Experiences of African American Teachers in Desegregated PK–12 Schools: A Systematic Literature Review

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This systematic literature review reports findings from a set of empirical studies on the experiences of prekindergarten through grade 12 African American teachers (PK–12 teachers) during the era of school segregation and desegregation and discuss the implications with regard to the shortage and retention of African American teachers in schools today. Taking into consideration the historical roots, the challenges associated with the shortage and retaining of African American teachers are not new. Although many consider the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision to be one of the most democratic achievements of the 1950s, the decision was not a panacea for longstanding racial prejudice and discrimination (Milner and Howard 2004; Orfield et al. 2014; Tate et al. 1993). As Milner and Howard (2004) poignantly described, the multitude of unintended consequences, such as the dismissal of African American teachers and principals and the demotion of African American teachers, "had a lasting negative impact on all students, particularly African American students and the community where they reside" (285), creating a constant shortage of African American teachers in the South (Cecelski 1994; Ethridge 1979; Foster 1997; Fultz 2004; Oakley et al. 2009; Tillman 2004). The history of school

desegregation and its profound impact on African American teachers will help us contextualize and better understand contemporary constraints and problems African American teachers experience today.

In response to these calls associated with the shortage and retention of African American teachers in US schools, this study discusses the process of school desegregation in the South after the landmark United States Supreme Court case *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* (1954) and its impact on African American teachers and considers the following two critically important questions that will help identify ways that support and retain African American teachers in the profession:

- What do we know about the experiences of African American teachers in desegregated PK–12 schools?
- What are some specific challenges African American teachers encounter as they teach in the desegregated schools?

This study consists of four parts. We first discuss the process of school desegregation and the impacts of the *Brown* decision on African American teachers in the South. After this historical context, we describe our methodology for selecting and analyzing the literature. Our findings from 19 empirical studies follow with a table that summarizes the selected studies. We conclude with a discussion of the overarching themes and challenges that African American teachers experience in desegregated schools, as identified in recent publications, and the implications for retaining African American teachers.

Historical Background: The History of *Brown* and Its Impact on African American Teachers

African American Educators during the Jim Crow Era

When the first public school systems in the South were created after the Civil War, race was a dominant factor. The vast majority of African American people lived in the region, as did remnant American Indian tribes and, in the Southwest, Latinx residents. Southern public schools were racially segregated from the start, and initially all students were taught and supervised by White teachers and administrators. Many of the earliest White educators were northern missionaries; others were associated with the Union Army or the northern-led Reconstruction effort (Alexander 2002; Daugherity 2016; Picott 1975; Rucker and Jubilee 2007). Although many of them showed considerable commitment to educating all students, an African American–led movement in

favor of "colored teachers for colored schools" paralleled the growth of public schools in the South (Alexander 2002; Woyshner and Bohan 2012).

In subsequent decades, African American and White southerners—the two largest ethnic/racial groups in the region—fought for control of the public schools. The most contested elements were funding for resources, curricular control, and staffing. For instance, African American students boycotted schools rather than be taught by Whites, and African American parents formally petitioned school officials for African American teachers. Growing African American political power, particularly after the adoption of universal manhood suffrage in the late 1860s, drove such protests. By the 1870s, African American teachers were employed in many areas of the South, in both private and public schools. By the 1880s, some southern districts also employed African American principals in African American schools (Alexander 2002; Fairclough 2007; Hale 2018).

After southern Whites regained political control of the South via the violent "Redeemer" movement in the 1870s, White elected officials prioritized schools for White children. Although officials were supposed to provide "separate but equal" facilities because of the Supreme Court's 1896 *Plessy v. Ferguson* decision, this did not happen (Batchelor 2015; Daugherity and Bolton 2008). Segregated schools for African American children and other ethnic groups received less funding from public officials, which resulted in inequities in resources, curricular offerings, and transportation to and from school. In addition, White school officials asserted more control over educators. Some districts dismissed their African American principals, and southern officials provided little financing or support for the training of African American teachers (Alexander 2002; Anderson 1988).

Despite these inequities, African American teachers played a crucial role in educating African American children in the South throughout the Jim Crow Era. By 1954, the number of African American teachers in segregated schools had grown to 82,000 (Ramsey 2005). African American teachers and administrators created supportive environments within schools where African American schoolchildren could succeed (Anderson 1988; Dingus 2006). As W. E. B. Du Bois (1935, 328) contended in "Does the Negro Need Separate Schools?" published in the *Journal of Negro Education*, "The proper education of any people includes sympathetic touch between teacher and pupil; knowledge on the part of the teacher, not simply of the individual taught, but of his surroundings and back-ground, and the history of his class and group."

Part of the reason African American parents and students preferred African American teachers and administrators was that African American educators committed their own time and resources to their students. Some African

American teachers purchased books and supplies for their students out of their own pockets (Anderson 1988; Dingus 2006; Fairclough 2007; Muhammad 2019; Ramsey 2005). African American educators also obtained local and outside assistance to promote the best possible educational opportunities for students. Furthermore, many African American parents felt that African American teachers could instruct their children more effectively. As scholar Jeannine E. Dingus has explained, "African American teachers in the segregated schools were personally invested in the academic, personal, and character development of their students" (Dingus 2006, 222).

The Impact of *Brown v. Board of Education* and School Desegregation

In May 1954, the US Supreme Court handed down its decision in *Brown v. Board of Education*. The unanimous ruling declared that segregation in education was unconstitutional and required school desegregation in states that mandated or allowed racial segregation in education. Seventeen southern and border states were directly affected by the historic decision, which provided new educational opportunities for African American children and highlighted federal support for integration. However, the vast majority of White southerners opposed desegregation, and southern officials worked diligently to delay the implementation of *Brown v. Board of Education* (Daugherity and Bolton 2008, 2016; Patterson 2001; Sitkoff 1993).

Throughout the South, African American teachers publicly endorsed desegregation, but the immediate post-*Brown* years brought both challenges and opportunities for African American educators. In many states, school officials increased spending on African American schools and hired new African American teachers in an effort to persuade the African American community to accept segregated education (Ramsey 2005). At the same time, most southern states adopted laws that pressured African American educators to distance themselves from the school desegregation movement; teachers who belonged to the NAACP were harassed, and teacher contracts were altered to allow for easier dismissals (Batchelor 2015; Daugherity 2016; Fultz 2004; Ramsey 2005). The prospect of job loss as a result of school desegregation worried many African American educators. In one survey of heads of education departments at African American colleges in the South, half of the respondents said African American teachers would not find employment in desegregated schools (Groff 1961).

In the first decade after *Brown v. Board of Education*, school desegregation in the South relied heavily on African American activism. Because White parents largely opposed school desegregation, the process almost always

involved African American parents seeking the transfer of their children into formerly White schools. African American parents wanted their children to take advantage of the more robust curricula found in White schools, more modern and substantial resources, or schools closer to home. This meant that initial school desegregation was generally a one-way street whereby African American students were admitted into formerly all-White schools but not the opposite. Challenges faced by the first African American student integrators, and the fact that desegregation placed the burden on African American parents, slowly undermined support for desegregation among the African American community and raised questions about the value of integration (Daugherity 2016; Pratt 1992).

School desegregation policies also negatively affected African American schools. As the number of African American students admitted to formerly White schools grew, school officials responded by closing African American schools, especially in localities with few African American residents. In fact, such closures were encouraged by federal agencies, including the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare—the predecessor to the US Department of Education—which reasoned in 1966: "In some cases, the most expeditious means of desegregation is to close the schools originally established for students of one race, particularly where they are small and inadequate, and to assign all the students and teachers to desegregated schools" (Daugherity 2016, 116). The African American community regularly fought such closures but generally without success. The loss of community landmarks, which the African American community had supported financially and otherwise for decades, embittered a growing number of African Americans (Dingus 2006).

The closure of African American schools also resulted in the firing or demotion of teachers and principals of color throughout the South, particularly after the desegregation of educators became a priority of federal officials after 1965. Southern officials preferred to employ White educators for a variety of reasons. One factor was that most White parents opposed having African American teachers educate their children. In addition, school officials believed that problems would occur if African American teachers attempted to discipline White students. As a result, whenever there was no longer a need for two teaching staffs, school officials typically demoted or dismissed African American educators first. One recent study of school desegregation in North Carolina estimated a 50 percent job loss among African American principals and 90 percent among African American high school principals (Batchelor 2015). In Hyde County, North Carolina, scholar David Cecelski (1994, 8) has argued, "School desegregation devastated African American educational leadership." African American teachers, counselors, and coaches throughout

the region were also negatively affected by school desegregation (Daugherity 2016; Dingus 2006; Erickson 2016; Wiggins 1966).

The mistreatment of African American students within formerly White schools has also generated concern among the African American community. During the era of desegregation, some White administrators and educators clearly harbored racist beliefs or refused to treat African American students with respect, which led to racially identifiable challenges within schools that scholars refer to as "second generation segregation" (Dingus 2006). African American students were also more likely to fail classes, be placed into special education programs, or be suspended (Cecelski 1994; Daugherity 2016; Erickson 2016; Fairclough 1995). In other cases, African American students were placed into largely segregated academic programs, excluded from certain extracurricular activities, or provided segregated transportation. Concerns about such mistreatment led to African American protests and demonstrations in schools throughout the South between 1969 and 1973 (Cecelski 1994). As civil rights activist Leon Hall wrote in Southern Exposure, a journal published by the Institute of Southern Studies in 1979, "I am convinced that they [White school officials] have chosen the most disruptive, discouraging and damaging means to incorporate African American children and African American educators. They have decided to handle desegregation in a way that makes the price African American communities must pay so high that African American citizens themselves will stop pushing for desegregation and ask: is it worth it?" (Cecelski 1994, 171).

Although most African American parents continued to support the concept of school desegregation, the difficult nature of the process challenged their commitment (Dingus 2006). By the late 1960s and 1970s, calls for educational programs to overcome the negative aspects of school desegregation resonated nationwide. By that time, the mandate of *Brown v. Board of Education* had been expanded to include northern and western states, particularly cities where most northern African Americans resided. School programs based on culturally relevant education, often with Afro-centric foci, sprang up in many communities. As the African American community questioned the value of integration, calls for African American teachers, ethnic studies programs, and similar changes occurred throughout the nation (Foster and Foster 1993; Woyshner and Bohan 2012).

The legal application of the mandate of *Brown v. Board of Education* to non–southern school districts in the 1960s increasingly affected other ethnic groups in the United States, most especially the Latin American and Asian American communities. In recent decades, population growth among non-White ethnic groups has also altered the demographics of American education.

Table 1. Percentage Distribution of Enrollment in Public Elementary and Secondary Schools in the South, by Race/Ethnicity during Selected Years from 1995 through 2013

Race/Ethnicity	1995	2000	2005	2010	2013
White	59.3	55.9	51.8	47.2	45.2
Black	26.3	26.6	26.2	24.2	23.6
Hispanic	11.7	14.5	18.4	22.4	24.2
Asian/Pacific Islander	1.7	2.1	2.5	3	3.2
American Indian/Alaska Native	.9	1	1.1	1.1	1
Two or more races				2.3	2.8

Source.—National Center for Educational Statistics (2016).

The Immigration and Naturalization Act of 1965 dramatically increased the number of Latin American, Asian, and African immigrants in the United States, and many schools now enroll significant numbers of students of color (table 1). The search for educational policies to best educate America's schoolchildren continues.

Methodology

The history of school desegregation in the South documents the consequences of *Brown*—African American teachers' job loss, its impact on the quality of education that African American students receive in schools, and later the process of school resegregation (Cecelski 1994; Daugherity and Bolton 2008; Fairclough 1995). In her review of research on segregated schools for African American students in the South during the period of 1935–69, Vanessa Siddle Walker (2000) concurred with these unintended consequences of *Brown* and argued that the focus of published research on the history of education of students of color, in her case African American students, has shifted from the poor condition of segregated schools, a deficit view on segregated schools, to the characteristics of African American teachers' pedagogies, parental involvement, and administers' support that nurtured African American students' learning and growth. Building upon her review of the literature, our systematic literature review explores scholarship published between 2000 and 2019 focusing on the experiences of African American teachers in desegregated PK–12 schools.

Literature Search and Selection

We utilized the Education Resources Information Center database to search for peer-reviewed empirical studies on the experiences of African American

teachers in the context of desegregated PK–12 classrooms, published between 2000 and 2019. For our initial search, we used search terms such as desegregation and African American teachers. We also utilized search terms such as *Brown v. Board of Education*, school integration, minority teachers, teachers of color, and African American teachers. The initial search found 62 articles. To address our specific goals, such as reviewing the findings on the experiences of PK–12 African American teachers, we set additional inclusion criteria and refined our search as follows: (a) the focus of the study is PK–12 African American teachers; (b) findings from the study illuminate the experiences of African American teachers during the desegregation era; and (c) the study includes empirical data and an explicit description of the research design and procedures of data collection, analysis, and interpretation (Téllez and Waxman 2006).

As a result, 19 articles were identified for the study. Among the 19 articles, 18 employed qualitative research design, including narrative inquiry, case study, phenomenology, archival research, and quantitative research with descriptive statistics. The average number of participants for the qualitative studies is 6.5 per study, ranging from 1 through 20 participants. Fifteen qualitative studies focused on the experiences of African American teachers, whereas two included the experiences of Latinx and Asian American teachers along with African American teachers. Seven reported the experiences of African American teachers in urban settings, five in suburban settings, and three in rural settings; the remaining four either mentioned no specific location for the study or took place in multiple locations. The full list of articles included in the review and overview of the articles are found in table 2.

Review Process

Grounded theory (Strauss and Corbin 1990) was utilized to review and synthesize the findings from the selected literature. The abstracts and then the full texts were carefully coded by the first author. The open codes involved analyzing each sentence or paragraph for codes reflecting the challenges that African American teachers encountered in their schools. Each challenge that African American teachers experienced was given a name in the codebook (an Excel spreadsheet), such as fear of losing the teaching position; challenges in interacting with White colleagues; teaching in integrated classrooms; and disconfirming evidence, among others. Then axial coding was done by refining the open codes and making connections

Table 2. Overview of the Studies in the Review

Studies	Research Question	Research Design/ Data Collection	Participants	Context	Challenges
Cook and Dixson (2013)	(1) What stories do Black educators tell about schooling in pre- and post-Katrina New Orleans? (2) What are the implications of these educators' perspectives for urban education reform?	Counter storytelling	7 AA	U	Expansion of charter schools; the disempowerment of teachers' unions; and the reorganization of teacher preparation
Jankov and Caref (2017)	What were the impacts of the closing of neighborhood schools and the expansion of character schools on Black teachers and Black students and the teachers that Black teachers have access to?	Descriptive statistics	Public data sets	U	Mass school closure; expansion of charter schools; and the limited number of quality teachers of color for Black students
Carrol (2017)	What are Black English teachers' perceptions of how they impact Black student achievement?	Qualitative research	5 AAF	U	Institutional frustration; pedagogical frustration; relational frustration; positional frustration; cultural frustration
Bell (2002)	How do teachers of color and European teachers perceive intergroup conflict in the urban context?	Case study	20 (3 AA, 7 L, and 10 W)	U	Intergroup conflicts
Lee (2012)	How are teachers of color socialized into predominantly European-American suburban high schools?	Grounded theory	8 (1 NA, 1 Latinx, 6 AA)	S	Socializing pressure to minimize their cultural capital; being questioned about their competencies as teachers
Mabokela and Madsen (2007)	What are the perceptions and experiences of the African American teachers in their interactions with school administrators, parents, and students? How did intergroup differences create performance pressures for African American teachers and how did this affect their ability to contribute optimally in these environments?	Case study	14 (7 AAF; 7 AAM)	S	Automatic notice; symbolic consequences; fighting discrepant stereotypes; cultural switching
Mabokela and Madsen (2003a)	What are the intergroup tensions within suburban schools and what impacts do these tensions have on the professional lives of African American teachers in desegregated suburban schools? What are the unfavorable factors that create unfavorable work environments for African American teachers?	A single case study	14 (7 AAF; 7 AAM)	S	Group boundary heightening; role entrapment

(*Continued*)

Table 2. (Continued)

Studies	Research Question	Research Design/ Data Collection	Participants	Context	Challenges
Mabokela and Madsen (2003b)	How did intergroup differences within suburban desegregated schools affect the professional experiences of African American teachers?	A single case study	7 AA	S	Performance pressures; bearing the burden of representing their race; becoming role entrapped
Madsen and Hollins (2000)	What were African American teachers' perceptions and experiences like in schools where European American teachers and students are the majority?	A single case study	5 AAF	S	Organizational pressure to be "their kind of Negro"; exclusion from the club; pigeonholing; guilt by association; coping with fatigue and shattered hopes; self-censorship and silence
Kraehe (2015)	How do pre-service art teachers negotiate race and racism in art teacher education?	Case studies	2 AAF	M	Racial microaggressions; race avoidance in art teacher preparation and research
Farinde-Wu (2018)	Why Black female teachers choose to teach in urban settings.	Qualitative research	12 AA	U	Playing multiple roles to meet students' needs; urban schools as under-resourced workplaces
Farinde et al. (2016)	Why Black female teachers remain to teach in urban settings.	Phenomenology	12 AA	U	Lack of administrative support; low salary; limited options for professional advancement
Ramsey (2012)	How did the process of desegregation impact the Black female teachers in their professional and personal lives?	Archival research and oral interviews	2 AAF	U	Discriminatory administrator and parents; coupled with gender discrimination; firing and demotion of Black teachers and principals; closing Black schools
Taylor (2013)	What were the teaching experiences of Black female teachers in a rural community before, during, and after desegregation in the South? What characteristics of resilience allowed them to remain in teaching?	Narrative inquiry	4 AAF	R	Low salaries, lack of administrative support and teacher blame; job dissatisfaction, student discipline problems; lack of influence over school decision-making
Polidore et al. (2010)	(1) What were the teaching experiences for each educator before, during, and after desegregation in the South? (2) What themes does each educator exhibit	Narrative life histories	3 AAF	R	Insecurities about their jobs and competences as teachers; absence of teacher/student

Study	Research questions	Method	Sample		Findings
	that contributed to her longevity in education?(3) What, if any, resilience themes emerge from the interviews of each educator?(4) To what extent do the experiences of these three educators inform the development of an emerging adult resilience theory?				relationship in integrated schools; lower salaries; little professional advancement
Mayo (2007)	The transition between segregation and full integration as seen through the eyes of ten Black teachers who experienced it firsthand is the major focus of this study. Powhatan (rural VA) and Charlottesville (small city).	Oral history	10 AA	R	Job uncertainties for Black teachers; being labeled inept or passive; daily challenges; lack of promotion
Lash and Ratcliffe (2014)	What was Miss Miller's (African American teacher in Wheeling, WV) experience like, before, during and after *Brown*? How was she able to manage her career, engaging all the changes?	Oral history	1 AAF	M	Demotion of African American teachers; lower salaries; racial prejudices; changing teaching methods for integrated classrooms; standardized testing; disempowerment of African American community in education
Walker (2015)	What were the perspectives of Black educators from Georgia Teachers and Education Association (GTEA) on issues that they wanted to engage during the desegregation era, 1967–1970?	Case study	N/A	M	Disempowering Black educators to advocate for Black children; the incongruity between language and practice in desegregation plans; the lack of attention to the educational needs of Black children in the desegregation process
Dingus (2006)	How do African American teachers' personal narratives of school desegregation provide a window into the complexities of school desegregation in Southern schools?	Narrative inquiry	9 AAF (3 generations)	R	Lack of preparation for integrated classrooms; being in the middle between Black parents and White "folks"; loss of Black teachers

Note.—AA = African American teacher, AAF = African American female teacher, AAM = African American male teacher, L = Latinx teacher, NA = Native American teacher, W = White teacher, U = urban school, S = suburban school, R = rural school, M = miscellaneous, N/A = not explicitly indicated.

between open codes to collapse them into larger categories. Finally, selective coding was done by refining the axial codes and identifying core categories. The analysis of the literature revealed two categories and three subcategories of challenges that African American teachers experience in desegregated classrooms across varying contexts, including urban, suburban, and rural settings: (1) "persistent structural challenges" and (2) "new challenges since *Brown*," such as (2.1) intergroup conflicts; (2.2) teacher experience as a social construct at the intersection of race, class, and gender; and (2.3) gap in research. The authors then built a storyline about common challenges that African American teachers experience by looking for causal conditions, intervening conditions, and consequences (Hays and Singh 2011).

Researcher Positionality

The four coauthors position ourselves as both insider and outsider in terms of the lived experience of African American teachers in desegregated PK–12 classrooms (Hellawell 2006) and in terms of each researcher's social position, including race/ethnicity and gender (Fawcett and Hearn 2004). With experience teaching in public schools in the United States, the four coauthors began the research as insiders, with some knowledge of the phenomena that happen in PK–12 schools. In terms of social locations, however, the first and third authors are educational researchers and teacher educators of color who self-identify as Korean-born women. The second author is a historian of the United States who is a White man. The fourth author, who was a doctoral student when the data was collected, is a White woman. The four coauthors are critically aware of potential biases we might bring to this study, and we carefully aligned our interpretations with empirical data (provided by the selected articles) while refraining from assertions or speculation regarding the findings of the articles (Fawcett and Hearn 2004). We also employed "triangulation of investigators" by building a research team to conduct data analysis and come to consensus on the interpretation of our findings (Hays and Singh 2011, 153).

Findings

Persistent Structural Challenges

The history of school desegregation after *Brown* demonstrates that school desegregation policies immensely affected African American schools, teachers, and students. The selected literature confirms the impact of *Brown*, including

the closure of African American schools and the firing or demotion of African American teachers (Lash and Ratcliffe 2014; Mayo 2007; Polidore et al. 2010; Ramsey 2012; Taylor 2013), as well as the disempowerment of African American communities on issues related to the education of African American children (Cook and Dickson 2013; Walker 2015). Two studies, however, suggest that more recent school reforms, with different causes than southern school desegregation, had similar consequences as *Brown*.

Based on a public data set created by the Chicago Public Schools (CPS) and the Illinois State Board of Education, Jankov and Caref (2017), for instance, documented that the CPS' promotion of charter schools and school closings in African American neighborhoods based on standardized test scores and low enrollment had sharply decreased the population of African American students in the school district from approximately 240,000, or 60 percent of all CPS students, to 156,000, or 39 percent of CPS students, and the number of African American teachers by almost half between 1981 and 2015. They further reported that despite their decreasing numbers, both African American students and teachers are more segregated than ever; specifically, that the vast majority of African American students remain in predominantly low-income, largely African American schools and that the vast majority of African American teachers remain likewise segregated in predominantly African American schools. Most of all, the average percentage of African American teachers who teach at schools where African American students are not the majority also fell by half during this time period.

Similarly, Cook and Dixson (2013) interviewed 10 African American educators from New Orleans and examined their experiences in the school rebuilding efforts after Hurricane Katrina and illustrated that an era of school reform in New Orleans following Katrina generated similar consequences as *Brown*: 4,500 teachers, mostly African American veteran teachers, were dismissed immediately after Hurricane Katrina and were not rehired. Moreover, neither New Orleans Public Schools nor any of the city's charter schools entered into the bargaining agreement with the United Teachers of New Orleans, and all the teachers were fired. Instead, White teachers who had newly graduated from both traditional and alternative teacher certificate programs outside of New Orleans were hired for the new schools. The 10 educators in the study recollected that despite their belief that "Reform is politically and racially neutral, progressive, beneficial and inherently good" (Cook and Dixson 2013, 1251), the teacher shortage was caused by the firing of, mostly, African American teachers, and the reform efforts did not value the knowledge and resources of local, African American people.

Taken together, both studies highlight that the two school reforms in Chicago and New Orleans resulted from different causes: a response to low performance and low enrollment in urban school districts (Jankov and Caref 2017) and a school reform initiated as a "ground zero" after the natural disaster (Cook and Dixson 2013). Despite these differences, the two reforms ended up with similar consequences: the mass influx of charter schools, the firing and demotion of African American teachers, the closing of schools in African American neighborhoods, and thus, the African American community and teachers losing their voices to educate African American students. These consequences echo those described and discussed as (unintended) consequences of *Brown v. Board of Education* by numerous scholars in education (Milner and Howard 2004; Orfield et al. 2014; Tate et al. 1993). Cecelski (1994), a historian, also estimated that more than 30,000 African American teachers in the South were displaced by the school desegregation process by 1970. This loss was lamented by southern African American teachers and educational associations throughout the 1960s and 1970s and continues to challenge public education systems and result in a shortage of African American teachers in the South today.

New Challenges since *Brown*

The research coded in this core category highlighted tensions that African American teachers experienced in urban (Bell 2002), rural (Dingus 2006; Mayo 2007; Polidore et al. 2010; Taylor 2013), and suburban settings (Kraehe 2015; Lee 2012; Mabokela and Madsen 2003a, 2003b, 2007; Madsen and Hollins 2000) where they worked with predominantly White counterparts. Findings from these studies also demonstrated that African American teachers are not monolithic but complex, shaped by intersections of race, class, and gender and by lived experiences (Carrol 2017; Dingus 2006; Lash and Ratcliffe 2014). Finally, the literature review documented a gap in research on experiences of teachers of color who are racially, ethnically, and linguistically diverse.

Intergroup Conflicts

Fourteen out of 19 studies documented intergroup conflicts as the main challenge that African American teachers encounter when working in predominantly White integrated schools. The most distinct patterns of this challenge include (a) cultural switching, or socialization pressure; (b) negative

stereotypes and the entrapment of roles; and (c) performance pressure and/or low expectations or presumption of failure. The first pattern in this challenge involves "cultural switching" (Mabokela and Madsen 2003a), "socialization pressure" (Lee 2012), or "heightened awareness of group boundaries" (Mabokela and Madsen 2003a; Madsen and Hollins 2000). That is, when African American teachers made up only a few people of color at the schools, even if they were members of the school community, these African American teachers were not perceived by their White counterparts as group members. African American female teachers (Mabokela and Madsen 2003a), for instance, struggled with cultural differences between themselves and White colleagues. Others also reported that they perceived heightened group boundaries when they were excluded from certain social activities (Bell 2002; Lee 2012; Madsen and Hollins 2000). African American teachers also felt constrained and unable to use social cues to navigate their school's culture (Mabokela and Madsen 2003a).

The second pattern of the challenge involves the fact that underrepresented individuals often bear the burden of resisting stereotypes and representing their race in their interactions with White counterparts (Bell 2002; Mabokela and Madsen 2003a, 2003b; Madsen and Hollins 2000). African American teachers in Mabokela and Madsen's study (2003a) reported that they were hired for the school districts to fulfill the hiring quota for teachers of color, and perhaps because of that, the school districts treated them as "minority representatives" rather than individuals with different personalities, preferences, and capabilities. This pattern of challenges appears to be a more pressing issue for African American male teachers. Teachers in the study noted that there were expectations from the school districts to conform to the districts' organizational culture such as dressing, speaking, and behaving like their White counterparts and that these expectations were reflected in the districts' hiring process. One said during the interview that "these school districts hired a safe African American. Outspoken African Americans who had an agenda of addressing racial inequities at a school were given either difficult working conditions or were isolated from other African Americans" (Mabokela and Madsen 2003a, 107).

The final pattern is that African American teachers periodically had to defend the legitimacy of their professional status by having their accomplishments recognized (Dingus 2006; Lash and Ratcliffe 2014; Mayo 2007; Polidore et al. 2010). Madsen and Hollins (2000), for instance, interviewed African American teachers at two suburban elementary schools to investigate their experiences in schools where White teachers and students predominated. These teachers perceived that their White colleagues

expected them to take ownership for issues that affected only the African American children and held low expectations about their performance as content experts. Thus, when an African American teacher outperformed other African American people, the teacher was complimented by White colleagues as someone "special, different, and more acceptable than other African Americans" (Madsen and Hollins 2000, 20).

It is worth noting that the African American teachers in our literature review taught within a wide range of time periods, from the early 1950s prior to *Brown* (Lash and Ratcliffe 2014; Polidore et al. 2010; Ramsey 2012; Taylor 2013) to the 2010s (Farinde-Wu 2018; Farinde et al. 2016; Kraehe 2015). The challenges for African American teachers in current integrated schools, though, were not dissimilar to what African American teachers experienced right after *Brown* when schools began to be desegregated. These challenges also mirrored the experiences of students of color during "second generation segregation" (Dingus 2006; Fairclough 1995). Similar to students of color, African American teachers who taught in largely White suburban school districts reported that they were hired and treated like a token, asked to speak for the entire race, likely to be socially isolated, mistreated by the administrators, and pressured to conform to White cultural norms. These experiences explain why African American teachers often do not wish to teach in suburban schools (Mabokela and Madsen 2003a), choose to remain in self-segregated urban school districts, or leave the profession, which is why the current teacher pipeline is failing.

Teacher Experience as a Social Construct

Studies in this category reported that teachers' experiences were shaped by multiple factors, including race, class, and gender (Farinde-Wu 2018; Farinde et al. 2016; Lash and Ratcliffe 2014; Ramsey 2012), from the entry point of their career until the time they left the profession. In a study of 12 African American female teachers in urban school settings, Farinde-Wu (2018) and Farinde et al. (2016) found that except for two, the 10 teachers in the study were drawn to urban schools that were predominantly African American, Title 1 urban schools because of their preference to teach in a school setting with a diverse population of students and in a familiar school culture for their own educational background, and their desire to meet the urgent need for highly qualified teachers in underresourced and urban schools.

On the other hand, findings from the two studies indicate that experiences of African American teachers were influenced by factors such as gender and class in addition to race. Miss Miller in Lash and Ratcliffe's study (2014) taught

at Lincoln School, a segregated African American school, and at Warwood School, a desegregated White school. Her story revealed that in having a strong female role model such as her mother and meeting the social expectations about female teachers, such as not being married or being paid as the same amount as their male teaching counterparts, it was her gender, as well as her race, that significantly influenced her experience as a teacher. Carrol's study (2017) added dimensions to the teacher experience by bringing in the lens of class and pinpointing the cultural dissonance that the teachers who grew up with African American middle-class values and norms experienced when working with African American students who had not necessarily grown up with similar values and norms. In her study of five African American female teachers, Carrol (2017) explored their perceptions of African American student learning and discovered that teachers in her study often encountered challenges relating to and working with African American students due to the cultural tensions they experienced between themselves and African American students whose class differed, notwithstanding the shared racial and ethnic backgrounds.

Gap in Research

As noted earlier, the application of *Brown v. Board of Education* to non-southern states in the 1960s increasingly affected other ethnic groups in the United States, most especially the Latinx and Asian/Asian American communities. However, we discovered that research on the experiences of teachers of color in desegregated schools heavily focuses on the experiences of African American teachers. We found two studies in our pool of the literature that investigated the experiences of teachers of color other than African American teachers. In her study of three African American teachers and seven Latinx teachers in urban public schools, Bell (2002) found that when teachers of color and White teachers interacted in the same schools, there were perceived intergroup conflicts for multiple reasons, including disagreement on the goals and pedagogical approaches to work with students of color. In a somewhat different context such as suburban, predominantly White schools, Lee (2012) interviewed six African American teachers along with one Asian and one Latinx teacher and discovered that the teachers of color in her study experienced social and professional isolations, purposely selected certain aspects of their cultural identities to fit in their White-dominated school, and resisted racial and ethnic stereotypes. The two studies in the pool, however, lumped together the experiences of Latinx and Asian American teachers with those of African American teachers, which resulted in a rather simplistic portrayal of their

experiences without a nuanced understanding of their experiences shaped by their racially, ethnically, and linguistically diverse backgrounds documented in other studies (Irizarry and Donaldson 2012; Nguyen 2008).

Conclusion and Discussion

The goal of this review was to give a systematic overview of the literature on African American teachers' experiences in teaching at PK–12 desegregated schools. Specifically, the review focused on challenges that African American teachers experienced in desegregated school settings.

Our analysis of the selected literature resulted in the following major findings and implications. First, we found that, although legal segregation in public schools no longer exists, the structural forces, including racism, still persevere in today's society and negatively affect African American teachers, further marginalizing African American teachers in the profession. The current consequences—such as the dismissal and demotion of African American teachers in Chicago and New Orleans public schools—appear to be even more problematic, increasing the student-teacher diversity gap. Drawing historical lessons from the unintended consequences of *Brown*, these findings call on policy makers to develop strategies, interventions, and programs that thoughtfully consider the benefits of having African American teachers for all students (Gay 2002; Ladson-Billings 1995; Paris 2012).

Second, our review showed that African American teachers who teach in integrated schools, especially predominantly White schools, experience challenges in navigating school environments. They feel tensions in socializing with their White counterparts. They feel pressured to be assimilated into White norms and practices, to resist racial stereotypes, to speak for their race, and to prove the legitimacy of their professional status. In response to these challenges, suggestions from the authors of the literature in this study are worth noting. Some suggest school leaders must provide in-service teacher programs where teachers of color and White counterparts openly discuss race-related issues as well as students' performance (Mabokela and Madsen 2003a, 2007; Madsen and Hollins 2000). They also recommend that school leaders facilitate an institutional atmosphere that acknowledges and appreciates pedagogical expertise African American teachers bring in.

Last but not least, our findings suggest African American teachers, including those who taught during the desegregation era and those who are teaching in the new millennium, are not monolithic, in that each has different experiences and perceptions of his or her own identity. More nuanced research on the experiences of African American teachers with varying context

and of different backgrounds would benefit the field of teacher education by bringing about a deeper understanding of their challenges and needs. For instance, what were African American teachers' experiences and challenges like in the northern states? How were their experience and challenges similar to or different from those of African American teachers who taught in the southern states? What were the experiences and challenges of African American teachers in urban, suburban, and rural contexts? Answering these questions would help policy makers, teacher educators, and school leaders better understand and support African American teachers in desegregated PK–12 classrooms.

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