2016; Leonardo, 2016). This act of White domination has resulted in the ascendency of White privilege, an intergenerational set of institutionalized benefits established around skin color that grant privilege to those deemed White (Kendall, 2012; McIntosh, 2003). This ascribed status of White skin privilege ensures unearned benefits are given to White people who dominate the position of mainstream Americans in this country (DiAngelo, 2018; Gaffney, 2018; McIntosh, 2003). This ascribed status provides a legacy of intergenerational unearned privilege to their descendants with access to levels of power and resources that are unavailable to people of color purely based on their phenotype (Booker et al., 2021; Smedley, 2019). In other words, Whiteness is the

birthright that entitles one to White privilege established by the colonizing settlers since they rationalized and established that White skin is the skin color of privilege. Doors are opened and opportunities are available to those with White skin that are unavailable to those with Black skin (Anderson, 2017; DiAngelo, 2018; Glaude, 2016; Goodman et al., 2019; Kendall, 2012).

CRT illuminates the laws, practices, and policies implemented by the dominant White culture that marginalize Black people from equitable treatment (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017; King, 2021; Taylor, 2016). CRT unpacks the social, cultural, and psychological assumptions created through a nefarious dominant culture that limits who we are, how we see each other, and how we are represented in the world (Brayboy, 2021; Taylor, 2016). CRT confronts the structural ethos and the historical conditions of structural racism that limit us as a people, by exposing and interrogating how race, class, gender, and this intersection are influenced by systemic racism (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017; King, 2021; Taylor, 2016). At the same time, CRT examines how power relations advance the interest of one group while oppressing other groups; how the truth is misconstrued, and how the construction of knowledge in our institutions, particularly academia continuously promotes the pathology of White supremacy (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017; Gillborn, 2016; King, 2021; Taylor, 2016).

While CRT deconstructs the biases in the legal system and how it is designed to discriminate against Black people with onerous and perpetual consequences (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017; King, 2021; Ladson-Billings, 2016), it also traces the historical trauma of injustice that White supremacy has established through a systemic and systematic structure of an unequal and unjust distribution of power, privilege, and resources, related

to sociopolitical, socioeconomic, racial, and gender intersections universally (Brayboy, 2021; Delgado & Stefancic, 2017; Taylor, 2016). CRT argues that the assumption of White superiority and its pathology is so deeply rooted in our social structures (political, legal, social, economic, and educational), that it has been normalized and, therefore nearly unrecognizable as the oppressive system it truly is (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017; King, 2021; Taylor, 2016).

Critical race theory (CRT) serves as a foundational framework to study the phenomena of racism and White privilege and provides a lens to explore discrimination and marginalization as they apply to the limited opportunities available to Black employees at a TWCC. Since racism can play a significant role in the lived experiences of Black employees' CRT articulates the forces of racism and how this phenomenon cyclically remanufactures racial inequity that sustains White privilege in the academic setting (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017; Ladson-Billings, 2016; Taylor, 2016). Therefore, pairing CRT with a qualitative single-case study design works well because the characteristics of qualitative research fit the goals of the study permitting an in-depth investigation of the phenomena in its setting and utilizing the many tools and techniques for data collection and analysis (Creswell & Creswell, 2017; Creswell & Poth, 2017; Hallberg, 2013; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The sociological relevance of CRT is that it explores and explains the long-standing continuity of racial inequality and how racism and White supremacy are reproduced through the culture of White dominance. Conceptually, the tenants of CRT will serve as a baseline to evaluate the phenomenon through the narratives of the participants because to understand the current system of oppression and inequality institutionalized in TWCCs, it is necessary to analyze the roots

of racism and its impact (Christian et al., 2019). Utilizing CRT as a theoretical framework for this study enables me to compare past and present discriminatory actions to illustrate how racism is a habitual part of the experiences of Black people, its impact, and its historical legacy (Christian et al., 2019). In theory, CRT will allow researchers to analyze race and racism through the lens of the experience of Black people in the TWCC setting and can lead to a deeper understanding of the exclusion and suppression of Black people in this environment (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017; Ladson-Billings, 2016). An interrogation of the phenomena of race and racism can provide evidence that leads to awareness and advocacy for change that will promote equity for the historically disenfranchised Black employees and dismantle the culture of professional reproduction. Utilizing the elements of CRT can inform the leadership at Colonial Community College of the necessity to disrupt the patterns of structural racism and develop anti-racist culturally competent policies, culturally sensitive practices, and inclusive campuses to improve opportunities and access for all who desire to enter the higher education system.

Chapter 3

Methodology

Introduction

This section presents the method and procedures employed in this study, which encompasses the purpose statement, research questions guiding the study, the research method and design, the theoretical proposition, the researcher positionality, and the setting context. In addition, this is followed by the sampling method, a description of the participants, ethical considerations, the study's instruments and strategies of inquiry, a description of the data analysis process, implications, and concludes with limitations associated with the research study, and a summary.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative case study is to explore Black employees' experiences on search committees and the extent to which they may experience racial biases and marginalization at a Traditionally White Community College (TWCC). These experiences can demonstrate how racism is exerted in ways that intend to oppress those deemed inferior by those deemed superior to maintain power and privilege for the dominant group. Gaffney (2018) and Jones et al., (2020), both argue that structural racism inflicts harmful conditions that give rise to the marginalization of Black people establishing racial inequity and sustaining White privilege. This dissertation identifies, describes, and analyzes the experiences of Black employees to explore potential racialized factors and mechanisms that impact those experiences on the part of the dominant and privileged White culture. The objective is to understand the experiences of

these employees and how search committee experiences relate to the dynamics of institutional racism in the TWCC setting.

Research Questions

This study seeks to answer the following research:

1. What is Colonial Community College's formal search committee structure?

2. What have been Black professional employees' experiences serving on search committees?

3. To what extent have Black professional employees experienced racial bias in search committee practices at Colonial Community College?

For this study, I explored Black professional employees' experiences on search and practices that shape their experiences to understand how these experiences may provide insight into institutional racism.

Research Methodology and Design

This study utilizes the relevant tools of qualitative methodology to answer the "what, how, and why" questions concerning the experiences of Black employees in a TWCC setting. The research demonstrates that open-ended "what, how, and why" questions can be utilized to explore participants' experiences allowing them to offer in-depth responses concerning those experiences. Creswell and Poth (2018) and Cypress (2015), claim that qualitative methods aim to answer questions about the "what", "how" and "why" of a phenomenon rather than "how many" or "how much" which are answered by quantitative methods. Qualitative research is a strategy of inquiry that is most appropriate to gain a holistic understanding of this complex phenomenon (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Furthermore, qualitative methods generally aim to understand the

experiences and perceptions of individuals through systematic inquiry (Cypress, 2015; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Qualitative researchers investigate phenomena in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, the meaning that individuals have ascribed to the phenomena (Cypress, 2015; Denzin & Lincoln, 2017). These qualitative research methodologies enabled me to explore the participants' experiences, in their own words, and in their setting (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Cypress, 2015). Therefore, qualitative methods are often appropriate if the aim is to understand how individuals perceive a particular phenomenon (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Cypress, 2015; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

A case study design is one type of qualitative research. The research indicates three key approaches that guide case study methodologies from three prominent methodologists; Yin, Merriam, and Stake (Yazan, 2015). The three epistemological perspectives guiding case study methodologies are positivism, constructivism, and existentialism (Yazan, 2015). For example, Yin leans towards the positivistic tradition that emphasizes a philosophical stance on recombining quantitative and qualitative evidence in case study research. Whereas Merriam's perspective is constructivism, whereby, an individual's reality is constructed by interacting with their environment. Likewise, Stake's epistemological position is constructivism and existentialism which argues knowledge is constructed rather than discovered (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Stake, 2013; Yin, 2017). For this case study, a constructivist paradigm is applicable (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). A constructivist paradigm suggests that we construct our reality depending on our perception of the world as individuals. This reality is subjective since it is created from our experiences. Various scholars state that a constructivist's worldview

is a reality that is relative and dependent on one's perspective, which demonstrates how this paradigm recognizes the significance of the subjectivity of the human creation of meaning, without discounting the notion of objectivity (Baxter & Jack, 2010; Lincoln & Guba, 2013; Mogashoa, 2014).

Merriam and Tisdell (2016) explain that a case study is an in-depth inquiry that provides a detailed description and analysis of a bounded system. A bounded system is a single entity, a unit around which there are boundaries. Therefore, the case represents a particular phenomenon occurring within a bounded context (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). For that reason, using a case study design is appropriate for this study because it allows for an intensive, holistic descriptive analysis of a phenomenon in a bounded system. A qualitative single-case study method will be used since it is a practical way to comprehend complex social phenomena while retaining the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real-life experiences, events, and occurrences (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Merriam and Tisdell (2016) argue that as a research method, the case study is defined primarily by an interest in an individual case, not by the method of inquiry used, and that the focus of the study is a specific, unique, bounded environment. And since institutional racism is a generalizable theme represented in all of our social systems, from our educational institutions, the healthcare industry, the judicial system, and beyond, a single-case study design offers an opportunity to explore the Colonial Community College formal search committee structure through the narratives of Black employees serving on search committees and the extent to which institutional racism impacts their experiences at a TWCC, thus bounding the case. Some or all of these Black employees may experience a constellation of racialized actions on search committees that may be

expressed through covert or overt hostility, subtle forms of contempt for occupying White spaces, the lack of support from peers, being relegated to powerless positions, reporting to a White supervisor that disregards them, and dealing with stereotype threats that maintain inequities creating feelings of helplessness and preventing a feeling of belonging for Black employees at Colonial Community College.

Theoretical Framework

Merriam and Tisdell (2016) state that a theoretical framework is a prerequisite before starting the data collection process; it is such a vital step in all rigorous qualitative case study research because the benefit of theory is the presence of a stronger research design and methodology which adds a heightened ability to interpret the data collected and to link it with the study questions and objectives. The theoretical framework used in this study is Critical Race Theory (CRT) because of the vast empirical research that has been accumulated by scholars in the field over the decades (Brayboy, 2021; Delgado & Stefancic, 2017; Ladson-Billings, 2016; Solorzano & Yosso, 2016; Taylor, 2016). The tenets of CRT illuminate the laws, practices, and policies that have been implemented by the dominant White culture of society to marginalize Black people in society (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017; Litowitz, 2016). CRT uncovers, examines, and critiques the social, cultural, and psychological assumptions that structure and limit our way of thinking and being in the world (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Taylor, 2016). CRT confronts the structural and historical conditions of structural racism created through the practices of the racism machine (Gaffney, 2018), by raising questions about the influence of race, class, and gender, and their intersections (Crenshaw, 2016; Delgado & Stefancic, 2017; Ladson-Billings, 2016; Taylor, 2016). The theoretical proposition of structural racism examines

the prevailing narrative of White supremacy and how it perpetuates discrimination (Delgado, 2016; Leonardo, 2016).

Researcher's Positionality

The researcher is the main instrument in qualitative research (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Therefore, as the main instrument, it is incumbent on me to utilize the most appropriate tools to successfully investigate Black employees' experiences on search committees and the extent to which institutional racism affects their experiences at a TWCC. For this single-case study, a constructionist-naturalistic approach was employed. Constructivism proposes that each individual mentally constructs the world of experience through cognitive processes, thus, viewing knowledge as constructed as opposed to created (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). This indicates how individuals construct knowledge from their experiences to understand the world around them and to develop a worldview. By utilizing this approach, it allows me to garner an in-depth understanding of the experience of the individual participants in their settings.

While exploring the experiences of Black employees at a TWCC, an awareness of my worldview must be at the forefront when doing this research. The lens through which I view the world is grounded in my philosophical and political ontological and epistemological assumptions that are constructed from life experiences that may be very different from the study participants (Grix, 2019: Scotland, 2012). As with all individuals, my reality is influenced by my beliefs and values systems which are shaped by cultural upbringing, race and ethnicity, socioeconomic status, gender and sexuality, faith and religious affiliation, political alliance, and historical and geographical locations (Bryman, 2016; Dubois, 2015; Marsh et al., 2017). I am not going to allow my

positionality to predispose my study towards a particular point of view or influence how the study is conducted, its outcome, and its results (Delamont, 2018; Rowe, 2014).

As a Black woman, I experience racism and discrimination on many levels in my personal and professional life, including serving on search committees at my institution. Some of my experiences on search committees reflect the tokenism I felt as the only Black employee on the committee and the unreceptive and unwelcoming behavior displayed by some committee members. This tokenism made me feel that the institution was using me to demonstrate its compliance with its non-discriminatory policy and diversity initiative instead of engaging in real collegial engagement. Although I have had many negative search committee experiences, others have been welcoming and encouraging and made me feel genuinely included in the institution's hiring process.

My lived experiences in society have compelled me to be an advocate for equity and social justice for minoritized groups, women, and poor people. I know what it feels like to be stereotyped and critiqued based on my skin color, and how the assumptions that White people can have about me potentially limit my opportunities in the workforce and in society. Structural racism has made me cautious about forming relationships with White people since I have had some bad experiences and interactions with those who buy into the White supremacist ethos; an ideology that perpetuates harm and suffering on minoritized communities. Albeit, not all White people hold racist views, and my philosophy is to judge people individually based on their character and actions. Therefore, self-reflection is a necessary prerequisite and an ongoing process during the research study to acknowledge and evaluate my position and identify any preconceptions that I may have that can interfere with the study (Bourke, 2014; Bryman, 2016).

Since we all have biases, I must be cognizant of my biases and subjectivity going into the study and make every attempt to acknowledge any biases, especially in the data collection and data analysis phases of the study. As the main instrument, the negotiation of a research relationship with the participants is critical. These relationships create and structure the interaction that allows the researcher to collect the data (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Research relationships are how the research gets done, thus, building a sound relationship with the participants can secure vital information (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Merriam and Tisdell (2016), maintain that it is important to have relationships that allow the researcher to ethically gain the information that can answer the research questions, and the research relationships that are established can facilitate or hinder the data collection process.

When I reflect on some of my search committee experiences and review the study participants' data, I see many similarities. As previously stated, I have experienced being the only Black search committee member which made me feel like a "token." My voice has been silenced, my opinions have been dismissed, I have fought for candidates of color, and I have felt unwelcome. I have witnessed the halo effect and the horn effect ascribed to various candidates whereby the White committee members will focus on the desirable attributes of the White candidate and focus on the undesirable attributes of the Black candidate. From these experiences and others, I can relate to the challenges and stress that racism imposed on my participants.

Sample

Purposive theory-based sampling is my chosen sampling method (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Purposive sampling is grounded in the assumption that I want to explore a

phenomenon to get an in-depth understanding of the implications of the phenomenon and its impacts on the individuals and the setting, for that reason, the investigator must select a sample population from which the most can be learned (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Therefore, establishing a non-probabilistic sampling strategy can provide the study with participants who have the most experience with the phenomenon. Since non-probability sampling is used to solve qualitative questions to discover what occurs, the implications of what occurs, and the relationship linking occurrences, purposive sampling is best suited to identify the situational relationship between the individual and the phenomenon in this setting (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Merriam and Tisdell (2016) argue that it is important to select cases that are information-rich because these types of cases provide an abundance of detailed information central to the issues and the purpose of the study that the researcher can use in support of their investigation, hence, the term purposeful sampling. As such, purposive sampling facilitates my ability to garner participants who can describe and depict their experiences as Black employees on search committees and their opportunities for advancement, plus share their experiences with institutionalized racism and White privilege in the academic society (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

I used a systematic approach to select participants based on their ability to inform of their experiences as Black professionals in a White-dominated space and how being in the minority position affects their search committee experience. These individuals are a representation of the widely varying instances of institutional racism potentially experienced by Black employees' campus-wide. Being the only Black employee on a search committee and feeling unwelcomed due to stereotypical assumptions embraced by some search committee members that Black people are not equipped to hold senior

leadership positions can inhibit Black employees from full participation on search committees. My supposition is that they facilitated my understanding of what is occurring on search committees, and the relationships of the occurrences to the phenomenon of racism (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Merriam and Tisdell (2016) stress that utilizing a purposeful sampling technique assumes that the investigator wants to discover, uncover, understand, and gain valuable insight, and therefore the sample selection is critical to garner the most information about the phenomena that can be learned. To begin the process, following approval from the Institutional Research Board (IRB), I contacted the prospective research participants individually to request their participation, inform them of the study, and answer any initial questions that they might have. In total, six participants agreed to participate. Once they agreed to the interview, I sent a consent form to each participant (n=6) which consisted of administrators across various disciplines and ranks. This diversity in the sample population triangulates data sourcing and can corroborate findings to support the validity and reliability of the results. The consent form outlined the study; invited the community member to participate in the study and obtained permission from the candidate to partake in the study and record the interview. Once I received the signed consent forms, I contacted the participants to set dates to start the data collection process.

Participants

The participants (n=6) in this study consist of full-time Black professional staff from a cross-section of departments and divisions. These Black employees come from different stages of professional experience, and an assortment of areas and fields, including the Social Sciences and Humanities, English, STEM and Health Sciences, and

Occupational Workforce Development. They make up a well-represented cross-section of community employees who spoke to their search committee experiences and to the extent to which they have experienced racial bias and systemic racism. This cross-section of community college Black professionals has the potential through their narratives to provide an understanding of Black professionals' experiences, how they feel they are viewed, and why they believe they are viewed in this way.

I opted to use a number range of 6-8 participants in the participant selection process instead of a specific number to facilitate a better chance of having ample participants in the study due to the limited number of Black administrators at Colonial Community College. In total, six individuals agreed to participate. Merriam and Tisdell (2016) assert that case study research does not need a large sample size and determining the sample size is based on the research criteria which is essential in choosing participants. However, the sample size is important in that it should be large enough to sufficiently describe the phenomenon of interest, answer the research questions, utilize the institution's resources, and withstand the loss of a participant if a participant leaves the study before completion (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). A number range of participants enables a better chance to enhance the saturation of non-probability sampling which augments the amount of useful information that can potentially be obtained employing this strategy (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

Ethical Considerations

An important step to assure an ethical research study is to obtain approval from the Institutional Research Board (IRB). This research ethics committee grants approval that qualifies the researcher to proceed with their research study. The guidelines for

approval assure in advance that the appropriate steps are taken to minimize any potential risk and protect the well-being and rights of the humans participating in the study (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The protocol of a case study research method is consistent with sound research design procedures that do not unnecessarily expose participants to harm. For example, no participant was contacted until IRB approval was granted, ensuring the participant selection process was equitable, maintaining the anonymity and confidentiality of each participant, and monitoring the data collected to ensure the privacy and safety of the participants (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Once selected, an informed consent form was given to each participant (Appendix A). This form outlined the relevant information for the research study. The consent form introduces the study and gives the purpose of the study, a description of the study, expectations of the volunteer's participation, potential risk and discomforts, a participant ID# for unanimity, the voluntary participation and authorization signature section, and information on how to withdraw from the study if a participant chooses to do so (Merriam & Tisdell; 2016).

Consideration of the sensitivity of the subject matter must be at the forefront of the research study. With that being said, the line of questioning must be carefully constructed and executed so that it is not presented in a way that crosses boundaries. I was careful to ensure that the study did not cause harm or distress to the participants from the beginning of the research process through the publishing of the research (Merriam & Tisdell; 2016). Confidentiality is another area of concern. If the confidentiality of the participant's identity is breached, this could harm the integrity of the study and destroy the trust of the participants.

Data Collection

I am using a qualitative case study design because it allows for an intensive, holistic description and analysis of a single phenomenon or social unit (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The methodologies that are standard in qualitative case study data collection techniques were utilized. This qualitative single-case study explores participants' attitudes, perceptions, and experiences as well as official search process procedures through personal interviews, field notes, a personal journal, and a review of relevant documents (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). As a researcher, field notes are an essential tool that helps organize my observations during the interviews, and my journal is where I record my thoughts and feelings while in the field.

Interviews

Each personal semi-structured in-person or virtual interview with the participants was sixty to one hundred and twenty minutes which enabled me to learn more about their experiences, how these experiences have impacted them, and why they believe that they are having these experiences. These participants may be able to share information about the institution that others are not privy to, or potentially provide data that others don't have access to (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

These intensive in-depth interviews were centered on approximately ten purposefully constructed interview questions (Appendix A) to solicit relevant information about the phenomenon. Interview questions are open-ended and designed to elicit details and concrete stories about the participants' experiences (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). They were developed based on my experiences and knowledge of the phenomenon and the literature from the conceptual framework (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Each interview was

held in person or virtually and recorded using an audio-recording device. Recording the interviews and transcribing them verbatim enables me to collect the narratives in the participant's own words and revisit the information as needed (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

Utilizing the systematic, yet flexible inductive structure of the case study methodology and a semi-structured interview process provides me and the interviewee with some structure and helps direct the responses, and it also affords room for the participant to elaborate (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). I can clarify responses and the interviewee can clarify questions, which is not possible with a questionnaire or a very structured interview (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

Fieldnotes

Field notes are an essential qualitative method for gathering data in addition to interviews and observations (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Field notes and observations are contemporaneous, and utilized along with conversations, which are essential components during the conduct of qualitative research (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Notes can be extensive or brief notations that can be elaborated on later (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Field notes are a way to record and catalog information that was garnered through observations, including observations of the site where the research is being performed. My field notes recorded what I heard, saw, experienced, and thought in the course of collecting and reflecting on the research process. However, I must maintain a balance between descriptive notes and reflective notes, such as hunches, impressions, feelings, and so on (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). This distinction can aid in the coding process of my field notes, identifying categories and associations with current codes (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

The accumulation of field notes is invaluable in keeping track of my observations during the interview process. These notes give me a written document to gain a sense of what the interviewee's answers are to my questions. The notes allow me to reflect on and confirm what I think the interviewee has expressed about their experiences post-interview. They supplement my research data by providing contextual information that can be useful in the data collection and analysis phase.

I made careful and objective notes about what I saw, heard, and experienced, recording all accounts and observations as field notes to provide an information-rich explanation of my findings (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). These field notes are ultimately recorded in a field notebook for further analysis. The field notebook is a cumulative document of the notes taken while in the field and can be useful in memo writing and a precursor to developing a memo bank (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Another useful technique is creating a memo bank of all of the memos, which contains each revision of the memo and field notes. This practice gives me the ability to cross-file memos to refine ideas (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

Research Journal

I maintained a journal throughout the research process to record my observations and assess my reflections during the study (Bassot, 2020; Berger, 2015; Janesick, 2015; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This reflective journal enables me to record my experiences; my thoughts and emotions during the study, my impressions of the participants, my opinions of the interviews, how I interpret the participants' responses to my interview questions, and my views about anything else that occurs during the study (Bassot, 2020; Janesick, 2015; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Since my positionality could potentially influence how I

interact within the setting, with the participants, and how the data is collected and interpreted, I self-evaluated throughout the research process (Berger, 2015). Acknowledging these reflections can increase accountability, trustworthiness, and clarity in the data analysis and interpretation process by performing a running check on any preconceptions I could bring into the context (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Studies show that in the data collection phase, a written record of my research experiences is an essential strategy that can facilitate reflexivity by examining my assumptions, judgments, and biases during the interview process that could influence my data points toward a particular conclusion (Bassot, 2020; Berger, 2015; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). As part of the research process, keeping a journal is elemental in creating transparency in the research process. Therefore, the specific aim of a reflective journal is to improve the reliability and validity of the data and preempt any biases that could corrupt the research (Bassot, 2020; Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Documents

My review of documents that contain relevant information to assist in gaining a thorough understanding of the doctrines that guide the principles and practices of the College's mission and vision was critical. Documents include the College mission, vision, and values statements, the strategic plan, the Middle States Accreditation Reports, policy manuals, the Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion (DEI) statement, the formal search committee guidelines from Human Resources, the search committee training procedures, and Human Resources job announcements. Merriam and Tisdell (2016) emphasize that documents are ready-made sources of data easily accessible and can be a great resource for investigative researchers. Reviewing internal documents can effectively expose

patterns and trends that occur over an extended period. And can reveal a lack of transparency, hiring patterns, confirm or dispute claims, and substantiate facts about the institutions that employees verbalize (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

Data Analysis

Data analysis is a systematic process of sifting and arranging all information obtained from interview transcripts, observations, field notes, graphic elicitation, and other materials collected to increase the researcher's understanding of the data to enable the presentation of what has been discovered (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). A qualitative case study method of inquiry enables the researcher to interpret research participants' meaning from the data gathered, which is themselves an interpretation of how they see the world. Thus, these interpretations enable me to produce a substantive theory from a real-world setting where the phenomenon of interest unfolds naturally (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

Coding

Merriam and Tisdell (2016) suggest an interactive data analysis approach that outlines the interactive cyclical process of data collection and data analysis. This data analysis model speaks to the contemporaneous process of analyzing the data as one collects the data. This process helped me visualize patterns and themes occurring in the data. To engage in this cyclical process, coding the raw data is the first step in organizing the data (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). In qualitative data analysis, a code is a researcher's generated construct that symbolizes and thus attributes interpreted meaning to each datum for later purposes of pattern detection, categorization, theory building, and other analytic processes (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Merriam and Tisdell (2016) assert that

coding is the transitional process between data collection and more extensive data analysis. For many qualitative inquiries, initial coding of the data line by line is the first step in coding. Line-by-line coding means naming each line of written data (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Merriam and Tisdell (2016) argue that line-by-line coding is a useful tool because ideas occur that have escaped attention when reading data for a general thematic analysis.

Once the initial coding is complete, the second phase of coding, focused coding, occurs, enabling the separation, sorting, and synthesizing of a large amount of data, permitting the identification of patterns in the data to facilitate the classification of themes (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The themes generated from focused coding are organized into groups and categorized into themes that are then presented in chapter 4. Thematic analysis is a useful methodology in qualitative case study methods to help me construct the meaning of the data (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). This approach enables the researcher to learn about the participant's worldview, experiences, and opinions. Through the coding process themes and patterns emerge and are critical for interpreting and aggregating data, and help develop data sets (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Another stage of data analysis that can aid in identifying themes and patterns in the data is displaying the coded data in a matrix or chart. Displaying the data in this form can reveal what data needs further analysis and what data is relevant or not (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Sorting the data in a matrix, chart, or structured visual arrangement organizes the information into an immediately accessible compact form, whereby, I can determine what is occurring, draw preliminary or justified conclusions, or be directed to a more useful

phase of the analysis process (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). This process enables me to view

what data in the matrix or chart is significant to the research project.

Trustworthiness

To safeguard the trustworthiness of the data and the rigor of the study, adopting

well-established research methods is generally recommended (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

Merriam and Tisdell (2016), maintain that the specific procedures employed, such as the

line of questioning pursued in the data-gathering sessions and the methods of data

analysis should be derived where possible from those that have been successfully utilized

in previous comparable projects. Qualitative case study methodologies employ specific

approaches to data collection and data analysis. These methods warrant that the theory

fits the phenomenon studied, does not include any forced elements, and is most useful

because the data comes directly from the methodologies used (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

Triangulation

For Merriam and Tisdell (2016), triangulation of data sources is one of the

strategies recommended when utilizing a case study research design because of the ability

to diversify data sources to ensure credibility. However, a general assumption can be that

traditional scientific techniques are incompatible with this alternate epistemology unless

the researcher attends to the trustworthiness of the qualitative research methodology by

addressing issues associated with credibility. Triangulation is typically a strategy for

improving the credibility and trustworthiness of research or evaluation of its findings to

control bias and establish a valid proposition. This technique is used to accurately

increase the fidelity of the interpretation of the data by using multiple methods of data

collection (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). These different methods include, but are not

limited to, individual interviews and field observations, audiovisual materials, email messages, and documents which are major data collection strategies in qualitative research (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Incorporating different methods in concert compensates for their limitations and exploits their respective benefits. For this study, participant interviews, observations, field notes, and documents were the methods of triangulating the data collection.

Credibility

The credibility of the data also can be established by utilizing member checking (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Member checking is an essential technique used by investigative researchers to confirm the collection of vital information for accuracy and resonance. Member checking is an important approach to establishing the credibility of the data by sending the participants their interview transcripts and asking them for any changes or additions to the data. Allowing the participants to confirm and potentially add to the interview data improves the study's accuracy and integrity (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). I sent each participant their interview transcript for member checking and each participant confirmed its accuracy without any additions or corrections required. Another effective process to support credibility in the data is the constant comparison method which helps facilitate my ability to identify concepts or categories that are emerging from one stage of the data analysis with concepts emerging from the next stage (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). By looking for and identifying relationships between these categories, and by constantly comparing them, I can form the basis of a theory (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). This process continues until no new categories or concepts are emerging, therefore producing data saturation. Once data saturation occurs I have enough data to draw

noteworthy conclusions, therefore, collecting more data did not yield value or additional insight. The benefit of using this method is that the research begins with raw data and through constant comparison; a substantive theory emerges constructing an account of individual experiences (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

Threats

Inquirer bias and preconceptions can present real challenges and threaten the trustworthiness of a qualitative case study. The underlying tenet of a qualitative case study inquiry is that the data reflects the narratives and stories through the lens of the participants and not that of the researchers (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Therefore, strictly adhering to qualitative case study methodologies inhibits threats and sustains trustworthiness. Additionally, the corroboration of the data from multiple study participants cross-referenced with field notes and documents can strengthen the trustworthiness of the data (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

Limitations

As a novice researcher, I must be cognizant of my limited skills and be aware of how my own biases and idiosyncrasies shape what I see in the data. Rigor must be at the forefront of the study, and although the sample size of the study is not large by some standards, rigor must be a constant in the entire process (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Another limitation to consider as reflected in my study is the lack of male participation. Because my study only has one male participant, it reduces the gender diversity among my participants and limits the male perspective allowing the female perspective to dominate. According to the literature Black men may experience more discrimination than Black women leading to their lack of representation (Turner & Grauerholz, 2017).

Also, creating a timeframe that works for the higher education semester structure allows me to access the participants promptly since a few of the participants have a robust work schedule that could present scheduling complications. In addition, I must consider any associated costs to undertaking this research project and properly account for any expenditures.

Chapter Summary

As stated earlier, a qualitative single-case research design is being used since it offers the methodologies that can be applied to explore individuals' experiences in a setting. Search committee membership and any racism at an institutional level can be explored through in-depth interview questions to understand the experiences of employees in their environment (Gaffney, 2018; Merriam and Tisdell, 2016). The data collection techniques of participant interviews, field notes, my reflection journal, and documents are instrumental in generating data from the ground up enabling me to answer my research questions. This triangulation of data sources is an important strategy for upholding credibility and trustworthiness in the process of the study. Additionally, identifying themes and patterns that can reveal what data is relevant or not and whether there is a saturation of the data, is essential. Including thematic analysis as a practical tool to recognize patterns and themes in the data, and classify the data categories is critical (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

Some scholars predict by 2025 more students of racial and ethnic backgrounds will be attending postsecondary institutions of higher education, and expectations are that a significant number of these students will enroll in community colleges (Beach, 2011; Hussar & Bailey, 2018). In addition, the current data shows that nationally in the fall of

2020, 74% of full-time faculty were White, and 26% of full-time faculty were people of color. Furthermore, 80% of administrators were White and only 8% of administrators were Black (CUPA-HR, 2020). Since much has not changed to date, it is imperative that when TWCCs employ leaders they reflect the student population because the College is a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI), thus, the need to hire more Black administrators and Black full-time faculty to support an optimal college experience for the student body and the college community at large (Barnett, 2020; Smith, 2020; Tate & Bagguley, 2018).

Chapter 4

Research Findings

The purpose of this qualitative research case study is to explore the experiences of Black employees in the Traditionally White Community College (TWCC) context regarding their search committee experiences. Central to my research study is the examination of race, racism, and White privilege, and how these phenomena contribute to Black professionals' experiences (Gaffney, 2018; Goodman et al. 2019; Kendall, 2012; Leonardo, 2016; McIntosh, 2003). I argue that racialized practices in the search committee process perpetuate a double standard in the TWCC setting that impacts Black employees' experiences.

The document analysis and interview responses from the participants structure this chapter and reveal the themes that capture the experiences of Black employees on search committees at a TWCC. I interviewed six Black employees across disciplines ranging in various ages and years of employment. The research questions listed below guide the study and support a better understanding of the phenomenon:

1. What is Colonial Community College's formal search committee structure?

2. What have been Black professional employees' experiences serving on search committees?

3. To what extent have Black professional employees experienced racial bias in search committee practices at Colonial Community College?

The qualitative case study research methods that guided this study were participant interviews, field notes, my research journal, and institution documents (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Once I received IRB approval, I immediately started the

recruitment process at Colonial Community College (CCC). I solicited eight potential

participants by individually emailing each person a key information research study

form outlining the research study topic and six Black employees agreed to participate

in my study and share their search committee experiences. One potential participant

declined and the other one never responded after a few attempts to contact him. I then

emailed each participant a consent form that shared more detailed information about

the study and what they could expect from being a participant. Confidentiality and

anonymity were paramount in receiving participation therefore each participant was

given a number. In addition to confidentiality, a number system was used to simplify

the tracking of the participants.

A comprehensive review of the scholarly research on Black employees serving on

search committees in higher education primarily focuses on their experiences at four-

year institutions revealing a gap in the literature for community colleges (Liera &

Hernandez, 2021; McCray, 2017; Sekaquatewa et al., 2019; White-Lewis, 2021).

While these studies provide valuable insight from the perspective of Black

professionals at traditionally White four-year colleges and universities, the TWCC

perspective has not been a focal point in the scholarly research. The TWCC sector

deserves equal attention since many of these institutions cater to marginalized

students of color and first-generation students of color (American Association of

Community Colleges, 2022). Therefore, the search committee process to recruit and

hire Black professionals to diversify their ranks is critical. For these reasons and

others, I feel a responsibility to investigate this phenomenon to provide knowledge of

the experiences of Black employees serving on search committees to close the gap in

the research and to provoke positive change in the search committee process at Colonial Community College.

Participant Demographics

The six administrators interviewed are from various disciplines and different areas across the College who identify as Black or African American. Their ages span from the late thirties to the late fifties. Their tenure at the College ranges from seventeen years to a year and a half of service. Some are alumni and have worked in different positions, multiple roles, and in more than one area on the campus. Most of them are the first person of color in their role. The table below outlines the participants' demographics and the order in which they were interviewed.

Table 1

Study Participants

Participant #	Gender Identity	Age (approx.)	Years of Employment
1	Male	50-55	15-20
2	Female	55-60	10-15
3	Female	40-45	5-10
4	Female	35-40	10-15
5	Female	50-55	5-10
6	Female	40-45	1-5

The table was created to provide an instant visual of the profile of the study participants. All of the information is important and helps identify the range of ages and years of service of each participant to demonstrate that these demographics are less significant than the common denominator of race which appears to be the critical factor that establishes the similarities in their experiences. Once I completed the in-person interviews, I had the recordings professionally transcribed verbatim and did a member check with each participant to make sure that their narratives were captured accurately and reflected their experiences (Harper & Cole, 2012; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

Once the participants confirmed and approved their transcripts, I started the process of coding each transcript. The first step was the initial coding of the data line by line. Line-by-line coding means naming each line of written data (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Once the initial coding is complete, the second phase of coding, focused coding, occurs, enabling the separation, sorting, and synthesizing of a large amount of data, permitting the identification of patterns in the data to facilitate the classification of themes (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The themes generated from focused coding are organized into groups and categorized into themes and subthemes. Finally, I used thematic analysis to help me construct the meaning of the data (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). These data analyses help unearth the themes and subthemes that provide a better understanding of the phenomenon studies.

Documents

I reviewed the Colonial Community College (CCC) Mission Statement, the Values Statement, the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Statement, the Strategic Plan, the Administrator/Support Staff Search Committee Guidelines, and the 2022 Self-

Study Report prepared by the institution for the Middle States Commission on Higher Education. All of these documents provided valuable information that aided in my discovery (CCC Website).

Document Analysis Findings

According to the documents I reviewed, Colonial Community College's (CCC) Mission Statement begins by stating it is an inclusive college community. This statement conveys to the reader that the institution is welcoming to all and represents a place where they can work and/or study in a hospitable inclusive environment. Similar, to the Mission Statement, is the Values Statement which includes language that communicates diversity, equity, inclusion, and accountability as a significant part of the institution's ethos. The Values Statement outlines the institution's commitment to the fair and equitable treatment of all constituents with a focus on historically underrepresented groups and encourages full participation of the College community through a system of shared governance. According to the documents on the website I reviewed, the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Statement, claims to value all aspects of diversity while relying on diversity to cultivate an inclusive college community and to support recruitment and retention that is reflective of an inclusive environment. In addition, the DEI statement supports curricula and social programs that embrace and expose the contributions of all people to effectuate the development of students for global citizenship. The Strategic Plan includes a vision to increase diversity with a focus on workforce diversity. The most recent Administrator/Staff Search Committee Guidelines, 2018, state that diversity in race, gender, and skills is a requirement to serve on a search committee. The 2022 Self-Study Report for the Middle States Commission, Standard VII: Governance, Leadership,

and Administration, concludes that a comprehensive plan needs to be created to successfully recruit faculty and administrators of color, and a concerted effort to engage faculty and administrators of color in discussions on the recruitment of this demographic is imperative. Equally as important is the recommendation for more inclusion of employees of color on search committees to recruit and develop a diverse and equitable workforce (CCC Website).

Essentially, the Mission Statement, the Values Statement, the Diversity Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Statement, the Strategic Plan, and the Administrator/Staff Search Committee Guidelines are the commitment statements that are the foundation to facilitate the College's goal of creating a racially diverse and inclusive environment. However, what I have gleaned from the evidential information outlined in the documents examined for this study is that CCC is aspiring to be inclusive but has not achieved the level of equity and inclusion to create equality and a welcoming environment for Black employees. When one juxtaposes the scholarly research with the evidential information it is clear that more needs to be done to cultivate the diversity principles touted in these statements.

Interview Themes

Interviews not only provide information on the participants' experiences serving on search committees at a TWCC, but they also provide a platform for their voices to be heard. Being selected as an interviewee can convey to the participants that they matter, their experiences matter, and that their insight into the phenomenon being studied is essential. Each question was uniquely crafted to gain knowledge about their most recent experience as a Black member of a search committee. Their answers provide a picture of

the context revealing how they navigate challenging situations and the impact of those

situations. These real-life experiences are a way to identify patterns from the interview

data and categorize the emerging themes.

Table 2

Thematic Map

Main Themes	Subthemes
Search Committee Guidelines and Training	
Negative Experiences and Bad Actors	
Racial Diversity and Representation	Committee composition Tokenism

Table 2 provides a schematic of the major themes and subthemes that arose

throughout the coding process. These themes are representative of the experiences shared

by the study participants. The goal of these themes is to understand better the experiences

that Black employees have while serving on search committees at a TWCC. Each theme

captures the key experiences of the participants and provides a window into how racism

on search committees can negatively affect the agency of Black employees leaving them

feeling marginalized and unwelcomed.

Theme 1: Search Committee Guidelines and Training

Theme 1 articulates that there are formal guidelines and training requirements for anyone to participate on a search committee and Human Resources (HR) is responsible for administering these requirements before search committee participation. This was also clear from my review of documents. However, the participants' narratives reveal the complexities involved with acquiring the guidelines and training.

The majority of participants stated that they received HR guidelines and training, however, only two of the participants said they were adequate.

Participant 2 stated, "I think that now they are doing a better job [with the guidelines and training] because I think the inequities are glaring." Participant 3 shared that the guidelines and training that HR provides are sufficient. "To be honest, I think they're pretty transparent. I think the rules are really clear." Participant 3 elaborated by affirming that her experience with receiving guidelines and training is informative and clear. She said,

> I believe that HR is very clear. They give you training before you even interview.
> They tell you the rules and the guidelines that you must follow before you can
> even interview a candidate. All questions are compiled by the group of people
> performing the interview, and those questions must be approved before we can
> even ask an individual candidate those questions.

Participant 3 emphasizes how committee members must follow the rules and apply the same process to each candidate. She explained,

They're also very clear that we must stick to the question that's on the paper and not be deterred from it. Ask additional questions from that question if it's not listed already because those same questions must be asked of every candidate.

Four of the participants stated that their experience with receiving search guidelines and training was not favorable. Participant 1 and participant 6 did not believe that the guidelines and training were adequate. Participant 4 only received training after she initially served on a search committee and participant 5 lamented that she never received any HR guidelines or training.

Participant 1 said,

I think it's just standard information. I don't think it's detailed. [The guidelines and training] are somewhat helpful, 50/50… We have theories and practice. But the fact [is] that we can say one thing in theory, [and] we can turn around and do something [else].

Participant 4 told me, "When I [served on] my first [search] committee, I wasn't trained." Later participant 4 elaborated,

You know how the HR sit down with you [for a] charge meeting? That's a charge meeting, I guess. I was not part of that. I asked the committee. I did not know there was such [a] thing as a training, since it was my first time and then the second time [I served on a search committee] I was given the charge [the search committee guidelines and] training, then I understood.

While participant 4 received training eventually, participant 5 did not receive training, explaining simply, "I never received any training at all."

Participant 6 commented that,

HR does come in the beginning initially, and they do a presentation about bias and what to look out for, what to think about, what to put in check. It's a small PowerPoint presentation. There's a handout that's given. I think that it was well-intentioned… [but] I don't think bias trainings are effective training.

Participant 6 added that the committee chair emphasized the process outlined by HR, saying,

We have to do this part, so we got to hand in this. So, I heard a lot of those rules continuously repeated throughout. I heard a lot of those things repeated, and so I felt like there was a clear path and direction… within the framework that was created by HR.

Theme 2: Negative Experiences and Bad Actors

Theme 2 focuses on participants' negative experiences on search committees. Almost all of the participants shared these negative experiences; several participants had multiple negative experiences. The participant narratives share their experiences with unorthodox practices.

Participant 2 shared an experience with explicit bias perpetuated by a White committee member and the action of the chair, stating,

[I] had to speak up about this explicit bias perpetuated by the White female committee member trying to leapfrog this candidate as one of the finalists, surprisingly the White male committee chair agreed, spoke up, and stopped this favoritism.

Participant 3 had several negative experiences on search committees. She shared one instance saying,

If we had to interview four people, and let's say three of the candidates were

Caucasian and one was Black or Latina or Latino… that Black and Brown person

wouldn't make it to the final round. I would have to sort of push [for them to be

considered] then I would have to advocate as to why I felt this person was

qualified. I don't know if people on the committee had their own biases and just

didn't sit back and acknowledge that.

Participant 3 described another example,

We were looking for someone with medical credentials to teach a course… the

interview pool was pretty diverse. However, some people on the committee did

not want to interview candidates because they felt they were overqualified. And it

just so happened that these people that were overqualified were people of color.

When I say overqualified, maybe they had their Ph.D., maybe they had their law

degree… they were already eliminating a group of people based solely on their

educational credentials. But they were okay with accepting this Caucasian person

who did not have the same amount of credentials as the people that they

considered overqualified. In fact, this person didn't even have an associate's

degree and they were considering them for the position.

Finally, Participant 3 explained a situation in which she contacted HR and the Dean to

report biased behavior,

Because this person was already employed by the institution and people knew that

the person could do the job, they solely focused on this individual instead of

looking at the pool of candidates. What I had to do at that moment was then go to

HR and explain to them what I saw happening, as well as let the dean know what

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was happening… they were in agreeance (sic) with what I brought to them. The

dean then emailed the team and told them to interview everyone. After doing so,

we ended up getting the most qualified candidate for the position… And I will say

that I am very proud that I advocated [at] that moment because it only proved my

point… I wanted them to interview everyone.

Participant 3, however, was upset about this and said she will not participate on anymore

search committees, explaining,

I'm proud of [the] advocacy that I did at that moment, but I don't know [if] I have

any more strength to keep doing that. I'm washing my hands of it, and now I just

feel that… other people can fight that fight if they want to.

Participant 2 described how she went to HR to report biased behaviors perpetuated by

search committee members and the HR response.

I very often would go to HR, and I would report [racist behaviors]. There's a very

disturbing collection of comments that have been made by members serving on

search committees where other people on that search committee have reported

them and HR has collected those comments, and they're blatantly… some of them

are blatantly racist. They're ethnocentric and xenophobic.

Participant 4 had two negative experiences on search committees. The first one was a

committee that she was unable to participate fully on due to international travels. HR and

the committee chair knew this but still insisted that she participate. Because her travel

time overlapped with the search committee's schedule, she was unable to interview all of

the candidates or participate fully on the committee. Participant 4 stated,

The first thing is I was traveling out of the country. I was given a task, I had a

conversation with the person who was in charge of the committee who was

handling it. I was able to interview two people out of the interview. With the other

two, I wasn't part of it because I was out of the country… They knew that I would

be out of that office and [they] had the interview done that week. I missed people.

I missed two of the four interviews because I was out of the country.

Then participant 4 shared how she felt as the only person of color on the committee,

I was just, I guess, a [person of color] there, I wasn't heard… I saw that crazy side

or untrustworthy side of the process. I felt like I wasn't really part of it… from the

get-go… I was just[a] face… That's it.

Participant 4 then described a committee experience in which HR asked her to "spy" on

the committee members to ensure that a certain candidate was chosen. She did not

comply because this request was against her principles and it made her feel insignificant

and used, stating,

I was asked [by] one of the HR representatives to keep an eye on something,

which I didn't feel comfortable about because something was not done right. I

was upfront with the person who asked me, and I asked the person… "Hey, how

can you ask me that?" I don't want to be called, I'm going to use street language

here, a snitch or somebody who is spying or something. Because I'm not a snitch

and I don't feel comfortable doing that.

Participant 4 expressed,

"I'm glad [that] I spoke up because my heart and my gut were like; I can feel it

when something is not right. Spiritually, you have to be honest about it. You can't

make stuff up like that."

However, Participant 4 lamented,

Since then I have not been on a committee. I think it's not fair… I guess [it is due

to] how I reacted… and I know they're not going to give me an opportunity to go

through that again. You can't forget those things. Now it also makes you think,

"hey is that what's happening with everyone?"

Next, participant 6 vividly described two committee experiences in which she stood up to

White men because of their aggressive behaviors. In the first instance, the only White

man on the committee, "

Complained about how the women were asking the interview questions to the

candidates… and said something to us like, 'the way you asked questions was wrong'

or… 'why do you ask things like that?"' Participant 6 explained that she intervened and

said, "that's actually not your job here [to critique the questioning]."

Participant 6 also expressed that she,

"Experienced disparaging name-calling, was told to be quiet, and endured demeaning

outbursts criticizing [me]… these angry and hostile acts perpetrated against the Black

female committee members represent White male entitlement and White privilege."

Participant 6 then said,

 I actually did go to HR… because I did share what happened because it was an

intense interaction between myself and the other person… I felt like there was a

deep lack of respect that happened, which is why I then responded the way I did to that person.

On the 2nd committee, Participant 6 shared,

> There was a gentleman on there who had a very close relationship with the chair. He and I argued because of how he was treating other people on that committee, particularly women, silencing them and treating them poorly, and making fun of them when they would say things in a certain way. The chair never put this person in check. Eventually [he] apologized [to me]; [he] did say [he] was out of line.

Participant 6 also described an experience in which the chairperson disregarded the search committee protocol and overruled the committee members' recommendations, explaining,

> "[The committee members] conveyed our top two candidates… And… the chair of that committee really felt like, 'nope, I know what's going to work here and what's not going to work, and this is not going to work.'"

Participant 6 added that she and some of the other committee members believed that the chair negated their candidate selections and that the chair overrode them and pushed her choice forward.

Participant 5 shared her difficult experience,

> The [chair] brought in someone [whom] we did not select to interview. Because [this] person had a department connection, they were one of the participants [interviewed], but the group did not select that person to interview. And so the person who was the chair of the search committee gave that person an opportunity to interview.

Participant 5 expressed,

> I was disappointed… how is it that the person, because they knew someone who
> worked in that department, that it was okay for that person to interview based on
> that person's opinion [of] how good this person was? And when they interviewed,
> the candidate was good, but I still didn't feel as if that person should have been
> bought in, because I thought that was biased. And if you think about us, if we're
> supposed to be about equality and you're using equity, then you're supposed to
> follow [the rules and guidelines].

Participant 5 revealed that although she was not given guidelines, she knew this was
wrong, telling me "I wasn't given the guidelines, but I know that if you didn't select the
individuals, the person should not have been interviewed."

In another instance,

Participant 5 shared that because she was volunteered, not invited, to serve on the search
committee, she did not participate in drafting the interview questions and explained how
it made her feel,

> [I was] given the [interview] questions that were developed by, I'm assuming
> from the committee chairperson, but that was it… because I wasn't the person
> who was selected, another person from my department was the person who was
> selected, and then it fell as a default to say, "well, could you do this, because that
> person didn't want to do it?" I feel undervalued.

Theme 3: Racial Diversity and Representation

The last theme presented in this research study reveals the study participants'
thoughts regarding committee composition and their feeling of being tokenized. While,

from my review of documents, it was clear that the committee should be diverse, requiring that diversity also had some unintended consequences. I first present the data relating to committee composition and then the data about feeling tokenized. Some of the participants acknowledged that they served on a racial and gender diverse committee, others shared an experience with an ethnically diverse committee, and one participant responded that her last committee was almost equally racially diverse. And three of the participants shared their experience of being tokenized.

Committee Composition

Participant 1 recalled the number and the gender of two recent search committees to indicate the diversity of the committee,

It was me, it was [two] African Americans… So, for us to conquer [the] Caucasians, I think I was the only male [and] the rest [were] female. Three female[s]… One female African American… one African American male, two Caucasian women.

Participant 1 then recalls another search committee and its diversity, saying,

If I remember correctly, the position prior to that… It was me. [And] we [had] someone who was LBGT… that was good, yeah. I was the only African American male and there was one African American female, with the majority being White.

Without hesitation, participant 1 spoke about his attitude toward continuing to serve on a search committee, saying,

If I don't feel comfortable being on a search committee [because of the racial composition of the committee, or with the people on the search committee], I'm

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just not going to be [on it]… I've been here long enough where people know, kind

of know my personality… Now I'm not getting many opportunities to serve on

these types of committees.

While speaking with participant 2, I learned that she has served on so many search

committees that she has lost track, telling me,

"I think I've lost track of how many search committees. I have served on administrator

and faculty search committees." Participant 2 continued by saying,

In the most recent committee that I served on the people on the committee were

primarily White but there was someone from the Middle East, me, and there was

also a Latina. I think there were seven of us on the committee. It was three people

of color and four were White people. We had quite a diverse pool. This was a

very intentional group, and we had a diverse pool of candidates.

During our conversation, participant 2 informed me that she will be serving on a search

committee that is majority of people of color with a chair of color, which is a rarity. She

articulated her delight with being invited to serve on a majority of people of color search

committee with a chair of color since this is atypical, saying,

Today I was asked to serve on a search committee… four employees of color and

three White employees, and the search committee chair is also a person of color…

it will be the first time I'm serving on a search committee at this institution where

people of color are the majority in the search committee.

My interview with participant 3 disclosed that within six years she served on

approximately one search committee a month which made her feel like the Black

representation for search committee. This is a potential unintended consequence of the

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HR requirement for diverse committees. She also revealed, however, that her most recent search committee was racially and ethnically diverse. She also declared,

> I'd have to say between the years of 2015 and 2020, I'll push it back to 2021, it was maddening. I probably was on, let's say about a search committee a month, give or take and I felt used… I would have to say the last interview committee I was on was diverse, so it was me and then it was a Muslim person. maybe one of the persons is Middle… maybe... Eastern White and then an Italian male, and then a Jewish person. That's diverse.

Participant 4 explained that she has served on several staff and administrator search committees. She included how she questions if her contribution matters and how she believes she's being used as a person of color, explaining,

> "[I have served on] maybe five… [search committees]… I really don't want to waste my time if I'm just there to sit and fill in a spot, they need somebody, a person of color in a committee."

Participant 4 also explained,

> [They] were primarily staff and administrators, no faculty search committees. They always want to have one person of color… It's always we want to use somebody Black or somebody Brown. But at the end of the day, even though you go through the process and everything, your contribution doesn't matter because the decision is made by a third party. I feel like this and my [peers] and I have discussed this. We make good selections and if we pick one person, it's somebody else selected. It makes me feel that we are wasting our time.

Participant 5 has served on one search committee. The committee was diverse in its racial and gender composition. But her experience from the start was complicated by how she was chosen, explaining,

> I've served on one search committee since I've been here. I think there were six committee members, only one male and the rest were females, but there were three people of color… My participation was actually by default because someone else was asked to serve and the person said that they had been on too many, and they asked me to serve… So that's the only way that I was selected. And I find that [very] disappointing.

Even though participant 5 served on the search committee she expressed her suspicions about how she was placed on the committee and the implications of the lack of diversity, saying,

> If I had not been defaulted to, it would've been two people of color. How do they select the individuals that would be on the committees? What is the process? How do you make those selections, I wasn't the only person of color on the committee, but…

Participant 6 shared that she has served on three search committees, and they have been very different. She was apprehensive about naming the specific types due to the potential risk of exposing her identity, but, she is forthcoming with the demographics of the committees, saying,

> Yeah, diverse racially, diverse gender-wise, but those are the only two categories I would say it's diverse in, that were obvious to me. On one search committee, we had six people in total; five women of color including Black, Latina, African,

Southeast Asian, and one White male. On another search committee, we had fourteen or sixteen people; it was the largest search committee that I have served on to date and it was racially and gender diverse too.

Tokenism

The underlying attitude of the participants is that they were chosen to serve on the search committee because they are Black and this classification fulfills an institutional specification. They expressed that their racial classification is the qualifier versus their merit as an employee. Participant 3 gives a vivid picture of how she experienced being the token Black person on search committees because her White colleagues are comfortable with her, saying,

> I was the token Black woman, the token Black person. Yes, and after a while, I think people who sat in on these interviews would be like, "hey, just call [participant 3], she'll do it." And… It got to the point where I told my immediate supervisor that I am no longer going to sit on any more interview committees because… I am your token. I am that Black person that's going to serve because you White people are comfortable with me. But I had to fight sometimes with the committee just to push through a person of color.

Participant 4 expressed a similar said, "I felt like a placeholder because they just wanted a person of color on the search committee." Participant 5 adds to the conversation of being the token Black employee on a search committee, saying,

> When someone of color is needed, I'm volunteered by my White colleagues in my department. I feel as if a lot of times, as I said previously, when I'm asked to

participate in certain things like a search committee… it is always like I'm the default or [the token] especially in my department.

Chapter Summary

This chapter outlines the document analysis as well as interview themes and subthemes that were identified during the data coding process with specific quotes that detail the essence of the six participants' experiences. The documents outline the institution's philosophy on diversity and inclusion as well as the search committee requirements which enabled me to evaluate these principles in relationship to the participants' experiences. Each theme helps to explain the participants' experience while serving on faculty, administrator, and/or staff search committees. These themes stress how most of the participants concurred that the search committee training that they received through Human Resources (HR) was adequate but there are areas for improvement. The testimonials describe the search committees as generally diverse in their racial composition although the chair of the committee is rarely Black. The themes help to reveal disturbing stories of how some participants were compromised on the search committee either by not being able to fully participate since their travels prevented them from attending all of the meetings or by being a default member of their committee because they were thrust into participating. These themes constitute the participants' narratives of bad actors on the search committee, and their courage to be assertive or inform HR of biased behaviors. Lastly, a few of the participants conveyed their concerns regarding continuing to participate on a search committee because they presume retribution for being outspoken or feel tokenized as the symbol of inclusion. Acts like these perpetuate systemic racism that marginalizes this demographic from search

committee opportunities. These reoccurring experiences dictated the themes and sub-themes which allowed me to connect the participants' experiences with the study phenomenon. In chapter five, I summarize the themes, answer the research questions, discuss the findings, reflect on the conceptual framework, and share the implications, recommendations, leadership, and policy followed by the conclusion.

Chapter 5

Discussions, Implications, Recommendations, and Conclusion

Summary of the Themes and Documents

The three themes emphasized in Chapter Four were developed by coding the interview data (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Coding of the interviews allowed themes and subthemes to emerge that enabled me to assign descriptive labels that identified related content from the interview data of the six participants. The themes identified relay the essence of the participants' experiences of participating on a search committee at a TWCC. These themes help to understand and grasp the Black experience and provide insight into the wielding of White privilege and racial biases by some colleagues serving alongside the participants (Kendall, 2012; McIntosh, 2003). Participant quotes magnify their voices and emphasize specific experiences. These citations are a lens that enabled me to capture the gravity of the participants' interpretation of their search committee experience. From my review of the documents I found and the three themes coded from the interview data, I identified discrepancies between what the documents espouse and the patterns that emerged from the experiences of the participants. The documents express the institution's aspirations of becoming more racially diverse and inclusive.

Member checking allowed me to circle back to each participant to ensure that the data collected was correct and allow them an opportunity to revise any incorrect data (Harper & Cole, 2012; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Since the themes are based on interview data, the participants' ability to review the accuracy to the data ensures credibility. This process contributes to the integrity of the data collected (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Although the findings demonstrate individual experiences, the themes

connect the participants' experiences, showing relationships among the experiences. The themes developed in chapter four as a result of the interview data enabled me to answer my research questions. My findings allowed me to connect the data to the literature review and existing empirical evidence.

Answering the Research Questions

The research study examined institutional documents and posed ten questions to the six participants to understand their experiences serving on a search committee at a TWCC. The testimonies provide an understanding of individual stories of Black professionals' challenges while serving on majority White search committees and how they navigate these challenges (Ladson-Billing, 2016; McCray, 2017; Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). These in-depth accounts, personal narratives, and themes that emerged aided in my ability to gain a detailed understanding of the study phenomenon and its impact through the lens of each participant (Bhattacharya, 2017; Ladson-Billings, 2016; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Thompson, 2020). This examination of the participants' experience provided first-hand information to answer my research questions.

After an examination of the institutional documents, my field notes and my research journal, the data gathered from sifting through the information jotted down during the participants' in-person interviews, and my observations, I concluded that although CCC espouses an environment that cultivates inclusion, in reality when it comes to search committees the data indicates that the experiences of the study participants do not reflect an inclusive perspective (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). My notes infer a quasi-inclusive environment whereby racialized practices perpetuate a double standard subjecting the Black participants to biased behaviors. The participants feel that they are

racialized as the participants of color on a search committee to demonstrate the inclusion practiced by the institution. My notations reveal that the study participants experienced that being White is the norm and preference for participating on a search committee due to the domination of the majority White members. Black participants feel they are not equally valued because of their experiences of racial biases. They confirmed a shared belief that it is typically necessary to advocate for the Black candidate whereby it is atypical for their White peers to have this need. So, as a result, I argue that these practices demonstrate how the institutions espoused theories are contradictory to their theories in use creating a double standard thus adversely impacting Black employees' experiences (Brown, 2019; Savaya & Gardner, 2012). In the next section, each research question is presented and answered based on the data collected from the institutional documents and the participants' interpretation of their experience.

Research Question 1

What is Colonial Community College's formal search committee structure?
To answer this question, I relied on the documents and my analysis of them as described in chapter 4. According to the documents I reviewed, when there is an employment opportunity for an administrator at Colonial Community College (CCC) the Dean, Director, or Executive Administrator of the respective department submits a request to Human Resources (HR) to fill the vacancy. This is required for both new and replacement positions. Once the Executive Administration approvals the request, HR allows the requesting individual(s) to review and revise the job description as needed. The requesting individual confers with HR to determine an appropriate timeline and closing date of a minimum of thirty days after the posting. Both parties collaborate on

where to advertise the position. HR will post the job announcement internally then through Internet Exchange, a data-sharing network, and disseminate the announcement to other ad agencies and various professional organizations. After this process is completed the formation of a search committee begins.

According to my data analysis, the requesting individual(s) in conjunction with the Executive Staff member selects a search committee chair which may be the Dean, Director, or Manager of the requesting department. In collaboration with the Executive Staff member, the department Dean, Director, or Manager, will recommend committee members and send these names to HR. The formal search committee guidelines specify that member selection should be diverse in race, gender, and experience. The guidelines specify a balance of faculty, administrators, and/or staff with specific technical and professional expertise within and from outside the requesting department, and also includes a student from the requesting department.

Per HR policy, annual training is provided by HR for administrators and staff members who desire to serve on a search committee. No one except for student members will be approved to participate if they have not received training within the last three years. Records of individual training are held by HR and made available to Executive Staff members to help with the participant selection process. HR provides a brief training for students who agree to participate on the search committee. Each search committee must have a minimum of three members, including the student, and all deliberation must remain confidential. At the initial search committee meeting, HR and the Executive Staff member will discuss with the committee members, if necessary, the process and the legalities, and implement the charge. Once employee compliance has been confirmed, the

committee members receive access to the applicants' resumes. The chair establishes the committee rules and procedures, ensures the timeline is upheld, and assists the committee in scheduling meeting dates and times, organizing the process, and developing interview questions. However, while these documents provide specific guidelines for conducting searches, as is clear from the data, the guidelines were not always used with fidelity. Several participants detailed incidents in which their experiences did not follow the recommended procedures. Participant five was volunteered for a committee by her supervisor, and participant four was out of the country during multiple search interviews. Participant four did not receive search committee training for the first search committee assignment.

Research Question 2

What have been Black professional employees' experiences serving on search committees? The participant interviews revealed complex feelings about serving on a search committee. Several feel that they are not respected members of the search committee due to the racial dynamics of the College culture and the search committee culture (McCray, 2017; Sensory & DiAngelo, 2017). Participants two, three, and four shared that many times, they were the only Black person on the search committee which can be an unfavorable position leaving them exposed to marginalization, microaggressions, and microinvalidations creating a tense search committee experience (Briggs, 2017; Campbell-Whatley et al., 2015; Colella et al, 2017; DeCuir-Gunby et al., 2018; Sue & Spanieman, 2022). Participant three said that she was consistently asked to serve on search committees because her White colleagues felt comfortable with her. Participants one through five shared that they served as the token Black person

requirement on the committee stating that one of the fundamental principles of the search committee guidelines is diversity in race. Participants three and four stated that incidents like these make them feel like the "token" Black person on the committee (Brooks-Immel, 2016; Dutt-Ballerstadt, 2022). Participant five expressed that her participation on the search committee was by "default" not by choice because her White supervisor did not want to serve so she volunteered my participant. Since she was not asked to participate but volunteered by someone, and the search committee was okay with this arrangement it made her feel less valued, racialized, and as a placeholder (Sensory & DiAngelo, 2017; Whitford, 2020).

Participant five acknowledged that she never received any search committee guidelines or training, and participant four stated that they only received their training after serving on a search committee, which potentially hampered their ability to fully participate which may have limited their effectiveness. Participants one through six shared that their candidate vote was systematically diluted because they were typically in the minority and their recommendations were often ignored by the White dominant group (Desivilya et al., 2017; Flaherty, 2017; McCray, 2017). They had to sometimes fight biased attitudes toward candidates of color and advocate for their opportunity to interview or seriously be considered for the position (Gasman, 2016; Grier & Poole, 2020). Participant two shared that the most recent search committee that she served on worked well, even though there was a White female member overtly trying to push for a White female candidate to be one of the finalists when she was not one of the top three candidates selected by the search committee. Also, there was nepotism with some of the White internal candidates since certain committee members knew the person and over-

prioritized them as the right fit, so they solely focused on this individual instead of looking at the pool of candidates. This unorthodox behavior was instituted by the White chair and negated the committee's candidate selection and instead put forward their White colleague for the position, as seen in previous research (Hakkola & Dyer, Lobnibe, 2018; 2022; McCray, 2017). Participant two said that these actions prompted them to inform HR leadership of the aversive racism against candidates of color (Dovidio et al, 2017). They shared that these experiences elicited frustration with the search committee process, feeling that their opinions, views, and contributions were not equally valued as their White peers.

Research Question 3

To what extent have Black professional employees experienced racial bias in search committee practices at Colonial Community College? The overwhelming narrative of Black participants bemoaned that racial biases are prevalent, but implicit on search committees and they experienced biases as members of the search committee (Arday & Mirza, 2018; McCray, 2017). The majority of the participants reported that they believe they were only chosen because they are Black and choosing them fulfills an institution specification. They expressed that their racial classification is the key qualifier to participate versus their merit as an employee. And this category provokes a sense of not belonging as an equal member of the search committee (Sensory & DiAngelo, 2017; McCray, 2017). Participants two through six spoke of experiencing a combination of implicit and explicit biases where favoritism was shown towards the White voices on the committee. These White voices were the gatekeepers that disregarded the Black voices when they disagreed or questioned certain practices (Bowden & Buie, 2021; Hakkola &

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Dyer, 2022). Participant four stated that she questioned how she was expected to participate on the search committee when she explained that she would not be available to interview all of the candidates because she would be traveling out of the country. The search committee chair and the HR leadership did not seem to mind her absence or that she was only able to interview two of the candidates. The committee went ahead with all of the interviews knowing she was unavailable to interview all of the candidates, then they selected a candidate. She interpreted this act as subtle contempt towards her as a Black woman, indicating that her absence was not relevant to the search process. In addition, she articulated her disappointment regarding the lack of ethical leadership demonstrated by the HR affiliates and the search committee chair (Mena & Vaccaro, 2017; Samad et al., 2022). She expressed to me that she felt that this process was biased and inequitable to her and the candidates (Han, 2018; Molenberghs & Louis, 2018). Participant six spoke intensely about a couple of biased and disrespectful encounters with toxic masculinity and misogyny perpetuated by two different White males on separate search committees that demonstrate the arrogance of some White people who feel empowered to weaponize their unearned privilege to commit acts of bias against Black people (McIntosh, 2003; Pruit et al., 2021; Sue & Spanicman, 2020).

Participants one, two, and three expressed, from their experience of serving on a multicultural search committee, that the college is attempting to promote diversity on search committees but some of the White voices on the committees are continuing to sway things to keep most levels of employment predominately White (Kelly et al., 2017; Patton et al., 2019). Participant two added that these racial biases are a transparent attempt at trying to justify excluding certain demographics from these positions, and from

her experience, this is not an anomaly. This conduct can be spirit-crushing if you ruminate on the insult of it all. As Black people, we use these situations to our advantage by making the opportunity work for us. To eliminate acts like these, the participant indicated that the administration needs to value Black employees and Black candidates' potential and eliminate the dynamics inhibiting fair and equitable practices on search committees. It is to the advantage of the College not to be seen as a racist institution but as an institution that truly wants to build a racially diverse culture and workforce (Barnett. 2020; Fradella, 2018).

Discussion of the Findings

The data clearly shows that the experiences of the study participants are aligned with the scholarly research delineated in the literature review. From the biased treatment to the unwelcoming environment, the parallels are glaring (De Cuir-Gunby et al., 2018; Espinosa et al., 2019; Hurtado & Ruiz, 2015). Participants two through six said they experienced implicit and explicit biases whereby their views, opinions, and candidate votes were disregarded. According to Liera and Hernandez (2021), Black employees serving on a search committee can have their voices stifled, their opinions can be unappreciated, and their contributions may not be valued. Participants two, three, four, and six spoke of racialized actions and stereotype assumptions that perpetuate a lack of respect from their peers. These biased worldviews held by some of the White search committee members shaped their stereotypical beliefs about the Black committee members and Black candidates, revealing an attitude that professionals of color do not perform as well as White professionals although the research contradicts this belief (Davis & Maldonado, 2015; Joseph, 2020; McCray, 2017). Participants three, four, and

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five shared their experiences of being the "token" Black member of the search committee. The research supports that Black professionals have reported that they were only invited to serve on a search committee to comply with the racial diversity requirement making them feel tokenized (Dutt-Ballerstadt, 2022; Sensory & DiAngelo, 2017). In essence, their participation gave the illusion of inclusion on the search committee, but that inclusion was not experienced in reality.

Additionally, participants four, five, and six shared their discontent with the search committee chair. They expressed the ineffectiveness of some search committee chairs in ensuring equity practices and following the search committee protocol, instead using their agency to take liberties that disregarded the committee's voice. When the chair is ineffective and does not demonstrate good leadership or challenge bad actors, it can perpetuate a culture of privilege and affect equity in the search process (Chun & Evens, 2015; Hakkola & Dyer, 2022; McCray, 2017). Participants three and four indicated that bad actors established a culture of White privilege that excludes Black search committee members and creates an unwelcoming environment, resulting in a troubling experience for Black committee members and making them contemplate never serving on a search committee again (Dutt-Ballerstadt, 2022; Grier & Poole, 2020; Withers, 2017).

Participants two, three, and four spoke about their dismay with the search committee process. They all expressed the rigors of search committee participation and how they felt an element of racism from the usual language and posturing of some of the White search committee members. Some of the White search committee members' coded language and body language communicated unwelcoming dynamics to Black participants (Crain & Shepard, 2019; Whitford, 2020). This behavior potentially depicts preconceived

stereotypes held about Black people. Assumptions such as Black people are not intellectually equipped for senior management positions, do not have good leadership skills, and have aggressive dispositions are typical (Davis & Maldonado, 2015; Joseph, 2020; Thompson, 2016; Wolfe & Dilworth, 2015). These stereotypes affect job opportunities and damage the careers of Black people, which can result in wage inequity. Search committee experiences like these can reinforce the notion that stereotypes are used to prevent Black professionals from attaining positions. According to participants two and three, these actions are an attempt to exclude people of color from the candidate pool which maintains professional reproduction (Bhattacharya, 2017; Sensory & DiAngelo, 2017; Sule', 2014; Vodenko et al., 2019).

Reflecting on the Conceptual Framework

This study utilized the theoretical framework of Critical Race Theory (CRT) to investigate the experiences of Black professionals at a TWCC serving on a search committee. The conceptual framework of CRT helps provide an understanding of structural racism and how systemic racism is reproduced and codified in the racial hierarchy of our social systems (Delgado & Stefancic; 2017; Ladson-Billings, 2016; Solorzano & Yosso, 2016). CRT is a critical analysis of racism to understand the persistent forces of inequality perpetuated through discrimination and other harmful acts of injustice. CRT interrogates the role of race and racism in society, explains how racism has shaped public policy, and criticizes how structural racism created a caste system placing Black people at the bottom. The cornerstone of CRT in education are the five major tenets that guide our understanding of the significance of the construction of race; (1) the notion that racism is ordinary and not aberrational, (2) the idea of an interest

convergence, (3) the social construction of race, (4) the idea of story-telling and counter-storytelling, and (5) the notion that White people have been recipients of Civil Rights Legislation (Delgado & Stefancic; 2017; Ladson-Billings, 2016; Solorzano & Yosso, 2016). Applying these tenets to this study enables me to understand the impact of systemic racism, implicit and explicit biases, and racial inequality that the participant's experiences conveyed.

The use of CRT connects the colonial history of racism and racial biases that created policies and practices that have long excluded and explicitly discriminated against Black people based on race while explaining how the prevalence of Whiteness continues to adversely impact the experiences of Black people in current times (Goodman et al., 2019; King, 2021; Taylor, 2016). Black professionals at Colonial Community College (CCC) routinely experience biased treatment when serving on predominantly White search committees, from stereotype perceptions to herd mentality, making Black professionals vulnerable to a culture of White privilege, microaggressions, microinvalidations, lack of respect, and other attitudinal and organizational biases that can create an inimical environment of racial discrimination (Aiello, 2020; DeCuir-Gundy et al, 2018; Hollis, 2016; McCray, 2017; Moody, 2012; Zambrana, et al 2016). These behaviors and practices are indicative of the perennial racism outlined in CRT and emphasized by the accounts of biased treatment that Black participants experienced and expressed (Ladson-Billings, 2016; Taylor, 2016). Race and implicit biases appear to be the significant factors in which the participants were treated differently, treated in harmful ways that articulated that they are less desired individuals on the search committee (De Cuir-Gunby et al., 2018; Ladson-Billings, 2016; McCray, 2017).

Likewise, some acts of explicit bias were experienced by certain participants. Participants two, three, four, and six expressed that the unchecked biases of bad actors impacted their experiences and this unjustifiable treatment led them to feel unwelcomed, less valued, and at times invisible. Bad actors have unfairly exerted unconstructed criticism that is hurtful whether intentional or unintentional, and have used their White power in damaging ways to marginalize their Black colleagues. These prejudicial behaviors fostered mistrust and fear of expression, imposing emotional turmoil and consequently causing some participants to inform HR (McCray, 2017; Sensory & Di Angelo, 2017; White-Lewis; 2020). Participants believe that since these incidents still occur, HR has not taken the appropriate steps to fully address search committee biases that impact Black committee members, indicating that HR leadership is either ill-equipped to handle this issue or does not fully recognize the extent to which Black employees deal with racism that can relegate them to a second-class status if not dealt with properly (Samad et al., 2021; Snell et al., 2016).

The participants' narratives show how racial hierarchies are enforced through racial systems even among peers with good intentions, revealing how well-intentioned White search committee members rarely defy their White colleagues in defense of Black committee members subjected to biased acts instead, they stand by in conspicuous silence (Flaherty, 2017; Hakkola & Dyer, 2022; McCray, 2017). CRT connects the experiences shared by these Black participants, allowing me to identify how racially constructed systems of the past have racist effects today. Regrettably, these infractions are not surprising because when reviewing the demographics at CCC one can see that White people dominate the majority of the positions and the positions of power which is

reflected on the search committees whereby the majority members are White, most of the chairs are White, and the power lies with the White majority, demonstrating how White people benefit from institutional racism created by colonialism and perpetuated by Jim Crow Laws that continue to disenfranchise Black people (Bhattacharya, 2016; Flaherty, 2017; McCray, 2017; Sensory & Di Angelo, 2017; Smith, 2022; Thompson, 2016). Although Civil Rights Legislation is the law of the land, as outlined by the fifth tenet of CRT, racism is embedded in the law and advances the interest of White people at the expense of Black people (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017; Litowitz, 2016).

The empirical evidence from the past and present explains how these racial systems were created by design to ensure transgenerational White power and White privilege (Pough, 2017; Kendall, 2012; McIntosh, 2003). The first tenet of CRT describes racism in the U.S. as normal, not aberrational, and is the ordinary experience of most people of color in this country, epitomizing how racist incidents are a symptom of the caste system of structural racism (Goodman et al., 2019; Wilkerson, 2020), a racial system familiar to my study participants and reflected in their narratives from experiences of anti-Blackness. Anti-Blackness is not always overt, it is mostly covert with subtle acts and actions that make individuals or groups feel unwanted or unwelcomed in spaces that have been deemed not for them (Bledsoe, 2020; Liera & Hernandez, 2021; Smith 2012). Participants' one through six experiences reveal that the energy of the search committees sometimes made them feel uncomfortable, unwanted, and not valued conveyed an anti-Black sentiment, causing them to feel unwelcome as committee members. Participants one, two, three, and six shared, that the institution is making an effort to include historically underrepresented groups on search committees and in other institutional

businesses. These statements demonstrate how social change is supported by the second tenet of CRT that indicates Black people generally benefit from opportunities when Black people and the White power structure interests converge, an example of this practice is the DEI initiative (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017; Joseph, 2020; Litowitz, 2016). Although there have been some changes, these efforts do not remedy the aversive racism experienced by Black professionals on search committees (Dovidio et al, 2017). Participant discontent with the search committee process is real and palpable and erodes their trust and confidence in the authenticity of the process.

Allies of racial justice and racial realists denounce racism, White privilege, and White entitlement acknowledging the significance of the third tenet of CRT which explains that race is a social construction and not biologically natural, nevertheless, the impact of racism is real (Booker et al., 2021; Saini, 2019). Those who do not know or believe that race is a social construct, ignoring the science, the scholarly literature, and believing in supremacy based on race carry with them entrenched attitudes of imperialism (Goodman et al., 2019; Kendall, 2012; McIntosh, 2003; Solorzano & Yasso, 2016). This can affect the interaction with people outside of their racial group reinforcing a double standard that supports racial inequality. Study participants argue that these are essential characteristics embedded in the actions of some White search committee members that reinforce levels of bias that are painfully familiar to them. Furthermore, the patterns and themes that emerged from the coding process show the relevance of the participant's lived experiences which correlates to the scholarly literature and the fourth tenet of CRT that explores the personal narrative of racially oppressed groups (Bhattacharya, 2016; Ladson-Billings, 2016; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The counter-stories illuminate their

lived experience and challenge the ignorance of those who argue that racism is something that occurred in the past and no longer exists.

The conceptual framework of CRT can provide an understanding of how the allocation of power, privilege, and status is structured within society and reproduced in academia, upholding race and racism on a micro level experienced by the Black search committee members (Bhattacharya, 2017; Bonilla & Peoples, 2022; Brooks & Arnold, 2013). This assessment can enlighten, reveal implicit biases, and perhaps stimulate interest in becoming informed about the global history of racism instead of accepting the revisionist history that can distort the truth. CRT can also illuminate the beliefs of those who deny racism and demonize movements that demystify racism, ban CRT, Black Lives Matter, and LGBTQI studies. Awareness and knowledge can potentially change behaviors, practices, and policies that combat inequality and eliminate adverse search committee experiences that are too common for Black participants (Bhattacharya, 2017; Sensory & DiAngelo, 2017).

Implications

The implications of this research are many and I have listed some that I believe are critical. My work can support the efforts of social justice advocates, historians, scholars, educators, and others who are cognizant of the impact of structural racism in our society, and who are diligent in their efforts to combat this system of imperialism and White privilege (Anderson, 2017; Goodman et al., 2019; Kendall, 2012; McIntosh, 2003; Saini, 2019). This thesis can contribute to the corpus of work that exposes and confronts the legacy of structural racism and how racism continues the transgenerational reproduction of White imperialism and White privilege in higher education (Gillborn,

2016; Goodman et al., 2019; Pough, 2019). It can serve to compare the search committee experiences of Black professionals at CCC to the broader higher education industry which can reveal search committee biases and improve the experiences of the Black search committee members. This study can be an instrument to effect change in how search committee guidelines are administered and followed, and improve the training process to ensure that search committee members are not omitted from training. This study can also help with recruitment and retention by exposing a double standard in the search committee process that impacts candidates of color's job opportunities and denounces professional reproduction (Belanger & Gorecki, 2019; Settles et al., 2019; Towns, 2019).

Additionally, my research can contribute to the framework for real change at CCC to counter the apartheid of the curriculum and the miseducation about the Black diaspora from the indoctrination of revisionist history (Bernal & Villapando, 2016; Gabriel, 2019; Linenthal, 2022). History that reinterprets historical accounts to favor the White culture as superior, disparaging the Black culture as inferior, and omitting the truth about structural racism and the formation of the racial hierarchy. This work can encourage institutions of higher education to take inventory of their espoused theories and theories in use to identify contradictions in their principles and practices that could expose racialized behaviors experienced by Black professionals who serve the institution (Brown, 2019; Savaya & Gardner, 2012). Ideally, it would dispel the false narratives that implicit biases are not endemic on the search committees and that everyone is treated the same regardless of race. It can address confirmation bias in which the White majority influence counters the voices of the Black minority members. I hope this study can bring

about awareness that could aid leaders in identifying racial biases and mitigating racial inequities to improve communication, build trust, and create a respectful atmosphere where everyone is treated equitably (Arday & Mirza, 2018; Barnett, 2020; Michel & Peters, 2020).

Implications for Practices

Colonial Community College (CCC) espouses DEI and has a dedicated employee to head this initiative (Patton et al., 2019; U. S. Department of Education, 2016). This individual may be interested to hear about issues of biases that Black employees have experienced on search committees and could be open to suggestions on how to address these biases. This starting point seems right since CCC's mission and values statements confirm the institution's commitment to practicing inclusive principles, principles that acknowledge differences, promote representation, cultural sensitivity, and respect social identities (Colonial Community College Website). Raising the social consciousness of those responsible for implementing search committee guidelines could create a synergy that encourages reviewing search committee practices that do not comply with the institution's espoused principles.

I recommend that a campus climate survey be conducted to better understand the perceptions and experiences of the College population. A compliance committee should be created to annually review search committee practices to ensure that they are fulfilling the goals outlined in the policy and the institution's DEI initiative to see what practices are working and which ones are not working. Establishing a DEI working group to address systemic institutional racism is an important step forward. This committee could check for practices that may promote favoritism for the White dominant group creating

unfair practices that marginalize the Black minority group (U.S. Department of Education, 2016; Patton et al., 2019; Whitaker, 2019), and ensure that the group responsible for developing the search committee guidelines is knowledgeable of the DEI goals, understands and respects the importance of racial diversity, and incorporates tangible change that supports equity (U. S. Department of Education, 2016; Patton et al., 2019; Whitaker, 2019). In addition, the committee could invite employees of color to share opinions and give feedback from their perspective on equity issues regarding the search committee directives or possibly create an anonymous complaint hotline so that employees who are impacted by biased acts can be empowered to report infractions without retribution. Also, it is critical to increase the opportunities for Black administrators to serve as the search committee chair. Black search committee chairs are necessary to effect change, but we know from the literature that Black professionals are overburdened with service (Rowley & Wright, 2023). Although this is the case, institutions must make equity on search committees a priority. One way this can be achieved is to have co-chairs to reduce the burden on a single individual. Finally, the committee could hold the leadership accountable for employees adhering to search committee guidelines established in the policy.

Implications for Policy

My research could have profound implications for interrupting the status quo and facilitating policy improvements. The interview data confirms what the literature has shown, that although there are policies in place to address racism and biases, Black employees are still subjected to racialized treatment on search committees at CCC (McCray, 2017; Sensory & Di Angelo, 2017). The participant narratives confirm that

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Black employees serving on search committees experience microaggressions, microinvalidation, and implicit and explicit biases. As previously mentioned from reviewing the evidential information, CCC has a DEI initiative that espouses equity and inclusion, specific guidelines to participate on a search committee, and an Affirmative Action statement on the institution's hiring advertisements. However, there is a need for the College to take more action or a different approach to how search committee policies are developed. Examining the criteria of how the search committee policy was developed could alert the leadership of gaps in the policy that do not address the potential for racial biases. Identifying these gaps could help reduce the episodic incidents on search committees that stem from bad actors ignoring procedures and protocols outlined in the policy and make sure that the policy is adhered to and hold violators accountable for biased actions. Actions that result in racial advantages that promote self-interest and a lack of integrity lead to a hollow search committee experience for Black members (Hakkola & Dyer, 2022; McCray, 2017; Sensory & Di Angelo, 2017).

Setting a precedent that the rules and standards delineated in the search committee guidelines that dictate behavior cannot be disregarded. This may be achieved by making sure that there are consequences for all participants who do not adhere to the policy. These rules and guidelines established from the policy are intended in part to create an anti-racist environment. As the literature affirms, biased behaviors are a symptom of a larger issue and if not addressed properly could compromise the recruitment and retention of Black employees (Kelly et al., 2017; Settles et al., 2019; Towns, 2019). Therefore, a regular policy review should be a common practice to revise and improve untenable

policies that inhibit CCC's ability to sustain its DEI goals, its mission and values

declarations, and the integrity of its search committee policy and practices.

Implications for Leadership

Writing this paper has allowed me to learn more about leadership styles. The main

thing that I learned is that the right leadership style is critical to the success of any

initiative and the consequences of bad leadership could manifest in various ways that

could be detrimental to the goals and the success of the institution. Therefore, leaders

must understand their responsibility to their constituents and recognize their obligation to

exhibit professional conduct (Kaleem et al., 2016; Nasereddin & Sharabati, 2016).

Leadership can be characterized as relationship-oriented; the ability of an

individual or an organization to provide direction, the capability to motivate people, and

the capacity to implement plans (Kaleem et al., 2016; Nasereddin & Sharabati, 2016).

While these characteristics are important, at times as a leader, you may need to be a

change agent (Fullan, 2020). One who recognizes inequitable practices and challenges

the status quo to transform racialized practices of the search committee culture that

adversely impact the experiences of Black professionals. This definition of leadership

explains why leadership is important to the goals of a search committee or an

organization. Furthermore, it establishes that the right leadership is vital for the success

of the stakeholders and the initiative (Kaleem et al., 2016; Nasereddin & Sharabati,

2016). A change agent can advance the institution's mission and goals through anti-racist

leadership efforts to combat institutional racism. As a champion for equity, they can

instigate community conversations to demystify the construction of race and racism

(Fullan, 2020; Goodman et al., 2019). They can allow all constituents' voices to be heard

by implementing a process to appraise the institution's culture, customs, and practices. Establishing real anti-racist policies to address racial disparities can transform the status quo on search committees and throughout the organization is imperative. These actions will confront racism at a systemic level and institute explicit norms to support racially egalitarian principles. Leading these efforts should be part of the institution's leaders' mission and they need to communicate the importance and provide the necessary resources for such efforts.

Participant narratives communicated that some of their search committee leaders did not exhibit the necessary leadership qualities to effectively lead a search committee. They shared that the leadership excluded them from some of the search committee processes, repeatedly minimized their contributions, and fostered a hegemonic culture instead of a collaborative culture (Chun & Evens, 2015; Hakkola & Dyer, 2022). Participants two, three, five, and six complained that the leadership of the chair was ineffective, that they did not follow the search committee guidelines, and that they usurped the collective power of the committee members. Participants two through six stated that clear and effective leadership could improve the search committee guidelines and the implementation process (Kaleem et al., 2016; Nasereddin & Sharabati, 2016).

The role of a search committee is crucial in the process of selecting individuals to join the institution. There can be pitfalls in the process if the committee's leadership is problematic (Lee & Chun, 2014; Liera & Hernandez, 2021). Since the search committee is a participatory process, a particular leadership style is essential for the committee's success. An authoritative style is not the best approach because this management style puts the leader in complete control, contradicting the search committee ethos of

collaboration and shared governance (Bertsh et al., 2017; Kaleem et al., 2016). The polar opposite, Laissez-Faire hands-off leadership style, will not provide the direction that encourages search committee members to work collectively, instead, it can invite chaos into the process interfering with the success of the committee in achieving its goal of recruitment and hiring (Kaleem et al., 2016; Nasereddin & Sharabati, 2016; Towns, 2019). Preferably, a participative leadership style is most effective when conducting a search committee (Bertsh et al., 2017; Kaleem et al., 2016). This leadership style includes the voices of all participants, is collaborative in allowing everyone to contribute, and is effective in fostering agency. Participative leaders listen to the group, build engagement, motivate morale, and ensure that members are part of the decision-making process (Kaleem et al., 2016; Nasereddin & Sharabati, 2016). While these are the desirable leadership attributes that foster an inclusive experience, most study participants shared that their search committee experience lacked many of these attributes, and instead failed to disrupt the patterns of racism, insulting remarks, and exclusion (Banaji et al., 2021; Bennett & Walker, 2018). Search committees are structurally shared governance processes where individuals work collaboratively towards a common goal, and ineffective leadership can adversely impact this process (Chaudhry, 2015). In short, search committees are charged with an important task that involves a collaborative process of cooperation from all members and requires inclusive leadership, making participative leadership a practical leadership style for search committee activity (Kaleem et al., 2016; Nasereddin & Sharabati, 2016).

Conclusion

Search committees provide a way to recruit and identify qualified individuals for employment opportunities but the process is not always fair and equitable for Black employees serving on these committees or the Black candidates applying for the positions. Acts of bias and racism from the White dominant group can create an unwelcoming environment that can marginalize Black employees and diminish their experience. These behaviors can unfairly judge Black professionals and prevent them from gaining employment. We can see from the testimonies of the study participants how subtle contempt, a disregard for their views, and not equally valuing their contributions can negatively impact their experiences as a committee member and create an environment that is unwelcoming expressing a sentiment of not belonging.

All of these experiences show the prevalence of institutional racism and White privilege on search committees and the persistence of these biases that compromise the experiences of Black search committee members and candidates of color continuing the practice of opportunity hoarding and professional reproduction (Barnett, 2020; Belanger & Glaude, 2016; Gorecki, 2019; Kendall, 2012; McIntosh, 2003). Practices like these confirm that search committee members' actions do not always align with the search committee guidelines and the espoused principles of the institution. The lack of accountability allows this misalignment to continue and support the actions of the bad actors. Since we operate within a White power system, anti-racism work is critical to facilitate change (Glaude, 2016; McGhee, 2022; Wilkerson, 2020). This is why those of us who care about equity issues act by speaking up and exposing these harmful and unethical occurrences.

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Appendix

Interview Questions

First, I want to thank you for agreeing to participate in my study. Your

participation means a lot to me.

Please give me a little background on your tenure at the College. How long have you

been at the college, and what do you do at the College?

1. Ok now tell me about, in general, your experience as an employee at this institution.

2. Can you describe some positive experiences you have had as an employee?

3. Tell me about your experience serving on a search committee(s).
    a. How many and how often have you served
    b. What type were they – faculty or administrator?

4. Can you please tell me about the HR information and training you received about search committees?

5. To what extent did your most recent search committee experience comply with the HR search committee guidelines?

6. Please describe the composition of the most recent search committee you served on.

7. To what extent did you feel your contributions to the committee and views and opinions of candidates were valued?

8. Please tell me, in general, about your most recent experiences on a search committee regarding hiring racial and/or ethnic diverse candidates.

9. To what extent would you consider serving on a future search committee based on your experiences?

10. Is there anything else you'd like to tell me or anything else I should have asked?