

BLACK WOMEN EDUCATIONAL LEADERS IN PK-12 PUBLIC EDUCATION:
A MULTIPLE CASE STUDY ON THE DOUBLE CONSCIOUSNESS
OF BLACK WOMEN EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP
IN SOUTHWESTERN UNITED STATES

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Abstract

“You control the story, you control the narrative, you control the power” (Mbalia, 2019)

This dissertation examined the stories of Black Women Educational Leaders (BWEL) in PK-12t public education and their double consciousness as expressed through their leadership. The focus of this study was BWEL’s counternarratives as leaders within a system built upon systemic racism and oppression. Their experiences as Black Women Educational Leaders in PK-12 in a school district in which most school administrators are white, but most of the student body is Black and Brown were highlighted and centered to shed light on how the double consciousness of Black women informs their leadership. Utilizing Critical Race Feminism as the theoretical framework with Black Feminist Thought and Double Consciousness as analytical lenses, this study considered the historical and current research on the experiences and impact of BWELs, examined how systemic racism affects BWELs, and explored the role of race-gender consciousness in the way these BWEL exercise their leadership within their organizations. This qualitative counter-narrative multiple case study provided more significant insights into the counternarratives of the Black Women Leadership Experience (BWEL) and filled gaps in the existing literature on the double consciousness of Black Women Educational Leaders.

Keywords: Black female educational leaders, racism, critical feminism, warm demander, Black leadership, double consciousness, Black Feminist Thought, Black women educational leaders, counter narrative

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Dedication

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Table of Contents

Abstract.....	iii
Acknowledgements	iv
Dedication	vi
Table of Contents	vii
List of Tables	xii
List of Figures.....	xiii
Chapter 1: Introduction	1
Introduction to the Study	1
Personal Connection to the Study	2
Problem Statement and Background	4
Purpose of the Study	5
Brief Review of the Nature of the Study and the Research Questions.....	6
Brief Review of the Theoretical Frameworks	6
Operational Definitions	10
Brief Overview of the Topic Literature	13
Brief Review of the Study Methodology	17
Bridging the Knowledge Gap: How this Study Advances Existing Research.....	18
Limitations.....	18

Scope and Significance of the Study	19
Chapter 1 Summary & Transition	20
Chapter 2: Literature Review	21
Introduction to the Literature Review	21
Restatement of the Purpose of the Study	21
Personal Connections to the Study	22
Restatement of the Research Questions	24
Situating the Literature Review	25
Literature Review Methodology	26
Identification of Emerging Themes and Gaps in the Literature	29
Domain One: BWEL & Culturally Responsive Leadership	30
Domain Two: BWEL & Racism-Sexism	33
Domain Three: BWEL & Double Consciousness	36
Gaps in the Literature	40
Ways the Study Addressed Gaps in the Literature	41
Chapter 2 Summary and Transition	42
Chapter 3: Research Methodology	43
Introduction to the Methodological Approach to the Study	43
Restatement of the Purpose of the Study	46

Theoretical Frameworks	48
Rationale for Research Study Designs	59
School District Information	65
Additional Methodological Considerations	66
Research Design	68
Sampling Techniques.....	71
Researcher’s Role in the Study.....	72
Research Participants.....	73
Data Management.....	74
Data Collection	75
Data Analysis.....	78
Ethical Considerations.....	81
Chapter 3 Summary & Transition	84
Chapter 4: The Voices of Black Women Educational Leaders	85
Introduction.....	85
Restatement of Purpose.....	85
Research Questions.....	86
Introduction to the Research Participants	87
The Life Stories of the Participants.....	88

Brief Overview of Findings	92
Theme 1: From Microaggressions to Culturally Responsive Leadership	93
Theme 2: From Black Woman Tax to Culturally Responsive Leadership	100
Findings.....	107
Discussion.....	108
Chapter 4 Summary & Transition	110
Chapter 5: The Future of BWEL	112
Introduction.....	113
Research Questions.....	114
Implications	114
Interpretation of the Findings.....	116
First Research Question	119
Second Research Question	122
Recommendations for Policy and Practice	123
Implications for Future Research.....	125
Limitations.....	125
Delimitations.....	127
Significance.....	128
Conclusion	128

Appendix A: Interest Survey	132
Appendix B: Email Scripts.....	133
Appendix C: Interview Protocols	137
Appendix D: Coding Frameworks	141
Appendix E: Journal Notes.....	144
References	145
Curriculum Vitae	172

List of Tables

Table 1: Timeline for Data Collection.....	70
Table 2: Timeline of Study	77
Table 3: Research Participants.....	88
Table 4: Interview Keywords & Findings	109

List of Figures

Figure 2.1: Literature Review Search Terms	29
Figure 3.1: Theoretical Frameworks and Analytical Lenses Relationship	58
Figure 3.2: Research Process	61
Figure 3.3: Data Analysis Process	62
Figure 3.4: History of Black Education in the Study’s Location	63
Figure 3.5: Double Consciousness of Black Women Educational Leaders- Research Design	69
Figure 3.6: Thematic Coding According to the Theoretical Framework & Analytical Lenses	79
Figure 3.7: Keywords Used for the Thematic Coding Using MAXQDA	81
Figure 4.1: Conceptual Findings Map	93

Chapter 1: Introduction

Chapter 1 provides an overview of the study on the Double Consciousness of Black Women's Educational Leaders (BWEL) in PK-12 public schools and charter schools in the Southwestern United States . I accomplished this by reviewing the research study's purpose, theoretical frameworks, methodology, and topic literature for the study.

Introduction to the Study

Black leadership exists in constant resistance and opposition to white supremacy because Black school leaders must fight through systemic racism, white supremacist hegemony, and racial bias to become school administrators (Rogers-Ard & Knaus, 2020). African American school leadership is an under-researched, under-valued, and undeveloped topic in school leadership (Tillman, 2004, 2009).

Research about Black Women Educational Leaders in PK-12 in the United States is limited due to the confluence of classism, racism, and sexism (Jean-Marie, 2013; Lomotey, 2019). The experiences, philosophies, approaches, and models of Black women's educational leadership should be analyzed holistically through a comprehensive understanding of the field of African American educational leadership. Previous research states there is a need for more studies concentrating on the leadership styles of Black women principals using an Afro-centered, feminine approach such as Black Feminist Thought (BFT) anchored in Critical Race Feminism (CRF), which centers around these specific attributes of black women leaders: dialogue, care, and accountability (Lomotey, 2019).

Double consciousness experienced by Black women school leaders who often feel the need to act “less” Black and code switch to be successful in leadership roles is a factor influencing the leadership of Black women school leaders, as discussed by researchers (Goings

et al., 2018; Lomotey, 2019). Research recommendations included the need for further qualitative research on the double consciousness of Black Women educational leaders who must cope with their position as agents of the system that criminalizes Blackness and agents for racially oppressed students while also attempting to cope with their Blackness and the racism in the public school system (Goings et al., 2018).

Hegemony concerns itself with power and domination through manipulation and coercion. Hegemony is concerned with symbolic domination, legitimate power, and viable institutions (Lash, 2007). Hegemonic narratives about PK-12 school leaders reinforce white supremacist values and beliefs about how school leaders should act and lead organizations. Stories about Black women in school leadership roles in PK-12 education, as told through a hegemonic and deficit lens perspective, do not place their voices at the forefront of research (Owens et al., 2019). There is a need for Black Women Educational Leaders to tell their counter-stories because the self-definition and self-valuing of Black women validate Black women's power as human beings (Collins, 1986).

Personal Connection to the Study

I begin by reflecting on my intersectional identities; the exploration of my intersectional identities led me to reflect on my positionality. I am a light-skinned Latinx working-class woman with a graduate-level education. I arrived in the United States when I was 17 years old. I am also an immigrant who became an American citizen twenty years after arriving in the United States. My family members who live in the U.S. are undocumented or achieved their citizenship by marrying U.S. citizens. I am a mother to an Afro-Latinx girl. I have been an inner-city educator leader for 18 years and have always worked in schools where Black and Latinx children comprise much of the student population.

My critical consciousness first developed through my upbringing as class consciousness through my mother's teachings of Marxism and socialism. My mother had been a fervent communist militant who was imprisoned and tortured due to her communist ideals, and her experiences really opened my eyes to the inequities of capitalism. My early experiences in the United States helped me develop a cultural and racial consciousness through learning from Black friends and co-workers about the reality of being Black in America and Latin America and educating Black children in America and Latin America.

My critical consciousness fostered my commitment to the inner city, and when I became a teacher, my critical educational consciousness began to develop. As an educator and leader, I learned all I know about pedagogy and leadership from Black woman educators and Black Woman Educational Leadership. The principal at my first school was a strong Black Woman who led a school that was a home for all of us, staff, and students alike. Her warm, demanding leadership style brought out greatness in everyone around her and made a difference in the school community. I learned how to be an educational leader by watching her simultaneously be a warm human and demand excellence. She saw a leader in me before I could see it within myself and ignited my desire to make a difference as an educational leader. Her vision was to maintain and create a school composed of mainly Black and Latinx teachers and staff so students could see themselves represented by their teachers and administrators. I worked at this school for eleven years and learned everything I know about teaching and leadership from her. She distinctly addressed racism, the school-to-prison pipeline, inequalities in education, and limited opportunities for Black students through her leadership. The school did not play the National Anthem in our 8th grade graduation ceremonies. The Black national anthem played instead in this

bastion of resistance in East Harlem. Students sang “Lift Every Voice and Sign” proudly to celebrate their academic accomplishments as they transitioned to high school.

When I became a mother to an Afro-Latinx daughter, my critical consciousness transferred to motherhood. It emerged in how I decided to raise my daughter as a proud Afro-Latinx female. My first critical motherhood awakening came when I was breastfeeding her in Argentina in a doctor’s waiting room, and when the doctor came out of her office, she told me: “I love how your daughter’s brown skin contrasts with the whiteness of your breast.” In that moment, I realized my daughter needed to grow up around Black people to develop a sense of pride in who she was and not to be always signaled out for having brown skin while having a mother with white skin.

The situations described above are nothing compared to the lives of Black women, men, and children filled with incidents like this one, whose lived experiences are constantly affected by racism, systemic racism, and racial oppression. I recall these incidents to frame my position as a writer, Latinx woman, mother, artist, teacher, researcher, and academic from the Global South dedicated to the cause of global Black liberation.

Problem Statement and Background

With increasing urgency, the voices of BWEL are needed to understand the double consciousness of Black Women Leadership. Their voices are of value due to their culturally responsive leadership practices and insider awareness of how systemic racism affects the lives of marginalized individuals such as Black and Latinx students (Goings et al., 2018). Previous quantitative critical race analysis on the experiences of African American educators and microaggressions demonstrated that African Americans in the field of PK-12 and higher education both experience racial microaggressions as professionals in the field of education and

recommended further qualitative research to be conducted to understand the experiences of Black educators and leaders (DeCuir-Gunby & Gunby, 2016).

Additional research needs to be conducted to understand the self-defined experiences of Black Women Educational Leaders and increase their representation in educational leadership because they have the power to close the achievement gap through their leadership (Goings et al., 2018). This information is relevant to this study because it elucidates the need to hear counter stories of Black educators centered on Black epistemologies. The problem to be studied in this research was the experiences of the double consciousness of Black Women Educational Leaders.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to analyze the double consciousness of Black Women Educational Leaders. This study aimed to contribute to the literature on the importance of double consciousness of Black Women Educational Leaders in PK-12 public education to increase the representation of Black women leaders. This qualitative multiple case study used a Critical Race Feminism theoretical framework and analytical lenses rooted in Black Feminist Thought and Double Consciousness to explore the themes emerging from the counter-narratives of Black Women school leaders by inquiring about their experiences with double consciousness. This study addressed the problem of the low representation of Black Women Educational Leaders in the study's state and city by giving Black women educational leaders a space to self-define and self-value their experiences with double consciousness through counter-storytelling.

Brief Review of the Nature of the Study and the Research Questions

This study explored the experiences of Black Women Educational Leaders and their double consciousness. The questions that guided the study were:

1) How, if at all, is Black Women Educational leaders' double consciousness manifested through their leadership?

2) How, if at all, do Black Women Educational Leaders experience their double consciousness, generally and specifically as they lead?

These questions were designed to elicit the counter-narratives of Black Women Educational Leaders, with a focus on their double consciousness. Data was collected through interviews with Black Women Educational Leaders in PK-12 public education in Southwestern United States .

These two primary questions seem similar. However, they both deal with different aspects of double consciousness and BWEL: the manifestation of double consciousness and their experience of double consciousness. The first question relates to the manifestation of double consciousness, and the second question relates to the inner experience of double consciousness. Through this research, I embarked on a quest to understand what double consciousness looks like through BWEL's lenses and what BWEL's inner experiences of double consciousness are through their counter-stories.

Brief Review of the Theoretical Frameworks

One critical area of scholarship that guides this research study is Critical Feminist Theory. This theoretical framework, rooted in Black Feminist Thought and Double Consciousness, was used as an analytical lens to inform the research. This framework and analytical lenses are briefly reviewed, along with a succinct framework genealogy.

Critical Race Feminism

Crenshaw introduced Critical Race Feminism by pinpointing Black women's unique experiences through the field of critical legal studies (Crenshaw, 1989). The previous work of the father of Critical Race Theory Derrick Bell (1992) stated racism was a permanent feature in daily life in the United States (Bell, 1992, p.4), however, Crenshaw concluded that the critical race theory framework was not sufficient to describe and understand the intersectionality of Black women's lived experiences because they experience interlocked racism and sexism in various forms in their daily lives (Crenshaw, 1991).

The critical race feminist framework centers on Black women and analyzes their experiences using intersectionality as a tool to empower and amplify the voices of Black women. The CRF framework derived from Critical Legal Studies and Critical Race Theory to answer questions that those frameworks could not answer when used exclusively (Wing, 2019). The use of a CRF framework begins by inquiring about the legal status of minoritized women of color and proceeding to develop a praxis based on addressing the needs of women of color as they relate to social justice and equality.

Black Feminist Thought & Black Women ‘Talking Back’

Researchers widely dispute the origins of Black Feminist Thought (BFT). However, as a theory standing against the oppression of white male hegemony, it was first organized as a movement by Ruby Doris Smith in 1973 with the establishment of the National Black Feminist Organization (Johnson, 2015). Black women organized due to their need to be grouped separately from white women and Black men because they felt neither group understood their struggle as existing both as Black and women in a white supremacist world built upon white male, middle-class values (Collins, 2000).

Black feminists believe Black women are valuable and possess unique knowledge that stems from the lived experiences they face due to multiple oppression for being Black women in a white supremacist society (Hull et al., 1982). The tenets of BFT are 1) self-definition and self-valuation of the lived experience as Black Women through dialogue, critical care, and accountability, 2) the interlocking nature of oppression, and 3) redefinition of culture (Collins, 1986, 1992, 2000). James (1999) explains that black feminism must include community work and resistance to dominant cultural norms that emphasize whiteness as the norm.

The use of BFT as an analytical lens serves to understand and contextualize the experiences of Black women by understanding Black women's historical, cultural, and social experiences in the world (Davis, 1993). BFT was conceived as an Afro-centric framework based on valuing and affirming Afrocentric feminist knowledge with the goal of social change (Brewer, 1992). The themes of oppression and resistance are essential components of using a BFT analytical lens for a CRF framework as they are interrelated and lend themselves to using counter-stories to give space for Black women to 'talk back' (hooks, 1989) and use their voices for self-empowerment, community building, and resistance against the oppression generated by existing as a Black woman in a white supremacist world.

Double Consciousness & the Outsider Within

In *The Souls of Black Folk*, DuBois discusses racism by informing the reader how, through slavery, racism became institutionalized and how racism is a problem that persists globally. He asserts that “the problem of the twentieth century is the problem of the color line—the relation of the darker to the lighter races of men in Asia and Africa, in America, and the islands of the sea” (DuBois, 1903, p.9). He calls this the “color line” and details how race can be described through a subjective lens by introducing the concepts of the veil and double

consciousness. Furthermore, the “veil” can be explained as a color evasive mentality that prevents whites from seeing their racist behaviors and positions of privilege and power in a white supremacist society (Dubois, 1903, p. 39). The effect of the veil is that it creates an obstacle for Black people to express their racial identity without retaliation from the indoctrinated non-Black individuals in a white supremacist society, and it keeps Black and whites living in parallel but separate realities.

Double Consciousness captures the feeling created by the tension within the Black experience in the United States between the American and Black identities who constantly conflict with each other (Dubois, 1903, p. 45). Double consciousness as an analytical lens captures the reality of the Black American experience beyond the Black and white duality of oppressed and marginalized people because being Black in America is to exist constantly thinking about how Black lives are perceived and assessed through the eyes of non-Black others in the context of a white supremacist society and how Black lives are self-perceived.

This section briefly explained the framework genealogy and the framework, and analytical lenses used for this study. Furthermore, I have explained the relationship between the analytical lenses and the framework.

Operational Definitions

This section will describe the operational definitions for key terms relevant to this research. The following definitions of key terms relevant to this research ensure a shared understanding.

Black Women Educational Leaders (BWELs)

A person who self-identifies as a woman and as of the Black racial groups of Africa who is a school administrator in PK-12 public schools (Walls, 2017). For this study's purpose, this term includes deans, assistant principals, principals, assistant superintendents, chief instructional officers, and superintendents.

Code Switch

It is the practice of adapting one's linguistic nuances, behavior, appearance, and expression to that of other cultural group in exchange for social acceptance, fair treatment, and employment opportunities (McCluney et al., 2019). In the context of the study, code switch will be understood beyond its linguistic nature to encompass the ways in which BWEL adapt themselves to survive as leaders in a white supremacist public school system designed to oppress and erase Black lives.

Systemic Racism

Racism as it shows up in the systems and structures that make up our society and our public education system (Bonilla-Silva, 2021). This term relates to the ways in which BWEL experience oppression as leaders who are part of a system designed to oppress Black lives.

Racism

The act of discriminating based on race (Bonilla-Silva, 2021). Racism can present itself in the form of microaggressions, color-blindness, and racial stereotypes such as the ones experienced by BWEL in this study.

Race

This study will discuss race as a social construct and not a biological fact (Brooks, 2020). Through the study, I capitalize the word Black when I refer to Black Women Educational Leaders to signal the importance of Black Women's contributions to the world, particularly to American public education and American democracy. Additionally, I capitalize the word Black when discussing Black Education and Leadership to honor the long tradition of Black educators in the United States.

Microaggressions

The aggressions experienced by Black people because of implicit racism are manifest as the subtle and everyday verbal, behavioral, and environmental expressions of oppression. (Lewis et al., 2013, 2016; Warikoo, 2016). The BWEL in this study describes a variety of microaggressions they experience in their professional lives, such as always having to prove themselves worthy of their leadership positions, being judged for how they speak, or always wearing their hair a certain way.

Double Consciousness

The term was coined to define how Black people in the United States always operate with a double consciousness as Black and American because of the racist system created by slavery (Dubois, 1903). This study particularly analyzes the experience and manifestation of the Double Consciousness of Black Women Educational Leaders.

Race Consciousness

Being conscious of one's race and the race of others, including the commonalities of the heritage shared by members of a race. Also, race consciousness represents the opposite of being color-blind (Carter, 2008; Peller, 1990; Simien & Clawson, 2004). This study explores the relationship between race consciousness and double consciousness in the professional lives of BWEL.

Outsider Within

The process by which Black women experience life at a unique intersection of race and gender by seeing themselves constantly through the eyes of the outsider looking in and the insider looking out (Collins, 2000). This study dives deep into the Double Consciousness of BWEL and investigates the relationship between their experiences of Double Consciousness as Outsiders Within a system that is designed to oppress Black Women.

Fugitive Pedagogy

This term refers to the ways in which the art of Black education has been practiced and viewed as a powerful tool for liberation and subversion since Antebellum South and the Jim Crow era. This term was coined by Givens (2021) who conducted a thorough analysis describing how Black teachers resisted the dehumanization of Blackness in the curriculum by teaching Black students in a culturally affirming way through teaching Black history and Black culture (Givens, 2021, p. 45). Givens (2021) centers the figure of Carter G. Woodson as a main contributor to Black Education in the United States through highlighting his efforts to document and create ways to honor Black history as examples of fugitive educational practices. In this study, I refer to the term fugitive pedagogy to expand the work of Givens (2021) into the realm of leadership as the term fugitive leadership.

Fugitive Leadership

This term refers to the ways in which Black Women Educational Leaders practice fugitivity through their leadership by challenging the preconceived notions of leadership in the location of their study, reclaiming their humanity, and resisting oppression and marginalization by succeeding in their roles as leaders. This term is based on the work of Givens (2021) in respect to fugitive pedagogy. I pose the idea that BWEL were once teachers who practiced fugitive pedagogies in the classroom and later translated their insider knowledge of fugitive pedagogies to their leadership styles.

Fugitivity

The spirit of the term fugitivity is related to the context of slavery when enslaved Africans engaged in acts of resistance against the oppression of their masters and mistresses and it can be translated in modern refusal to accept white supremacy as the status quo in every aspect of our society (Adams et al., 2022). A recent group of scholars in educational research has explained the role of fugitivity in Black education by describing the practice of fugitivity as acts that value, affirm, and appreciate the humanity and spirituality of teachers and students in the context of a racist public school system and a racist society (Givens, 2021. Stovall, 2024; Zaino, 2021).

Brief Overview of the Topic Literature

This section discusses the areas of study that emerged from the literature review related to Black Women Educational Leaders' Double Consciousness. After reviewing previous research, I divided the literature into three domains according to themes that I could distill. These three domains are 1) BWEL and culturally Responsive Leadership, 2) BWEL and racism-sexism, and 3) BWEL and double Consciousness. This brief literature review justifies the need for the

study by showing the scarcity of research available on Black Women Educational Leaders' Double Consciousness.

Domain One: BWEL & Culturally Responsive Leadership

The theory of culturally responsive pedagogy was first developed by Gay (1994) in response to the lack of research regarding cultural diversity in the realm of teaching pedagogies. Similarly, the body of work regarding culturally responsive leadership was born out of the question on how to apply culturally responsive pedagogies to leadership and refers to the leadership behaviors that are liberatory, anti-racist, social-justice oriented, and affirming of culturally diverse identities (Khalifa et al., 2016). In a study conducted to examine how the participants' reflective experiences about culture and race can promote culturally responsive leadership in school buildings, Genao (2016) suggests that educational leader preparation programs lack the clinical experience with the emphasis on culturally responsive leadership need for future urban school leaders.

The voices of Black Women Educational Leaders are needed to understand how their experiences of double consciousness inform their culturally responsive leadership practices. The stories of BWEL are of value due to their insider awareness of how systemic racism affects Black leaders, Black teachers, and Black students (Goings et al., 2018). Culturally responsive Black Women Educational Leaders are known to create a culturally affirming school climate for Black and Latinx students that simultaneously sets and holds these students accountable to high academic expectations (Jones and Davenport, 2018; McClellan, 2020; Tevis et al., 2020; Williams, 2021). Culturally responsive Black Women Educational Leaders embody the characteristics of warm demanders; they are both nurturers and demanders of excellence in every area of their organizations including from themselves (Williams, 2021).

Additional research is needed to understand how the experience of the double consciousness of Black Women Educational Leaders constructs their leadership dispositions towards social justice (Flores & Gunzenhauser, 2021)—accordingly, Goings et al. (2018) also identified the need for further research on how Black school leaders' double consciousness—as concomitantly Black and as agents of a school system that racially oppresses Black and Latinx students—influences how they lead schools. Culturally responsive educational leaders have the power to impact a school's climate and to create an inclusive environment for all students that focuses on academic excellence. Findings indicated the need for additional research on social justice-informed educational leadership approaches used by educational Leaders of Color to disrupt the racialized achievement gap for Black students intentionally (Griffin et al., 2017; Hernandez & Murakami, 2016). Genao and Mercedes's (2021) study of school Leaders of Color identified the need for additional research examining the impact of educational Leaders of Color on the recruitment and retention of Teachers and the academic trajectories of Students of Color.

Fugitive pedagogy is a term which describes the educational practices and cultural traditions of Black educators who have historically used subversive, culturally responsive pedagogies to teach Black students literacy skills while infusing a sense of pride in their Black identity and Black history in the context of a white supremacist educational system designed to erase Black humanity (Givens, 2021). Culturally responsive BWEL are Black educators who practice fugitive pedagogies through their leadership by using their double consciousness to code switch in their roles as leaders.

Domain Two: BWEL & Racism-Sexism

Black leadership exists in constant resistance and opposition to white supremacy because Black school leaders must fight through systemic racism, white supremacist hegemony, and racial bias to become school administrators (Rogers-Ard & Knaus, 2020). Black educational leadership is an under-researched, under-valued, and undeveloped topic in school leadership (Jean-Marie, 2013; Lomotey, 2019; Tillman, 2009). Previous qualitative critical race analysis on the experiences of Black educators and microaggressions demonstrated that BWEL in the field of PK-12 and higher education both experience intersectional microaggressions as professionals and recommended further qualitative research is needed to understand the experiences of Black educators and leaders (DeCuir-Gunby & Gunby, 2016). Additionally, Black Women Educational Leaders sit at a crossroads in which they experience racist and sexist microaggressions in leadership preparation programs and in their roles as leaders (Weiner et al., 2021).

Domain Three: BWEL & Double Consciousness

Dubois used the term double consciousness to describe the feeling created by the tension within the Black experience in the United States between the American and Black identities who exist in constant conflict with each other (Dubois, p. 9, 1903). Double consciousness captures the reality of the Black Women Educational Leaders' experience as people who are oppressed and marginalized in a double manner due to their race and sex and who exist constantly thinking about how they are perceived and assessed through the eyes of non-Black others in the context of a white supremacist society, living as outsiders within.

Brief Review of the Study Methodology

The research method was a multiple case study. Case studies aid in understanding a phenomenon by providing an understanding through personal storytelling consisting of interviews and observations (Brandell & Varkas, 2001; Miller et al., 2020). I used a multiple case study method because it allowed me to interview four Black Women Educational Leaders and look at common themes emerging from their interviews. This approach aligned with the study's problem, purpose, problem, and research questions by allowing the researcher to holistically explore Black Women Educational Leaders' experience of double consciousness. This methodology was appropriate because multiple case studies provide robust evidence that can add to previous research conducted on the same topic. Additionally, using a case study methodology was appropriate because I sought to understand the process of double consciousness in Black Women Educational Leaders and develop an in-depth understanding of it through a comprehensive qualitative analysis (Creswell, 2007; Patton, 2014). This research explored the counter-narratives of Black Women Educational Leaders in PK-12 public education in Southwestern United States, focusing on double consciousness. I used Glaser and Strauss's constant comparative method to understand the experiences of Black Women School Leaders in PK-12 public schools in Southwestern United States. Using an open coding process (Strauss & Corbin, 1998), I read through the data and created codes to identify similarities in perceptions, themes, and experiences. I read the interview data multiple times to separate content according to codes. The findings from the interviews identified similarities and different perceptions and experiences.

Bridging the Knowledge Gap: How this Study Advances Existing Research

Black school leadership is an under-researched, under-valued, and undeveloped topic in school leadership (Tillman, 2004, 2009). Research about Black women's educational leadership in PK-12 in the United States is limited due to the confluence of culture, class, racism, and sexism (Jean-Marie, 2013; Lomotey, 2019). The experiences, philosophies, approaches, and models of Black Women Educational Leadership should be analyzed holistically through a comprehensive understanding of the field of Black educational leadership. There is a need for more studies concentrating on the leadership styles of Black Women Educational Leaders using an Afro-centered, feminine approach such as the Black Feminist Thought (BFT) framework, which centers around these specific attributes of Black Women Leaders: dialogue, care, and accountability (Lomotey, 2019).

Researchers frequently discuss the double consciousness experienced by Black women Educational Leaders who often feel the need to act "less" Black and code switch to be successful in leadership roles as a factor influencing the leadership of Black women school leaders (DuBois, 1903; Goings et al., 2018; Lomotey, 2019). Further research recommendations centered on the need to study the double consciousness of Black Women Educational Leaders (DuBois, 1903; Goings et al., 2018).

Limitations

This research study was limited because it depended on the collaboration of Black Women Educational Leaders willing to participate. I selected the research participants from a small pool of Black Women Educational Leaders in PK-12 in Southwestern United States, which represents an additional limitation. Furthermore, the researcher conducted one-to-one interviews with the participants and was constrained by scheduling changes requested by study participants

and participants who exercised their choice to leave the study due to other commitments. However, to ensure the minimization of these limitations, I used professional judgment and facilitated the appropriate options.

Scope and Significance of the Study

Public education in the United States is in crisis. There is a dire need for highly effective, culturally responsive educational leaders such as Black Women. However, Black Women in leadership positions in the field of PK-12 public education are severely underrepresented. Research on the double consciousness of Black Women Educational Leaders can lead to increased representation in Black Women's Educational Leadership.

Previous research on the topic concluded that Black Women's Educational leadership characteristics were related to a high level of teacher collective responsibility, student-centered leadership, community consciousness, positive student self-identity, positive school culture, positive role-modeling, focus on the holistic development of children, and increasing academic achievement for all students (Jang & Alexander, 2022; Moorosi et al., 2018). Black women principals are positively associated with increasing 9th graders' math achievement scores for all students despite the challenges of the school contexts for which they are instructional leaders (Jang & Alexander, 2022). The findings are consistent with prior literature, which states that Black women principals are effective instructional leaders for all students (Lomotey, 2019). Research on Black Women's Educational Leadership has pointed to a similar discussion by identifying the transformational leadership qualities of Black women principals as leaders who demonstrate transformational critical care or "other mothering" behavior towards their students, staff, and school community, which promotes increased student achievement and a positive

school culture (Lomotey, 2019; Tillman, 2004). Critical care can be defined as high expectations combined with relentless warmth and care (Lomotey, 2019; Msila, 2022; Tillman, 2004).

Chapter 1 Summary & Transition

Chapter 1 has provided an exploration related to the concepts of racial bias, racism, and systemic racism in the context of the systems and structures of public education. Additionally, this chapter briefly introduced the theoretical models that served as the framework for this research study on the experiences of the double consciousness of Black Women Educational leaders in K-12 public education. Chapter 2 will review the literature relevant to the research study, followed by a discussion of the methodology in Chapter 3.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction to the Literature Review

Chapter 1 briefly reviewed the nature of the research questions, the theoretical frameworks, and relevant topic literature for this study. Chapter 2 examines the literature on Black Women's leadership and double consciousness in PK-12 education and addresses how the study filled the knowledge gaps identified. Chapter 3 will discuss the methodology and methods chosen for the study, outline the research design, and describe the research participants and the plan to obtain informed consent. This literature review aims to examine, analyze, and synthesize the literature to understand how to guide the research study on the double consciousness of Black Women Educational Leaders. Specifically, research about Black women's educational leadership reflects a variety of designs. However, a large proportion of existing research in many of the top-tier journals is qualitative. This review of the literature highlights several qualitative studies reflecting the work that has been conducted.

Restatement of the Purpose of the Study

Culturally responsive educational leaders engage in educational environments differently than other leaders. As a result, their leadership is more inclusive of all students and more likely to focus on dismantling educational inequities faced by increasingly diverse student populations (Khalifa et al., 2016). The concept of applied critical leadership is mentioned in previous research to describe the uniquely different way that culturally responsive Leaders of Color enact their leadership praxis that results, deliberately, in improvements in teaching, learning, and academic achievement and career outcomes for all students, but particularly for African American and Latinx students (Santamaria & Santamaria, 2013, 2015).

Previous research on Black women educational leaders used intersectionality and Black Feminist Thought to understand the experiences of Black women leaders as a doubly marginalized group due to their race and gender (Moorosi et al., 2018). Black Women Educational Leaders' characteristics were related to a high level of teacher collective responsibility, community consciousness, pupil-centered approach to leadership, focus on the holistic development of children, a positive student self-identity, positive school culture, positive role modeling, and increasing academic achievement for all students (Jang & Alexander, 2022; Moorosi et al., 2018). Double Consciousness experienced by Black women school leaders who often feel the need to act "less" Black and code switch to be successful in leadership roles was discussed by researchers as a factor influencing the leadership of Black women school leaders (DuBois, 1903; Goings et al., 2018). Further research recommendations centered on the need to study the double consciousness of Black Women educational leaders (Goings et al., 2018).

The study aimed to answer the quest for further research on how the double consciousness of Black Women Educational Leaders in PK-12 influences how they lead schools. Notably, this study sought to extend what is known about double consciousness through the examination of the lived experiences of Black Women Educational Leaders in PK-12 in SouthWestern United States.

Personal Connections to the Study

My first experiences with racism occurred in my own family. I am a light skinned Latinx woman from a mixed South American family. I point out the color of my skin to recognize the privilege I carry in Latin America and the United States. My grandmother used to tell me she would change seats on the bus when a Black person sat next to her and that I should do the same. I never listened, of course. My beloved aunt, Tia Norma, was considered Black in the context of

the rampant racism and classism in South America, and my grandma used to look down on her and tell me she was not my aunt because she was Black. Black or Negra is used in Argentina as a racist term to describe people of lower social classes who have dark hair and dark skin.

My aunt only completed up to third grade in her education but managed to provide for her sons and grandchildren independently by cleaning houses and caring for children and older adults. She loved me unconditionally, cared for me, and taught me everything I know about life. My mom and my aunt encouraged me to migrate to the United States to be free, have a better future, and get away from a culture that oppressed women. Notably, I have shared these points of reference about my childhood to illustrate the influence of Black women in my life.

Upon arriving in the United States, I interacted with Black culture daily and became close friends with many Black women. Through these interactions, I learned to appreciate and respect the beautiful cultural narratives, traditions, and folklore of Black people in the United States, as well as witness the painful struggles related to the oppression and terror inflicted upon Black people through the white Supremacist system. An influential Black woman leader in my life was one of my college sisters, Wula Dawson. She taught me how to be humble and open-minded to learn from her life experiences dealing with racism and sexism in America. At the beginning of the pandemic, we were catching up, and she nonchalantly stated, “Black women leadership is superior. They should study the success of organizations led by Black women”. This conversation planted a seed inside me, led me to reflect on the lessons I learned from Black teachers and leaders practicing fugitive pedagogy, and ultimately led me to write this dissertation.

Restatement of the Research Questions

Primary Research Questions

When considering the research questions, I decided on including primary and ancillary questions to address the complexity of the double consciousness of Black Women Educational Leaders. The ancillary questions helped me focus on specific aspects of the Black Women's Leadership Experience. The study had the goal to answer the following primary and ancillary questions:

- 1) How, if at all, is Black Women Educational leaders' double consciousness manifested through their leadership?
- 2) How, if at all, do Black Women Educational Leaders experience their double consciousness, both generally and specifically as they lead?

Ancillary Research Questions

- a) How, if at all, are Black Women Educational leaders in PK-12 public schools impacted by the experience of their double consciousness as they interact with superiors, colleagues, staff, students, parents, and the community?
- b) How, if at all, does double consciousness impact the decision-making of Black Women Educational Leaders in PK-12 public schools ?
- c) How, if at all, does double consciousness impact the day-to-day instructional leadership role of Black Women Educational Leaders in PK-12 public schools?

These two primary questions may seem similar. However, they both deal with different aspects of double consciousness: the manifestation of double consciousness and their experience of double consciousness. The first question relates to the manifestation of double consciousness. The second question relates to the inner experience of double consciousness. Through this

research, I investigated what double consciousness looks like and feels like through the leadership of Black Women. The ancillary questions explored different facets of educational leadership, such as professional relationships, decision-making, and instructional leadership. They were designed to go in-depth to understand the manifestation and experience of double consciousness for Black Women Educational Leaders. Moreover, the ancillary questions added specificity to the interview process to inspire self-reflection and counter-storytelling centered on the experiences of BWEL.

Situating the Literature Review

Researcher Positionality

I come from a long line of fugitive educators who taught in the most remote places of South America and believed in the power of education to transform a society. As a result of my experiences as a Latinx educator and educational leader, I have witnessed and experienced the transformative leadership of Black women in PK-12 public education in the United States in multiple states and contexts. I have lived experiences in public and charter schools where Black Women Educational Leaders increased student achievement and created positive school climates through their leadership practices. This phenomenon is also documented in the literature (Jang & Alexander, 2022; Lomotey, 2019; Santamaria & Santamaria, 2013).

Rationale for the Literature Review

Through working on this dissertation and reflecting on my own experiences, I have contemplated the following questions: a) What is the unique leadership style of Black women? b) What are the experiences of Black women in positions of leadership? c) What is the role of research in increasing the representation of Black women educators and leaders in public education? These questions led me to embark upon a search of seminal and current research on

issues related to Black women's leadership in public education, double consciousness, culturally responsive leadership, intersectionality, systemic racism, and racism.

Literature Review Methodology

Collaboration with Librarian

I began my literature review with meeting with the UNLV education subject librarian to discuss my research ideas and questions. My time with the librarian was structured around how to best manage the multitude of publicly available data and resources available exclusively to UNLV affiliates. We discussed how to conduct general keyword searches and build upon what I collected through those searches to refine future searches. I equate the experience of working with the librarian to building a pyramid, which led me to the resources I utilized to build this literature review. The results showed that this dissertation's topic is highly under-theorized and under-researched in educational research.

Search Strategy & Selection Criteria

My initial search for Black women's leadership in public education in the United States resulted in 670 results. I refined the search to include Black women educational leaders and double consciousness and returned 2 results. The collaboration between the librarian and I involved narrowing search terms and utilizing various keyword combinations to get to more appropriate resources related to my areas of interest. The keyword searches included: a) Black women leaders, b) Black women educational leaders, c) critical leadership, d) culturally responsive leadership, e) double consciousness, f) Black Feminist Thought, g) fugitive pedagogies, h) outsider within, i) microaggressions, and j) stereotype threat.

Theoretical saturation in qualitative research is an extensive process by which a researcher concludes that the ability to obtain new information about the research topic has been

reached (Guest et al., 2006). I reviewed 302 articles in total. I concluded that I had reached theoretical saturation when I noticed all research pointed out to the same theories. I narrowed down my references to 201 sources including books, YouTube videos, and historical artifacts. This body of articles were the ones used for the research because they related to the central topic of research: Black Women Educational Leaders.

Database & Resource Selection

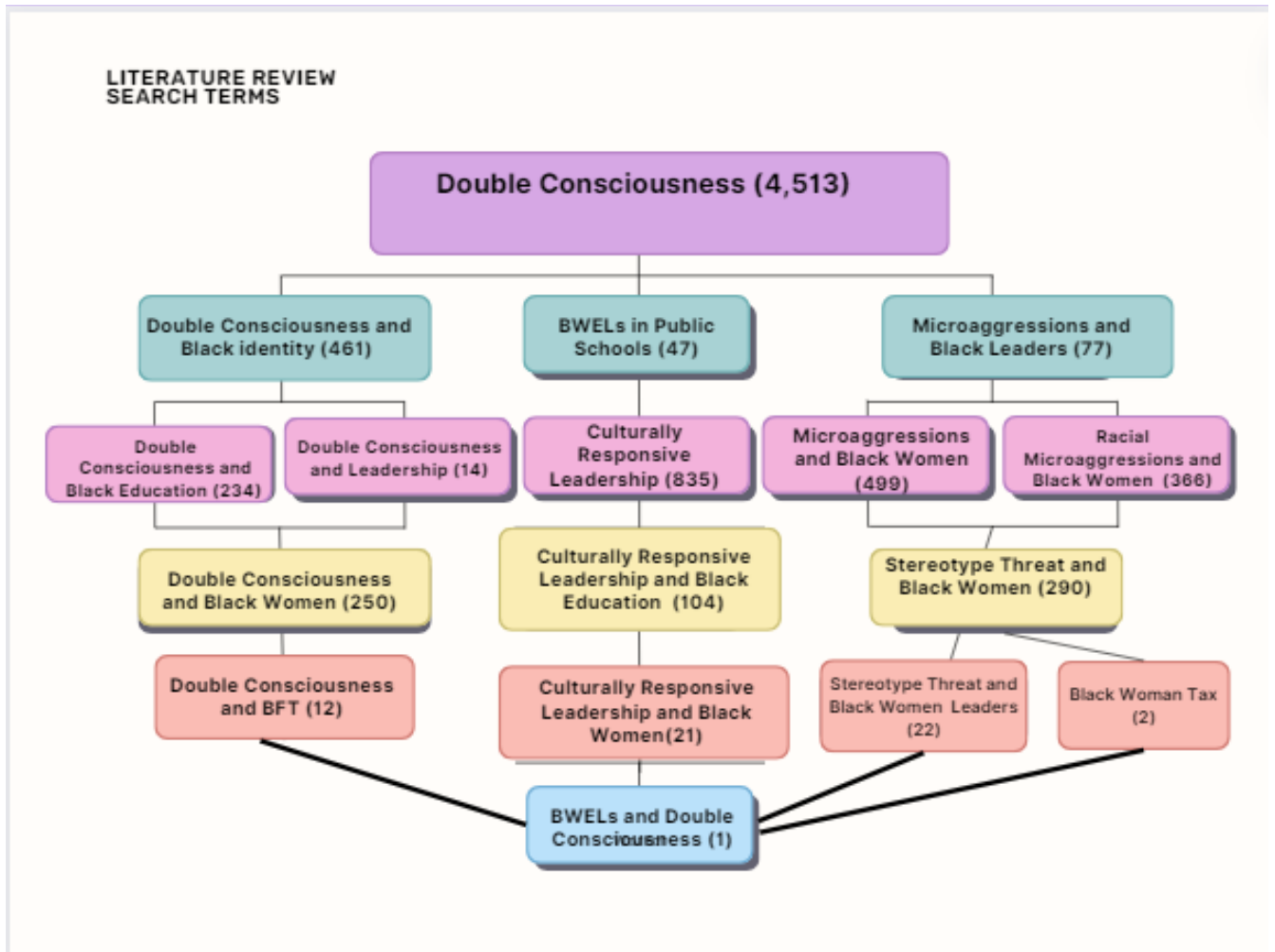
Academic Search Premier, ERIC, and JSTOR represent a small range of databases used during my literature review to glean more about what research already existed. I began my search by entering the term double consciousness on the search bar at the UNLV library. This search resulted in 4,513 results. After skimming through the results, I narrowed down my search based on the information I encountered into different subtopics to focus my search. These three subtopics were double consciousness and Black identity, BWEL in public schools, and microaggressions and Black leaders. After that, I continued to narrow down my search into subtopics related to my research questions. I used double consciousness and Black education, double consciousness and leadership, culturally responsive leadership, microaggressions and Black women, and racial microaggressions and Black women. I continued to zoom in on the topics related to my research questions and narrowed down the search terms even more based on the topics emerging from scanning the results. I searched for double consciousness and Black women, culturally responsive leadership and Black education, and stereotype threat and Black women. After scanning the results of the search, I decided to distill my search even more and I searched for double consciousness and Black Feminist Thought, culturally responsive leadership and Black women, and stereotype threat and Black women leaders. I noticed the search was producing fewer results as I was getting closer to the specific topic of my research questions.

Lastly, I searched for Black Women Educational leaders and double consciousness, and I found only one result. The outcome of this search suggested the topic of this research was under theorized and under researched.

I reviewed 302 peer-reviewed journal articles, 25 dissertations, data from 11 academic lectures, 19 webinars, 25 YouTube videos, and 40 books. I also initiated conversations with academics and practitioners about their experiences and the need for Black women leadership in public education. I narrowed down my research to 202 sources including peer reviewed articles, books, and YouTube videos, I chose the articles to include in my literature review according to the themes that emerged in previous research related to my topic of research: Black Women Educational Leaders and double consciousness. I knew these articles were best suited to provide more insight into my topic of analysis because they were closely related to my research questions, methodology, and frameworks I used to conduct the research. I did not look nor did I find any discrepant literature on the topic.

In sum, I examined research about Black Women Educational Leaders in PK-12 public education and research that utilized qualitative methodologies. Further, I reviewed existing literature on double consciousness applied to educational leadership. This focus helped narrow my literature review to examine research on the historical and modern-day manifestation and experiences of double consciousness and the lived experiences of Black Women Educational Leaders. The figure below shows the process I followed for my literature review.

Figure 2.1: Literature Review Search Terms



Identification of Emerging Themes and Gaps in the Literature

I grouped this literature into three overarching domains: a) Black Women Educational Leaders and Culturally Responsive Leadership, b) Black Women Educational Leaders and Racism-Sexism, and c) Double Consciousness and Black Women. Collectively, the research reviewed in these domains underscored the need for this study and, in so doing, revealed the gaps in existing knowledge about the double consciousness of Black women’s leadership in PK-12 public schools in Southwestern United States.

Domain One: BWEL & Culturally Responsive Leadership

Systemic racism presents itself as a lack of culturally responsive teacher and leader preparation programs. Racism and systemic racism manifest in U.S PK-12 schools through the lack of access to diverse school administrators who can be representatives of their school communities and student body population. Culturally responsive leadership was born out of the field of culturally responsive pedagogy theorized by Geneva Gay in 1994. Culturally responsive leadership refers to the leadership behaviors of leaders who uplift and affirm the cultural identities of their staff, students, and school communities through their practice and encompass anti-racist, anti-oppressive, transformative and culturally affirming leadership practices (Khalifa et al., 2016).

Four major strands were identified by previous research as culturally responsive leadership behaviors: 1) critical self-awareness, 2) culturally responsive curriculum and teacher preparation, 3) culturally responsive and inclusive school environments, 4) engaging parents and families in community contexts (Khalifa et al., 2016). The research on culturally responsive leadership coincides with Plachowski's work on critical care which describes how effective culturally responsive school leaders express care by openly acknowledging and redressing educational inequities (Plachowski, 2019). The concept of applied critical leadership is mentioned in previous research to describe the uniquely different way that culturally responsive Leaders of Color enact their leadership praxis that results, deliberately, in improvements in teaching, learning, and academic achievement and career outcomes for all students, but particularly for African American and Latinx students (Santamaria & Santamaria, 2013).

Culturally responsive Black women educational leaders in PK-12 public schools are known to create a welcoming school climate for Black and Latinx students that simultaneously

sets and holds these students accountable to high academic expectations (McClellan, 2020; Tevis et al., 2020; Williams, 2021). Specific approaches to school leadership, such as warm demander leaders, have been shown to be the main drivers in closing the racialized achievement gap and increasing college readiness (Abdulraheem et al., 2017; Jones & Davenport, 2018). In sum, Black Women Educational Leaders are known to create positive school climates for all students (Griffin et al., 2017; Jones & Davenport, 2018; McClellan, 2020; Tevis et al., 2020; Williams, 2021; Lomotey, 2019). Previous findings indicated the need for additional research on social justice-informed culturally responsive educational leadership approaches used by educational Leaders of Color to disrupt the racialized achievement gap for Black students intentionally (Griffin et al., 2017; Hernandez & Murakami, 2016). Multi-state research on the relationship between the race of school principals and Black teacher recruitment and retention rates, and Black student achievement indicates that having a Black principal increases the probability that a newly hired teacher is Black by 5-7% and Black student exposure to Black teachers by 3%; having a Black teacher also increases the math achievement of Black students and having a Black principal also increases the math achievement of Black students even if they are not assigned to a Black teacher (Bartanen et al., 2019). The presence of Black and Latinx principals and teachers also increases the representation of Black and Latinx students in gifted programs (Grissom et al., 2021). Similarly, Genao and Mercedes' (2021) study of school leaders of color identified the need for additional research examining the impact of educational leaders of color on the recruitment and retention of teachers and the academic trajectories of students of color (Genao & Mercedes, 2021). Prior research suggests there is a lack of culturally responsive leadership content for urban educational leaders in educational leadership preparation programs (Genao, 2016).

Fugitive pedagogy is a term coined by Givens (2021) which refers to the educational practices used by Black educators historically to combat the dehumanization of Blackness in the curriculum by using subversive practices that taught, affirmed, and celebrated Black culture (Givens, 2021, p. 45). In this context, fugitive pedagogy can be linked to culturally responsive pedagogy because it responded to the needs of a specific cultural group and made the learning process connected to their cultural context. Additionally, fugitive pedagogy legitimized forms of cultural capital (Yosso, 2005) that were not recognized by white supremacy as legitimate such as Black history or Black literacy. Fugitive pedagogy is a decolonial pedagogy (Mignolo & Walsh, 2018) rooted in fugitivity which is a form of creating liberatory spaces by engaging in acts of refusal and disconnection from oppressive systems that seek to erase Black lives.

The history of Black education is subversive in nature because it involves reclaiming Black humanity within a context in which Black humanity was erased through the system of slavery (Dumas, 2016). Black Women Educators have been at the forefront of the struggle for Black literacy since its inception risking their lives for the cause of Black education and Black literacy because Black literacy was an instrument of resistance and liberation to reclaim Black Humanity (Neal-Stanley, 2023). Some of the early fugitive pedagogies embodied by Black Women Educators before the Civil War included examples of cultural code-switching such as teaching in night schools in the middle of the woods away from the eyes of slave masters.

After the Civil War, fugitive pedagogies took a different form such as teaching Black history and Black culture explicitly even though it was not allowed in the curriculum imposed by white authorities (Givens, 2021, p. 49). The biggest example of fugitive pedagogy was exposed by Carter G. Woodson (1875-1950) with the creation of Negro History Week, a week for the celebration of Black freedom through the story telling of counterhegemonic narratives about

Black culture and Black life in schools across the country made possible through the grass-roots efforts of thousands of Black Educators across the country (Givens, 2019). Negro history week was a revolutionary concept crystallized as the embodiment of Black identity and Black history in the context of a White supremacist system that sought to criminalize notions of Black humanity (Givens, 2019). It is important to point out that fugitive pedagogies developed as a response to a system rooted in anti-Blackness; therefore, they should not become the normative (Stovall, 2024).

Fugitive pedagogical practices have been passed down from generation to generation of Black educators as Black epistemologies and Black Women Educators have been the keepers of this cultural capital (Yosso, 2005). One way of embodying fugitive leadership by BWEL was suggested in the literature as the practice of protecting Black students through alternative discipline measures that recognized their humanity and respected their dignity as students while fully acknowledging the issues that led to the behavior infractions and holding them up to high standards of academic and behavior excellence (McKinney de Royston et al., 2021). This is consistent with literature on the characteristics of Black educators as warm demanders (Irvine & Fraser, 1998).

Domain Two: BWEL & Racism-Sexism

Public education in the United States has historically served as a reproducer of inequalities (Wise, 2021). Situating education as an equalizer within the context of a white supremacist hegemonic system is a misunderstanding of how systemic racism is represented in public education. Inequality is not an accident but the desired outcome of systemic racism and the reason why standardized testing is used to test the academic achievement of children from non-standard backgrounds (Wise, 2021). Systemic racism is complex and embedded in every

institution and system in our society, such as healthcare, education, income, housing, crime, and unemployment (Johnson, 2021). These systems, all grounded in systemic racism, interact with each other, predicting outcomes in the lives of individuals.

Systemic racism in the public education system is color evasive; however, color evasiveness and race evasiveness coexist within systemically racist structures even though our society continues to believe discrimination is individual and not systemic (Pak, 2021). The term color evasiveness is a term rooted in DisCrit used instead of color blindness (an ableist term) to describe how our society is built upon evading topics related to color and race (Annamma, Jackson & Morrison, 2017). Ignoring or denying the existence of systemic racism only contributes to maintaining systems based on whiteness as the norm. Racism and systemic racism manifest in U.S. PK-12 schools through the lack of access to diverse school leaders who can be representatives of their school communities and student body population and through leadership preparation programs rooted in whiteness as the default way in which leaders are supposed to act.

Systemic racism is embodied through the gendered racialized microaggressions BWEL experience as they lead when their presence and behavior break the cultural norms associated with whiteness which dictate how leaders are supposed to present themselves and behave with others. Microaggressions are defined as racial and gendered discrimination manifested in daily brief verbal, behavioral, or environmental interactions and humiliations, intentional or unintentional, which communicate antagonistic, pejorative, or negative remarks and insults toward targeted groups (Pierce, 1970). Moreover, microaggressions are denigrating interactions that can be verbal or non-verbal (Delgado & Stefanic, 2001; Nadal et al., 2015; Sue et al., 2007). Simply put, microaggressions are a common form of racism that upholds white supremacy by

communicating exclusion, lack of belonging, and illegitimacy that can make people of a certain race feel like outsiders (Williams & Reid, 2012; Pérez Huber & Solórzano, 2015). These can be comments about hair, educational achievement, grammar, or speech.

BWEL experience gendered racial juxtaposed microaggressions in leadership preparation programs that do not teach culturally responsive leadership and emphasize whiteness as the norm for how leaders should behave (Weiner et al., 2021). This situation continues in their leadership roles once in the professional arena because BWELs are often seen as “race specialists” on their campus and they are expected to concentrate on Black students (Moore, 2013). Similarly, previous research has shown BWEL are targets of racial microaggressions related to the intersection of their gender and sex (Cyr et al., 2021; Horsford & Tillman, 2012; Reed & Evans, 2008; Reed, 2012; Thomas et al., 2008).

The Black Woman Tax is another form of microaggression directed towards Black Women in predominantly white spaces (Melaku, 2022). The term Black Woman Tax refers to the additional invisible, unpaid labor that Black Women are forced to experience in white institutional spaces to cope with racial and gender violence (Melaku, 2022; Melaku & Beeman, 2023). The Black Woman Tax can be manifested as discredit for the professional and academic qualifications of BWELs. The term Black Woman Tax evolved from the term “Black Tax” used first by John King (2016) to describe the “invisible tax” that Black male teachers have to pay in predominantly white spaces when they are expected to be the disciplinarians, or when it is assumed they are experts in cultural diversity just because they are Black (King, 2016).

One manifestation of gendered racial microaggressions are stereotypes. Stereotypes are a tool for oppression used to perpetrate systemic racism and racism in our society (Neal-Stanley, 2023). Stereotype threats are a construct that refers to the fear of actualizing self-sabotaging

negative beliefs about one's racial, ethnic, gender, or cultural group (Chance, 2022). Stereotype threat theory is defined as the sociopsychological threat felt by an individual who is marginalized and/or minoritized which affects their psychology (Steele & Aronson, 1997).

Lewis et al. (2016) created a measure for gendered racial microaggressions and divided it into four subscales: 1) assumptions of beauty and sexual objectification, 2) silenced and marginalized, 3) the strong Black woman stereotype, and 4) the angry Black woman stereotype. In the case of Black women educational leaders, the Angry Black woman stereotype functions as a stereotype threat that serves to uphold white-hetero normative standards as expected leadership behaviors and function as a tool of oppression and racism (Collins, 2000). In a study on Black women facing stereotype threat in college campuses, the researcher documented how Black women in predominantly white institutions responded to the Angry Black Woman stereotype threat by developing a heightened sense of double consciousness (DuBois, 1903, p.5; Jones, 2023).

Domain Three: BWEL & Double Consciousness

In *The Souls of Black Folk*, DuBois discusses racism by informing the reader how racism was institutionalized through slavery and how racism is a problem that persists globally (DuBois, 1903, p. 9). He explains inequality in simple terms by stating that darker-skinned individuals are more aware of their positions in society than their lighter counterparts (DuBois, 1903, p. 10). He calls this the "color line" and details how race can be described through a subjective lens by introducing the concepts of the veil and double consciousness (DuBois, 1903, p.5). The "veil" can be explained as a colorblind mentality that prevents whites from seeing their racist behaviors and their position of privilege and power in a white supremacist society (DuBois, 1903, p. 34).

The effect of the veil is that it creates an obstacle for Black people to express their racial identity without retaliation from the indoctrinated non-Black individuals in a white supremacist society.

Dubois (1903) coined the term double consciousness to capture the feeling created by the tension within the Black experience in the United States (p.5). Double consciousness refers to how Black Americans navigate their African and American identities, which are constantly in irreconcilable conflict with each other. In essence, double consciousness describes the process by which a Black person in America can have various conflicting identities that are never reconciled within the context of a white supremacist society (Goings et al., 2018). This translates to the realm of educational leadership because BWEL are constantly engaging with their double consciousness as marginalized people and as agents of a system designed to dehumanize Black people. Dubois (1903), asserts that:

“Black Americans view themselves through the lens of the Black experience and the lens of the perceptions of the white world- It is a peculiar sensation, this double consciousness, this sense of always looking at oneself through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity. One ever feels his twoness-an American, a Negro; two souls; two thoughts; two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder (p.5).”

Double consciousness experienced by Black women educational leaders who often feel the need to act "less" Black and code switch to be successful in leadership roles was discussed by researchers as a factor influencing the leadership of Black women school leaders (DuBois, 1903, p. 5; Goings et al., 2018). Previous case studies on the experiences of Black women school leaders in urban school districts in the United States used an Afro-centric, intersectional

framework and life narratives to explore the multiple types of marginalization present in the intersection of racism, classism, and sexism faced by Black Women Educational Leaders (Jean-Marie, 2013; Jean-Marie et al., 2009; Moorosi et al., 2018).

Previous research on double consciousness suggests that BWELs view their race and gender as factors that impact their leadership, and they use double consciousness to navigate the challenges stemming from gendered racialized microaggressions in their leadership roles (Lomotey, 2019). Research on fugitivity defines it as the ‘the constant seek of an outside to white supremacy that might elusively be understood as black freedom’ Therefore, BWELs double consciousness can be conceived as an act of fugitivity because they use their double consciousness to resist and steer through the complexities of a racist school system while they challenge pre-conceived notions of leadership associated with white supremacy. For example, BWELs use double consciousness to adapt their language and cultural behaviors according to their audience and this is manifested in practices such as code-switching (Myers, 2020). The theory of cultural capital explained by Yosso (2005) seeks to affirm and uplift marginalized forms of cultural capital. This connects with the concept of double consciousness exposed by Dubois (1903) because double consciousness provides BWELs with the tools they need to affirm their cultural capital by choosing when and how to code-switch to create authentic, meaningful, cultural connections.

Black Women Educational Leaders' understanding and response to racial bias, racism, and systemic racism are essential to understand if we seek to dismantle racism and increase the representation of Black Women in educational leadership. Black Women School Leaders experience racial bias, sexism, racism, and systemic racism in the intersection of racism and sexism in their personal lives and leadership roles as double outsiders (Horsford & Tillman,

2012; Jean-Marie et al., 2009). They use their "double consciousness" to inform their leadership styles, resist marginalization and dehumanization, and navigate an oppressive system (Dubois, 1903, p.5).

Race and Gender Consciousness as Double Consciousness

Harper (2012a) defined racism as conscious and unconscious acts that maintain marginalization and produce racial inequality by using institutional and systemic norms that elevate white privilege. Racism still exists but utilizes a variety of tools to conceal itself by not appearing as bluntly as it was in the past (Bonilla-Silva, 2021). This approach serves to soothe the white consciousness and white guilt who choose to remain blind to white privilege and racism. However, race-conscious educational leaders understand this tactic and must navigate the politics of race consciousness and voluntary race unconsciousness in their daily lives (Carter, 2008; Peller, 1990). Being a race-conscious educational leader encompasses having a critical understanding of the race-power dynamics that exist in America

The conceptual lens of double consciousness can be applied to gender consciousness and race consciousness. Black Women Educational Leaders experience their lives as race and gender conscious beings due to the intersectional nature of their existence. These juxtaposed identities influence how Black Women Educational Leaders see themselves, make decisions, lead, and think about how their environment perceives them. In a sense, race consciousness and gender consciousness are a component of Double Consciousness (Dubois, 1903, p. 5). Black Women Educational Leaders must grapple with another set of conflicting identities as agents of a system that oppresses and criminalizes Black children and agents for Black students (Goings et al., 2018). The intersection of oppressed identities within the context of a leadership role in a system designed to criminalize Black bodies places Black Women educational leaders at a crossroads.

They must contend with the question of how they exist as leaders within a system that marginalizes Black students who do not adhere to Eurocentric notions of appropriate behavior and learning processes.

Gaps in the Literature

Through this systematic literature review, there were three main areas in which gaps in literature were identified: Black leadership, Black Women Educational Leadership and culturally responsive leadership, and the double consciousness of Black Women Educational Leaders. Previous research on Black educational leadership in PK-12 asserted it is a subject under-valued and under-researched topic in educational leadership (Tillman, 2004; 2009). Similarly, research about Black Women Educational Leadership in PK-12 is limited due to the confluence of racism, sexism, and classism (Jean Marie, 2013; Lomotey, 2019). Research on culturally sustaining school leadership asserts that culturally responsive educational leaders are needed to increase student educational equity in PK-12 education in the United States (Santamaría & Santamaría, 2015). School leaders need training in culturally responsive leadership to become motivated to close and be effective in closing the racialized achievement gap in their schools; thus, there is a need for more research on culturally responsive leadership centered on Black Women as culturally responsive leaders (Ylimaki & Jacobson, 2013). Culturally responsive educational leaders play a role in increasing student achievement by creating school environments in which Black students and other Students of Color feel personally and educationally affirmed (Jones & Davenport, 2018). Personal history and educational experiences affect the leadership dispositions of educational leaders toward social justice to use data to close the opportunity gap; therefore, there is a need for more research centered on studying the leadership dispositions of leaders such as BWEL who are part of student populations who experienced an achievement gap (Flores &

Gunzenhauser, 2021). Lastly, previous on the double consciousness of BWEL was sparse and referred to the need of BWEL to code switch to be successful in leadership roles as a manifestation of their double consciousness (Lomotey, 2019; Goings et al., 2018). However, researchers recommend for further research to be conducted on the double consciousness of BWEL as agents of a system designed to oppress Black lives and as marginalized people within the same system (Goings et al., 2018).

Ways the Study Addressed Gaps in the Literature

Critical race feminism as a framework is used in research to conceptualize how race and gender are equated with power and thus result in the oppression and marginalization of those who do not fit the normative of white maleness (Crenshaw, 1989). Researchers recommended critical scholars use counter-narratives to understand the lived experiences of women of color in leadership roles in PK-12 education because they reflect the lived experiences of their marginalized communities (Bolding et al., 2022; Goings et al., 2018; Martinez et al., 2020; Miller et al., 2020). This research addressed the gaps in literature through the counter stories of BWEL who shared their stories about the manifestations and inner experiences of their double consciousness in their roles as leaders and demonstrated how they used their double consciousness as a tool to resist and navigate oppression in their leadership roles.

In sum, seminal and growing contemporary research illustrates Black educational leaders, especially Black Women Educational Leaders in PK-12 public education, play a unique role in confronting racism and closing the racialized achievement gap for Black students (and all students) in PK-12 public education. Accordingly, this study amplified the exploration of the double consciousness of BWEL through experiences and manifestations of Black Women Educational Leaders in a large urban school district in Southwestern United States.

Chapter 2 Summary and Transition

Chapter 1 succinctly reviewed the nature of the research questions, the theoretical frameworks, and relevant topic literature for this study. Chapter 2 examined the literature on Black Women's leadership in education, culturally responsive leadership, and double consciousness and identified the gaps in the literature, and addressed how the study filled the knowledge gaps identified. This literature review analyzed and synthesized prior literature related to the research questions to understand how to guide the research study on the double consciousness of Black Women Educational Leaders in PK-12 public schools in the Southwestern United States. A large proportion of existing research about Black Women Educational Leadership in many of the top-tier journals is qualitative. This review of the literature highlights several qualitative studies reflecting the work that has been conducted. Chapter 3 will discuss the methodology chosen for the study, outline the research design, describe the research participants, and the steps followed to obtain informed consent. Chapters 4 and 5 will document the findings and present the implications for policy and practice in relation to the research questions.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

Introduction to the Methodological Approach to the Study

Chapter 1 introduced the study on the double consciousness of Black Women educational leaders in PK-12 in the Southwestern United States by unpacking the historical background and context, reviewing relevant literature related to the study, and providing an overview of the theoretical frameworks grounding the study. Chapter 2 provided a literature review of the literature regarding Black Women Educational Leadership in PK-12 in the United States, Black Educational Leadership in PK-12, culturally responsive leadership, microaggressions, and double consciousness. Chapter 2 also identified gaps in literature and addressed how the study filled the gaps identified in the literature. The literature review presented in Chapter 2 analyzed and prior literature related to the research questions to understand how to guide the research study.

Chapter 3 will analyze the research study's theoretical frameworks and the methodology. This chapter will discuss the methodology chosen for the study, outline the research design and methods, discuss the research participants and the steps followed to obtain informed consent, and provide a timeline of activities.

My Discovery of Black Education Counter Narratives

My daughter attended elementary school in the historic West Side of the city where the study was conducted. Through my experiences as a teacher and mother working in the West Side, I got to know the community and its rich legacy of Black education. My daughter's first-grade teacher was an outstanding Black Woman educator who used the warm demander pedagogy to teach first graders how to be excellent readers and writers. After finishing her first week in first grade, my daughter told me: "Mama, I love this school because my principals and my teacher are

Brown like me. Everyone looks like me here”. Her words made me smile, and I saw how these powerful Black Woman teachers and leaders ignited her love for learning.

This school became our notion of “home” in Las Vegas, and her principal became my mentor as I transitioned from being a teacher to a school administrator. Additionally, many of my peer mentors in the path of school leadership I met in the schools on the West Side are Black Women Educational Leaders who constantly inspire me to not give up in the fight to dismantle oppression and white supremacy in public education. These experiences consolidated my beliefs about the need for equity and social justice-oriented leadership that challenged white Supremacy in public education and solidified my commitment to Black liberation.

Helen A. Toland

The first Black principal in the case study’s state and city was a Black Woman Educational Leader named Helen A. Toland. I bring forth her example and life story to honor the genealogy of BWEL in this location and shed light on counternarratives of Black education. In a YouTube video named “Conversations: The Journey Feet of our Elders: Helen Anderson Toland and Opal Lee” (2022), Helen A. Toland recounts about her life. Helen A. Toland was born in Missouri to a single mother. She recounts living with her mother and grandparents. She remembers going to a one room all Black school in which she attended up until 8th grade. Then, she went on to a high school more than 30 miles away from her home. She remembers she had to go live with her aunt and uncle in a different city to be able to attend high school. She remembers attending a mixed high school in Springfield, Missouri and worked part-time as a housekeeper for white people in the area. She remembered she always wanted to be more than a housekeeper because Black Women were not even allowed to get a job as a clerk in stores and she shared how her aunt who used to be a teacher in a Black school before moving to Springfield had to take a

job being a bathroom attendant there. She did not know much of the world up until she went to college and state white people and Black people were not together under any occasion, only for voting. She stated her only association with white people was with the white people she worked with (Toland, 2022). She shared how she arrived to the University of Illinois on a scholarship she received as a result of her test scores. She vividly recounts how she worked at a factory the summer before going away to college to become a teacher. Once she arrived to her university, she worked to support herself through her education (Toland, 2022).

Helen A. Toland's story is one of persistence and determination to advance in life through the power of education. Toland recalled how she wanted to become a teacher to not work for white people as a maid. She shared her support system during college was a student club where students and staff members gathered to share their experiences, celebrate Black culture, and plan civil disobedience acts to desegregate movies and restaurants. Mother Toland used all her experiences growing up as fuel in her role as the first Black principal in this state and city, where she faced multiple challenges and obstacles (Toland, 2022). Helen Toland stated she agrees with Critical Race Theory because it tells the truth about the Black experience. In her speech, she referred to the concept of interest convergence by reminiscing how she always used to say that people don't care what happens to Black people until it affects them. She urged young generations to seek knowledge all around them and to get as much knowledge as possible because it will help them move forward in their lives (Toland, 2022).

Hegemonic Narratives vs. Counter Narratives

Hegemony concerns itself with power and domination through concern and coercion. Thus, hegemony involves symbolic domination, legitimate power, and viable institutions (Lash, 2007). Hegemonic narratives about PK-12 educational leaders reinforce white supremacist

values and beliefs about how school leaders should act and lead organizations. Black women in educational leadership roles in PK-12 education are often viewed through a deficit lens perspective, and their voices are not placed at the forefront of research (Owens et al., 2018).

Hall (2021) identifies race as a signifier of a cultural system that is relational and constantly changing. Hall's understanding of race places race and racism as no longer marginalized but at the center of culture. He analyzes racial signs, structures, and systems and the trauma of racial suffering as a critical aspect of culture. Counternarratives present marginalized people's lived experiences by allowing them to use their voices to tell their stories of racial suffering and overcoming by situating their culture as a center for their identity in the world. Counternarratives are critical in interrupting and challenging the hegemonic narratives that perpetuate the low representation of Black Women Educational Leaders in PK-12 public schools in the United States.

Restatement of the Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to analyze how the double consciousness of Black Women Educational Leaders influences the way in which they lead schools. Particularly, this study's purpose was to extend what is known about Black Women Educational Leaders in PK-12 public education and their double consciousness. In this section, I restate the purpose of my research and my primary and ancillary research questions to discuss how my methodology is informed by this study's purpose and the research area.

This study contributed to the literature on the importance of Black Women Educational Leadership in PK-12 public education to close the achievement gap and disrupt the school-to-prison pipeline. This qualitative multiple case study used a Critical Race Feminist framework grounded in Black Feminist Thought and Double Consciousness analytical lenses to analyze the

themes emerging from the counter-narratives of Black Women Educational Leaders by inquiring about their experiences. This study addressed the problem of the low representation of Black Women Educational Leaders in PK-12 by exploring the double consciousness experiences of BWEL.

This research explored the double consciousness of BWEL using counter-narratives to tell their stories. The study answered the following primary and ancillary research questions:

Primary Research Questions

- 1) How is Black Women Educational leaders' double consciousness manifested through their leadership?
- 2) What are Black Women Educational Leaders' experiences of their double consciousness?

Ancillary Research Questions

- 1) How, if at all, are Black Women Educational Leaders in PK-12 public schools impacted by the experience of their double consciousness as they interact with superiors, colleagues, staff, students, parents, and the community?
- 2) How, if at all, does double consciousness impact the decision-making of Black Women Educational Leaders in PK-12 public schools?
- 3) How, if at all, does double consciousness impact the day-to-day instructional leadership role of Black Women Educational Leaders in PK-12 public schools?

These questions will help the researcher explore the counter-narratives of Black Women Educational Leaders in PK-12 and their experience and manifestation of their double consciousness through their leadership. Based on the research questions for the research study mentioned above, a qualitative design will be employed.

Theoretical Frameworks

This qualitative research study was framed based on one theoretical framework: 1) Critical Race Feminism. The analysis of the data was conceptualized through the lenses of: 1) Black Feminist Thought, and 2) Double Consciousness. These theories, individually and collectively, provide an analytical lens through which the conceptualization of this research on Black women's leadership in education occurred, and how new information generated by this study was synthesized to contribute to our understanding of these issues. This theoretical framework and analytical lenses situated the research study inside the larger issues of systemic racism, racism, white privilege, marginalization, and misogyny.

Framework Genealogy: Critical Race Theory

Critical Race Theory (CRT) as a framework was born from legal studies. Derrick Bell (1992) first developed critical race theory to look at how the laws were written to benefit and protect the interests of white supremacy. His work birthed what is known as Critical Legal Studies (Delgado & Stefanic, 2001). Simultaneously, many social science fields began to utilize CRT to frame their work including feminist studies, Latino/Latina studies, and African American studies. Critical race theory was expanded to education as a framework used to conceptualize the ways in which race is synonymous with power; as a result, this acts to serve the ideals of white supremacy and how these ideals are enacted in the public education system in the United States (Crenshaw, 2011). The goal of Critical Race Theory (CRT) is to analyze and alter the relationships between race, racism, and power. CRT in education challenges the hegemonic narrative on race dynamics and racism at work in educational theory, policy, and practice (Delgado & Stefanic, 2001; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002).

CRT is based on the acceptance that racism is present in everyday life in the United States because the United States institutions have all benefited from the free labor and/or cheap labor provided by Black and Latinx minorities (Bell 1992; Capper, 2015). Critical race theory states that structural inequalities can highly determine the opportunities and life choices of a person living in the United States (Ladson-Billings, 2006). Researchers look at regular day interactions through the CRT lenses to identify and name racism at play in daily life regardless of situational contexts (Ledesma & Calderon, 2015). CRT names the ways in which systemic racism affects the educational development of Black and Latino students through the creation of systems and structures that negate the academic success of Black and Latino students (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002).

The CRT framework is based on five basic tenets: 1) racism as ordinary, 2) whiteness as property, 3) counter storytelling, 4) interest convergence, 5) intersectionality, 6) race as a social construct. The first tenet states racism is present in every interaction in the United States. The second tenet regards whiteness as a property interest. In other words, white people in the United States are only mobilized to challenge racism through interest convergence (Ladson-Billings, 2006). The third tenet of CRT is the opposition between counter storytelling and majoritarian narratives through the interaction of interest convergence, critique of liberalism, and intersectionality (Capper, 2015). The tenets of CRT are used by researchers to analyze the ways in which racism may be present in education and the ways in which white supremacy is noted through policies, procedures, and systems that organize public education in the United States (Howard & Navarro, 2016).

The underlying thread in CRT is that whiteness and whiteness as property are the norm and the driver of all systems, policies, practices, and structures in the United States (Harris,

1993). There are five principles that should inform theory, research, pedagogy, curriculum, and policy when using CRT as a framework. These principles are a) the inter-centricity of race and racism, b) the challenge to the dominant ideology, c) the commitment to social justice, d) the centrality of experiential knowledge, and e) the utilization of interdisciplinary approaches (Solórzano and Yosso, 2002).

Critical Race Feminism

Critical Race Feminism pinpoints the unique experiences of Black women through the field of critical legal studies by expanding on intersectionality as it pertains to the experiences of Black Women. Through her research, Crenshaw asserted that Black Women experience both racism and sexism in various forms intersectionally in their workplaces and daily lives and criticized the work of previous feminists who did not center the feminist framework around Black women and, therefore, created a version of feminism centered around white women's experiences while erasing Black Women from the feminist movement. A critical race feminist framework centers on Black Women and analyzes their experiences using intersectionality as a liberatory focus Crenshaw (1989, 1991).

Critical Race Feminism (CRF) is a necessary theoretical framework to use because analyzing the experiences of Black Women educational leaders requires an intersectional lens that acknowledges how their lives are affected simultaneously by racism and sexism. Utilizing a mere racialized or sexualized lens does not accurately paint the totality of the reality of Black Women's lives (Hines, 2020). Using CRF as a theoretical framework allows for the voices of Black Women to emerge in the form of counter-narratives detailing their lived experiences in a world that constantly pushes white middle-class role models of femininity and behavior onto them.

Black Feminist Thought & Black Women ‘Talkin Back’

The origins of Black Feminist Thought (BFT) are widely disputed among researchers. However, as a theory standing against the oppression of white male hegemony, it was first organized as a movement by Ruby Doris Smith in 1973 with the establishment of the National Black Feminist Organization (Johnson, 2015). Black women were organized due to their need to be grouped separately from white women and Black men because they felt neither group understood their struggle as existing both as Black and women in a white supremacist world built upon white male, middle-class values. The most prominent BFT scholar is Patricia Hill Collins (1986, 1992, 2000). Black feminists believe Black women are valuable and possess unique knowledge that stems from the lived experiences they face due to multiple oppression for being Black women in a white supremacist society (Hull et al., 1982).

The tenets of BFT are 1) critical care, 2) self-definition and the lived experience as a Black Woman, 3) the use of dialogue, and 4) personal accountability (Collins, 1992, 2000). Black feminism must include community work and resistance to dominant cultural norms. The use of BFT as an analytical lens serves to understand and contextualize the experiences of Black women by understanding Black women’s historical, cultural, and social experiences in the world (Davis, 1993; James, 1999). BFT was conceived as an Afro-centric framework based on valuing and affirming Afrocentric feminist knowledge with the goal of social change (Brewer, 1992).

The themes of oppression and resistance are essential components of using a BFT analytical lens in conjunction with CRF theoretical framework as they are interrelated and lend themselves to using counter-stories to give space for Black Women to ‘talk black’ and use their intersectional voices for self-empowerment, community building, and resistance against the oppression generated by existing as a Black Woman in a white supremacist world (hooks, 1989).

In this sense, the tenet of CRF which names racism and sexism as permanent fixtures of daily life in the United States connects with the BFT concept of “outsider within” (Collins, 1992) because it serves as a vehicle for BWEL to tell their counter stories and ‘talk back’ as a means of resistance against the white hegemonic structures and systems present in the public school system in the United States. Similarly, the double consciousness (Dubois, 1903, p. 9) of BWELs who are forced to live constantly seeing themselves through the eyes of non-Black others who live their lives evading the permanence of racism and sexism in their lives and separated by “the veil” (Dubois, 1903, p. 12) serves as a vessel BWEL use to navigate leadership in the context of a white supremacist educational system that does not affirm Black culture and Black cultural capital.

Double Consciousness

In *The souls of black folk*, Dubois discusses racism by informing the reader how slavery institutionalized racism and how racism is a problem that persists globally (Dubois, 1903). He explains inequality in simple terms by stating that darker-skinned individuals are more aware of their positions in society than their lighter counterparts (Dubois, 1903). He calls this the “color line” and details how race can be described through a subjective lens by introducing the concepts of the veil and double consciousness (Dubois, 1903).

The “veil” can be explained as a color evasive mentality that prevents white people from seeing their racist behaviors and their position of privilege and power in a white supremacist society (Dubois, 1903). The effect of the veil is that it creates an obstacle for Black people to express their racial identity without retaliation from the indoctrinated non-Black individuals in a white supremacist society. Double consciousness captures the feeling created by the tension within the Black experience in the United States between the American and Black identities who

exist in constant conflict with each other (Dubois, 1903). In a qualitative study about the double consciousness of being a Black father and a Black counselor educator, the researchers discussed the effects of using double consciousness to navigate educational institutions rooted in white supremacist culture as 1) intensified state of mind, 2) burning the candle at both ends, and 3) opportunities come in greatest struggles (Brooks et al., 2015). Similarly, in a quantitative study of double consciousness as a psychological phenomenon, researchers suggested double consciousness can be linked to increase creative problem-solving skills and creativity along with advantageous academic outcomes for African-Americans (Brannon, Markus, & Taylor, 2015).

Connections to the Study

Critical Race Feminism (CRF) provided a theoretical framework through which the researcher developed the instruments for data collection and analysis. CRF is based on the premise that racism and sexism exist in daily life in America; therefore, the experiences of Black Women in the U.S. must be analyzed using intersectionality. Critical Race Feminism is based on counter-storytelling and the recognition of intersectional identities and intersectional marginalization of Black women. I decided to use CRF as a theoretical framework because the tenet of racism and sexism as permanent in conjunction with the concept of intersectionality provided a solid point of access to enter the conversation with Black Women Educational Leaders acknowledging how racism and sexism permeate their lives.

Consequently, I began the data analysis process by looking for their counter stories of leadership and double consciousness and coding instances in which the participants experienced racism and sexism in their roles as leaders. These manifestations of racism were coded as microaggressions or racial stereotypes according to the type of event described. Events related with hair or grammar were coded as microaggressions and events related to the participants

being stereotyped or being careful to not fall into stereotypical behaviors were coded as racist stereotypes. The key words I used to code for microaggressions and racial stereotypes were: hair, grammar, ghetto, angry Black woman, violent, hands, reaction.

Black Feminist Thought provided the foundation for a conceptual analysis of the counter stories of BWELs by focusing on the concept of "outsider within" (Collins, 1992) an analytical lens to inquire about the consequence of racism and sexism as permanent features of their roles as Black Women Educational Leaders. Using the analytical lenses of BFT provided me a deeper understanding of the inner experiences of BWELs who participated in the study and enabled me to gain a deeper insight into their experiences of marginalization in their leadership roles.

I used the analytical lenses provided by BFT to code any instances in which the participants discussed situations in which they were forced to pay a Black Woman Tax as manifested through this constant pressure to prove themselves worthy of their positions of leadership and power despite their professional and educational qualifications. Additionally, I coded the interviews using outsider within to signal the times in which the participants felt as outsiders within the public education system in which they led.

Double consciousness is a natural consequence of this feeling of "outsider within" (Collins, 1992) an educational system built upon racism and plagued with systemic racism. It is also an effect of racism and in the case of Black Women also a manifestation of sexism, an adaptive mechanism used by Black people to exist in a white supremacist world by experiencing reality through the "veil" (Dubois, 1903, p. 12). I used Double Consciousness as an analytical lens because, grounded in the permanence of racism and sexism (CRF) and the concept of BWEL as "outsiders within" (BFT), it allowed me to inquire about the nature of double consciousness as a tool used by BWEL to resist and navigate oppression and marginalization.

I used the code Black Woman double consciousness to focus specifically on the double consciousness experiences of BWELs. I analyzed the experiences of the participants by coding their critical self-reflections of instances in which BWEL who participated in this study worried about how non-Black others perceive their behavior as they experience reality through this “veil” (Dubois, 1903, p. 39). The manifestations of double consciousness were coded as code switching because participants retold how they adapt their language and behavior according to their audience. Therefore, the inner experiences and manifestations of double consciousness are a direct consequence of the veil (Dubois, 1903, p. 12). Additionally, I used the code Black Woman Double Consciousness to code for any mentions of how the participants view themselves through the eyes of non-Black others. I employed the code Black Woman excellence to signal for mentions related to the participants having to stick to policies and procedures and do an outstanding job in their roles as leaders due to their double marginalization as BWEL.

The role of race, racism, and sexism was a focus as the research study progressed. Double consciousness and BFT used as analytical lenses served as an entry point to analyze the experiences of Black Women educational leaders presented through counter storytelling (Dubois, 1903, p. 9). Moreover, the background knowledge that each participant brought to the interviews was thoughtfully considered. Finally, the intellectual integrity of the process focused on unpacking the experiences of race-gender conscious Black Women Educational Leaders in PK-12 public schools in Southwestern United States.

How the Frameworks Were Operationalized in the Conduct of the Study

This research explored the counter-narratives of Black Women Educational leaders in PK-12 regarding double consciousness and leadership. Critical race feminist researchers use counter-narratives for Black women to tell their stories from their unique positionality as a

liberatory exercise against invisibility, oppression, and marginalization. Counter-narratives grounded in CRF and BFT are used to amplify the voices and experiences of Black women by using intersectionality to understand the epistemologies of Black Women Educational Leaders in PK-12 who enter leadership as "outsiders within" an educational system designed to destroy Black lives and use their double consciousness to navigate leadership (Collins, 1999).

Critical race feminism (CRF) as a conceptual framework and Black Feminist Thought (BFT) as analytical lenses center Black women as knowledge experts and contextualize the unique realities and experiences of Black women sitting at the intersection of race and gender (Crenshaw, 1989, 1991, 2011; Watson, 2016). The tenets of Black Feminist Thought are: 1) critical care, 2) dialogue, and 3) accountability (Collins, 1992, 2000). Using these tenets along with the concept of "outsider within" originated in BFT, the counter-narrative of Black Women Educational Leaders emerged as they told their stories rooted in their experiences of their Double Consciousness (Collins, 1986, 1999). Counter-narratives were used in according with a CRF framework for BWELs in this study to define their leadership without the constraints and the gaze of white supremacy and tell their experiences through Black women's epistemologies, Black Women's culture, discourse, and personal accountability.

As a non-Black Latina scholar, I used these frameworks rooted in the work of Black women theorists to be a reporter for the experiences of the Doble Consciousness of Black Women Educational Leaders in PK-12 in Southwestern United States for the world to hear. To fully comprehend the experiences of Black Women Educational Leaders in PK-12 in Southwestern United States through the themes that emerged from my interviews, I member-checked my findings with a fellow emergent scholar who identifies as a Black Woman to ensure my interpretation is valid and rooted in Black Women pedagogies. I applied these frameworks to

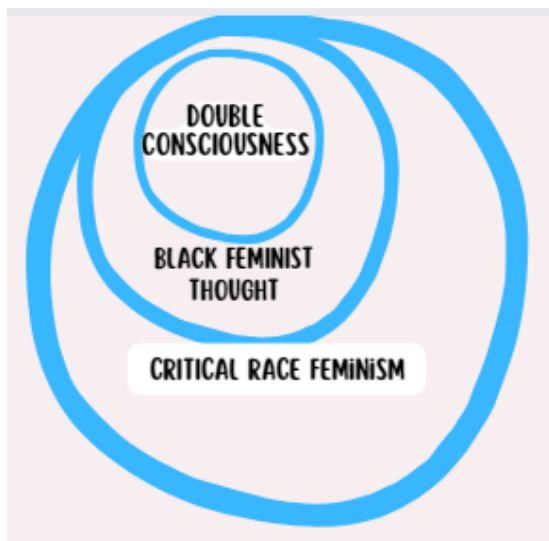
center my research on Black lives, Black joy, Black girl magic, Black suffering, and Black excellence to capture the lived realities of the BWEL who participated in this study.

Consequently, I categorized the data from the interviews using a thematic coding based on the theoretical framework and analytical lenses which reflected the intersectionality of the Black Women Educational Leaders' experiences.

The figure below shows how the theoretical framework and the analytical lenses were operationalized and interacted to conduct this study. I view the process of using the theoretical frameworks and the analytical lenses like a visit to the ophthalmologist. Initially, they check your eyesight without any type of corrective lenses. This can be likened to the mindset of common people who do not have a critical view of the world to look at the phenomena I am trying to understand with this research. After, the ophthalmologist tries one type of corrective lens with a low amount of correction such as 0.25. When you see through this lens, you see a little bit better but you still cannot zoom in on the details in objects. You can only see the big picture of things. This can be likened to applying a tenet such as racism and sexism as permanent corresponding to a broad theoretical framework to understand a phenomenon. Now, you can see a better with this type of correction but you still need help looking at details from far away. Then, the doctor applies a higher amount of correction such as 0.50. This type of correction assists you in seeing some details that before you could not notice. This can be likened to using the analytical lenses of “outsider within” corresponding to BFT. Once you start instances in which racism and sexism are permanent, you start zooming in on the effects of racism and sexism as permanent and notice this feeling of being an “outsider within” occurs in the inner reflections of BWEL. However, you still need to be able to see the details in objects farther away from you. Then, the doctor gives another lens with 1.25 correction. This can be likened to the process by which I added Double

Consciousness as the second analytical lens to inquire about the experiences of Double Consciousness of BWELs in relation to their leadership. Finally, the doctor also discovers that you need this type of correction in your left eye but in your right eye you only need 0.75 correction. However, you need both lenses to be able to see the world around you in its totality and you most certainly need a frame to hold the lenses. Having a frame alone and knowing you need corrective lenses to see better would not have helped you see the world around you with clarity and focus. Similarly, having a frame with only one lens in your left eye would have been an improvement but would not have helped you see the reality around you in its totality, Now, when you have the frame and the two lenses, you are finally able to see the world around you clearly and you discover details and nuances you would not have noticed otherwise. Below you will find a visual representation of how having a theoretical framework and two analytical lenses allowed me to zoom in on the phenomenon being studied in this research.

Figure 3.1: Theoretical Frameworks and Analytical Lenses Relationship



Rationale for Research Study Designs

Qualitative Studies

A qualitative design was considered appropriate for this research because it allows readers to hear Black Women Educational Leaders' voices through their leadership and double-consciousness counter-stories. Additionally, a qualitative approach to research allows researchers to delve into each participant's life stories (Creswell, 2007). Qualitative research in educational leadership allows researchers to understand the factors influencing leaders' embodiment of leadership.

Case Studies

Case studies allow researchers to discover causation through insight, discovery, and interpretation (Merriam, 1988). Case studies are often used to tell a story to learn about a specific phenomenon (Brandell & Varkas, 2001). Each case study is situated within a specific context; and, historical, cultural, political, and, physical contexts are important to understanding the phenomena studied through case studies (Stake, 1995, p. 12). A case study methodology fits within this research because of the desired goal of constructing counter-narratives based on the double-consciousness experiences of Black Women Educational Leaders in PK-12 public education.

This case study was bounded by place as the participants were limited to Southwestern United States. Additionally, the boundaries in this multiple case study were created by the group of people participating because they were all required to self-identify as Black Women who currently or previously had served as educational leaders in the Southwestern United States.

Multiple Case Studies

The research method utilized in this study is a multiple case study. This approach aligned with the study's problem, purpose, and research questions by allowing the researcher to do an in-depth, rich exploration of Black Women Educational Leaders' experiences of double consciousness. Multiple case studies allow the researcher to use the different contexts in which the phenomena is situated to inform their interpretation of the findings (Stake, 1995, p. 13). Using a multiple case study allowed the researcher to use a CRF framework grounded in BFT and Double consciousness theory as a lens to build the counter-narratives of Black Women School Leaders in PK-12 in Southwestern United States. (Dubois, 1903). Conducting a multiple case study addressed the questions by exploring the double consciousness of Black Women Educational Leaders in PK-12 in Southwestern United States. Case studies aid in understanding a phenomenon by providing an understanding through personal storytelling consisting of interviews and observations (Brandell & Varkas, 2001; Miller et al., 2020). Below you will find figure 3.2 outlining the research process starting from formulating the research questions and finalizing it when the answers to the research questions have been reach. Figure 3.2 also outlines the interaction between the theoretical framework and the analytical lenses as complementary units.

Figure 3.2: Research Process

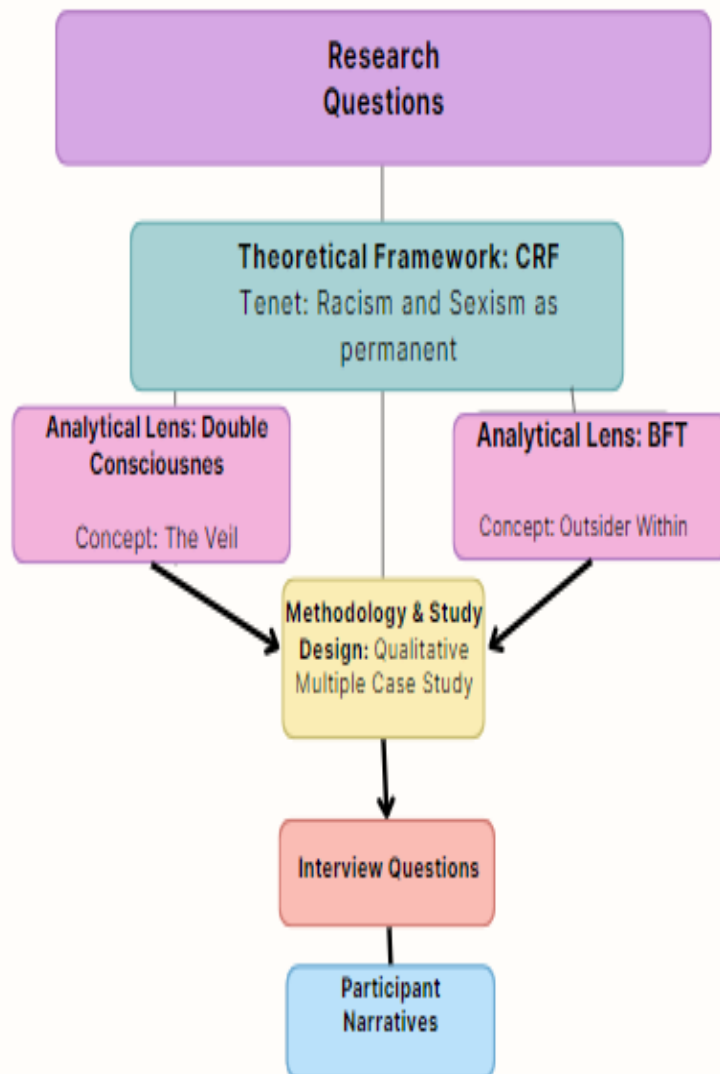
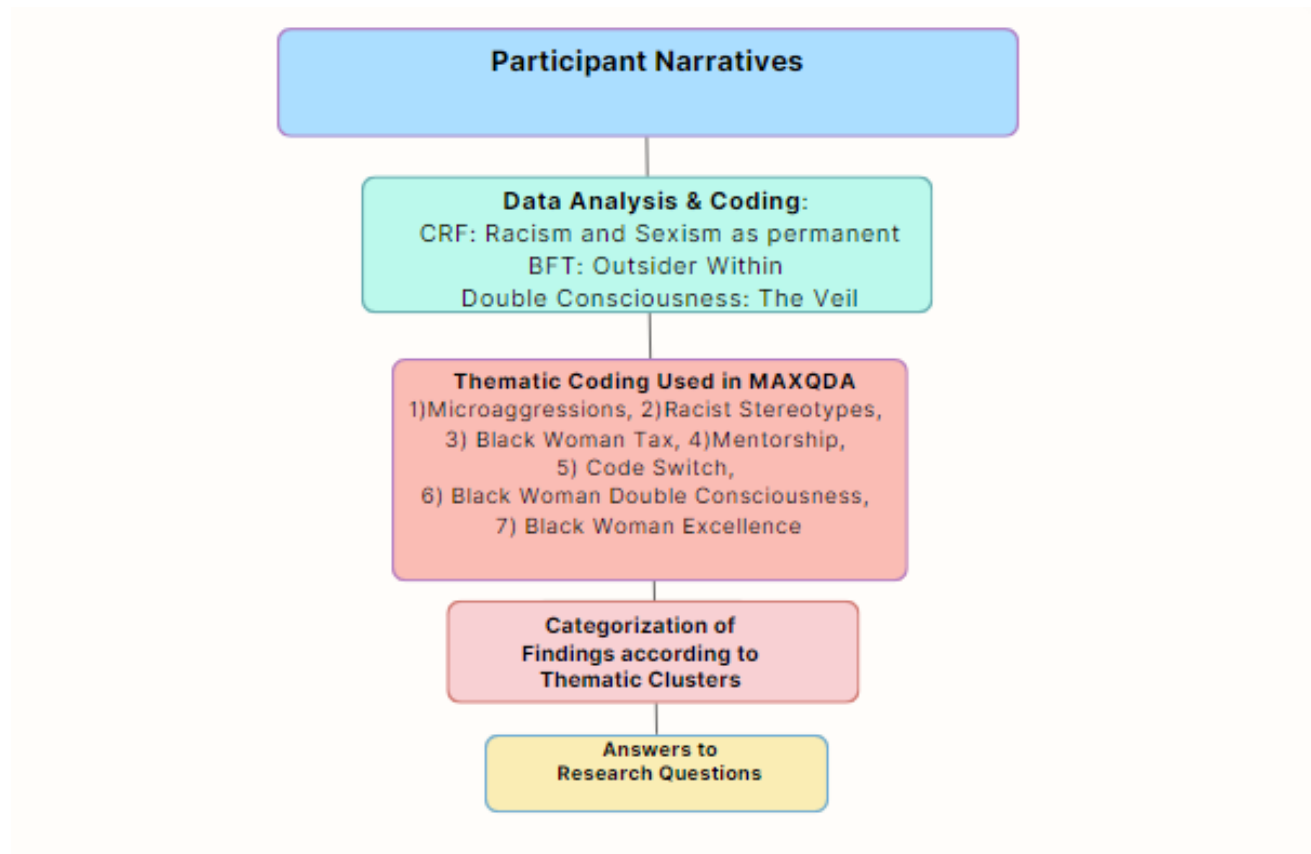


Figure 3.3: Data Analysis Process

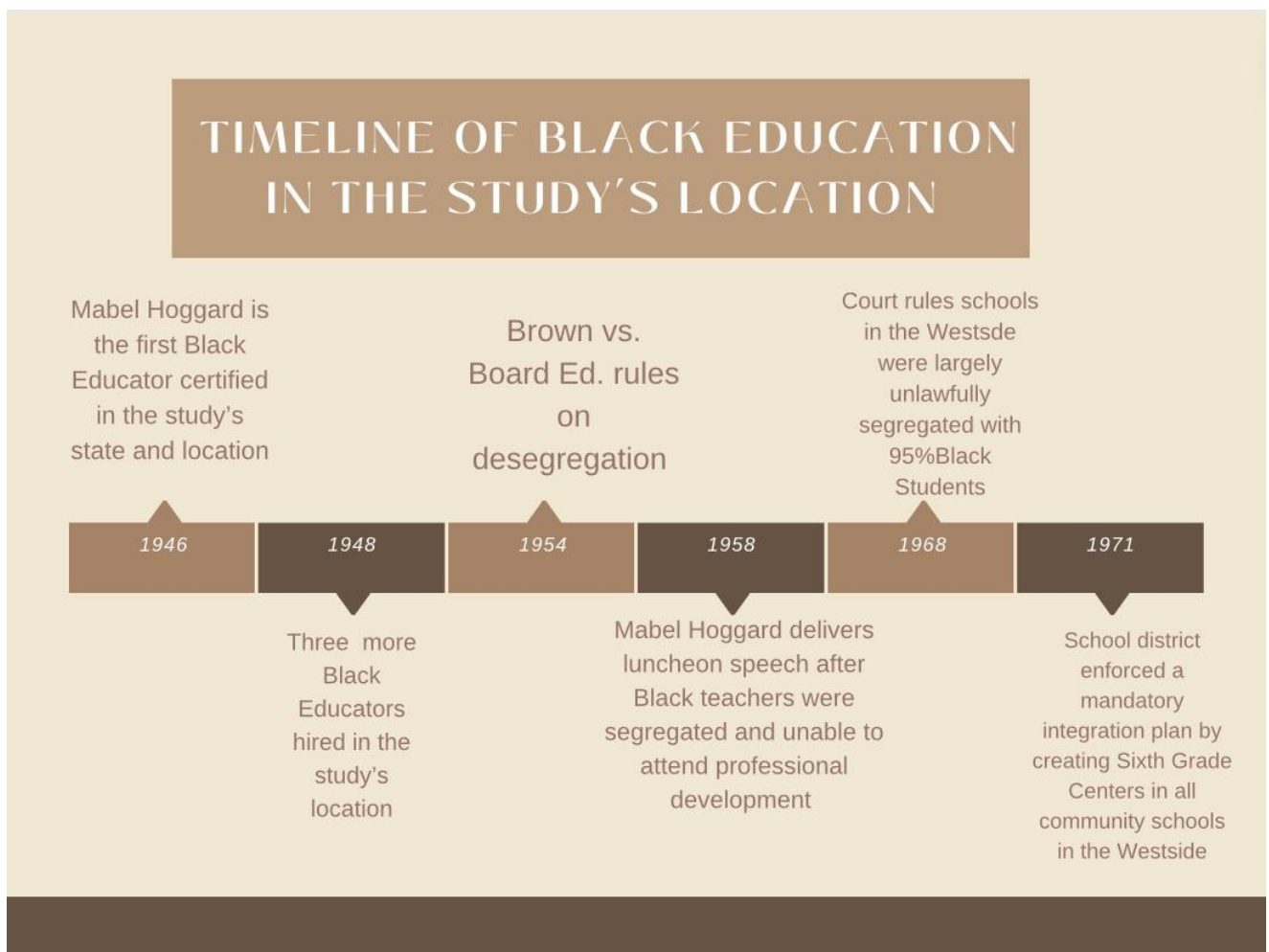


Locality & Study Rationale

Southwestern United States was chosen as a place to conduct the study because this region is home to the fifth-largest urban school district in the United States and one of the lowest-performing school districts in the nation. Historically, the biggest city in this region was nicknamed "The Mississippi of the West" due to its long history of racial segregation. This affected the way this school district in Southwestern United States was desegregated by a court mandate in 1968 and resegregated through the years after the plan for mandatory integration was abandoned in 1992 due to the request of the Black community in the Westside because the

mandatory integration plan put the burden of integration on the Black students of the Westside who had to be bused outside of the Westside to integrate school in white neighborhoods of the city in which the study was conducted (Horsford et al., 2013). This school district has a unique history that still affects communities today and mirrors the situation of other school districts in the country. Figure 3.4 shows a timeline for Black Education in this location.

Figure 3.4: History of Black Education in the Study’s Location



Historically, the Black population in the study's location was confined to the Westside of town. The living conditions in the Westside were dire and subpar compared to the luxury and plush life sold by the casinos and hotels at this location. Close to Downtown, this center of Black culture and Black education was a haven for Black residents of this segregated town. Mabel Hoggard was the first Black teacher in this study's location and was hired in 1946. Consequently, three more Black teachers were hired in 1947 (UNLV Special Collections, n.d.) In a speech given at a luncheon in 1958, Hoggard describes how the white citizens of this city and state discredited the educational qualifications of these teachers and raised complaints and concerns over their hire while informing her primarily white audience about the Black educational experience in Las Vegas. Hoggard gave this speech as a response to the racism felt by her and the other Black teachers when they were not allowed to attend a professional development event held in a hotel in the tourist part of town due to segregation (UNLV Special Collections, n.d.).

The schools on the segregated Westside became the heart of a community that valued education as a synonym for freedom. Black Women Educational Leaders in the Westside brought the community together. A prominent BWEL was Doris French, a principal in the West Side School, who would go and knock on children's doors to bring them to school herself because she was committed to uplifting her community by ensuring Black children learn how to read and write (UNLV Special Collections, n.d.).

Mabel Hoggard was a pioneer Black Women Educational Leader in the study's location who advocated for social justice and equality in the West Side community. Four years after *Brown v. Board of Ed.*, in 1958, Mrs. Hoggard highlighted the contributions of Black Educational Leaders in this city by detailing how Black educators created better outcomes for all

students. She detailed how Black educators could practice what she called 'intercultural education' because they taught students respect for every single individual through their examples of excellence and dedication. Hoggard pioneered intercultural education and advocated the use of education for social justice and equality. She defined intercultural education as recognizing and appreciating individual differences while recognizing the humanity of every individual, regardless of race (UNLV Special Collections, n.d.). Years later, the first magnet school on the West Side of this town was named Mabel Hoggard, and it is a homage to this trailblazer pioneer of Black and multicultural education in this study's location (Horsford et al., 2013).

School District Information

This school district ranks 50th in academic achievement and is composed of a majority-minority student population with 22.3% white, 15.3% Black, 6% Asian or Asian/Pacific Islander, 47.2% Hispanic/Latino, 0.3% American Indian or Alaska Native, and 1.6% Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander (U.S. et al. L.P., n.d., para. 1). In this district, there is an over-representation of Black students in disciplinary action, over-representation of Black students in special education placements, and over-representation of Black students in the school to prison pipeline. Even though this school district is comprised of a majority of Black and Latinx students, the student population is not represented in the teacher or administrator demographic data. As of 2023, most teachers and administrators in this school district are white, consisting of 67% and 63%, respectively, of licensed staff (Clark et al. District, 2023, para. 1).

Moreover, there is a low representation of Black teachers (7.3%). Black leaders (13.6%) in this school district (Clark et al. District, 2023, para. 1). Research conducted on the mismatch of teachers and school administrators to student population indicates school administrators from

similar race and ethnicity as students can be beneficial to increasing student achievement of minority students (McClellan, 2020). Having a Black principal increases the probability that a newly hired teacher is Black by 5-7% and Black student exposure to Black teachers by 3%; having a Black teacher also increases the math achievement of Black students, and having a Black principal also increases the math achievement of Black students even if they are not assigned to a Black teacher (Bartanen et al., 2019). The presence of Black and Latinx principals and teachers also increases the representation of Black and Latinx students in gifted programs (Grissom et al., 2021). Culturally competent Black female educational administrators are known to create a welcoming school climate for Black and Latinx students that simultaneously sets and holds these students accountable to high academic expectations (McClellan, 2020; Tevis et al., 2020; Williams, 2021). The rich, in-depth information provided by this study can potentially be relevant for other urban school districts facing the same reality. The participants in this research study were mainly a homogenous group, and their cultural heritage and gender facilitated conversations.

Additional Methodological Considerations

Unsuitability of Quantitative Methods for this Study

A quantitative design was not considered appropriate for this research as the purpose of the research was to shed light on the double consciousness of Black Women Educational Leaders in PK-12 public education in Southwestern United States and analyze themes in the research emerging from the interviews. For this purpose, a quantitative approach was not considered appropriate to understand the experiences of Black Women Educational leaders in PK-12 in Southwestern United States regarding how their double consciousness informs their leadership.

After critically analyzing the literature on Black Women's Educational leaders, I developed research questions to provide more insights into their leadership experiences through the double consciousness lens. For this research, I considered numerous methodological approaches, including ethnography and phenomenology. Below, I outline each methodology and explain why I chose not to pursue each one.

Ethnographic Considerations

Ethnographers study people's cultural practices in their environments as they occur, which allows the researchers to use unstructured data (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2019). Moreover, the participant-observation method is a distinct feature of ethnographic Research. Given that this research study is based on the experiential accounting of the experiences of Black Women Educational Leaders in PK-12 public education with double consciousness, ethnography would not serve this study well.

Phenomenological Considerations

Phenomenology is a methodological approach that allows researchers to challenge the hegemonic ideologies behind a phenomenon. This method provides the researchers with the space to analyze a problem in depth through the experiences and perceptions of insiders (Lester, 1999). Phenomenology is a robust methodology. However, the topic of research is multi-layered and intersectional. Therefore, it cannot only be analyzed by zooming in on a single phenomenon as understanding the experience and manifestation of the double consciousness of Black Women Educational Leaders in PK-12 in Southwestern United States requires the researcher to analyze the context as a part of the phenomenon.

Interviewing

The term interview will be used when referring to one-on-one interviews. Interviewing allows researchers to understand the lived experiences of individuals impacted by a phenomenon and can stimulate greater insight for others interested in the phenomenon. Seidman (2005) discussed interviewing as a basic mode of inquiry in which meaning making occurs through communication between people. Interviewing provides researchers with insights into the participants' lived experiences. Moreover, interviews can bring a greater understanding of the phenomenon (Boyce & Neale, 2006; Silverman, 2015).

Standardized open-ended questions make participants more likely to provide expanded details of a phenomenon (Turner; 2010). In this study, I used standardized open questions to conduct the interviews to allow participants to spontaneously provide details regarding their double consciousness as it informs their leadership. The qualitative interview research design format includes an informal conversational interview, a general interview guide approach, and a standardized open-ended approach. The open-ended approach provides researchers with accurate data to discover and understand the participants' stories as they answer the research questions (Creswell, 2007; Turner, 2010).

Research Design

Considering the purpose, objective, existing literature, and available resources, this research utilized a case study design where Black Women were the unit of analysis. Notably, I employed multiple case study methodology, including individual interviews. Figure 1.2 illustrates the research design and the pathways between the fundamental philosophical grounding and the research questions. At the same time, Table 1 details the research questions and explicates the planned timeline to collect and analyze data from all three sources.

Figure 3.5: Double Consciousness of Black Women Educational Leaders- Research Design

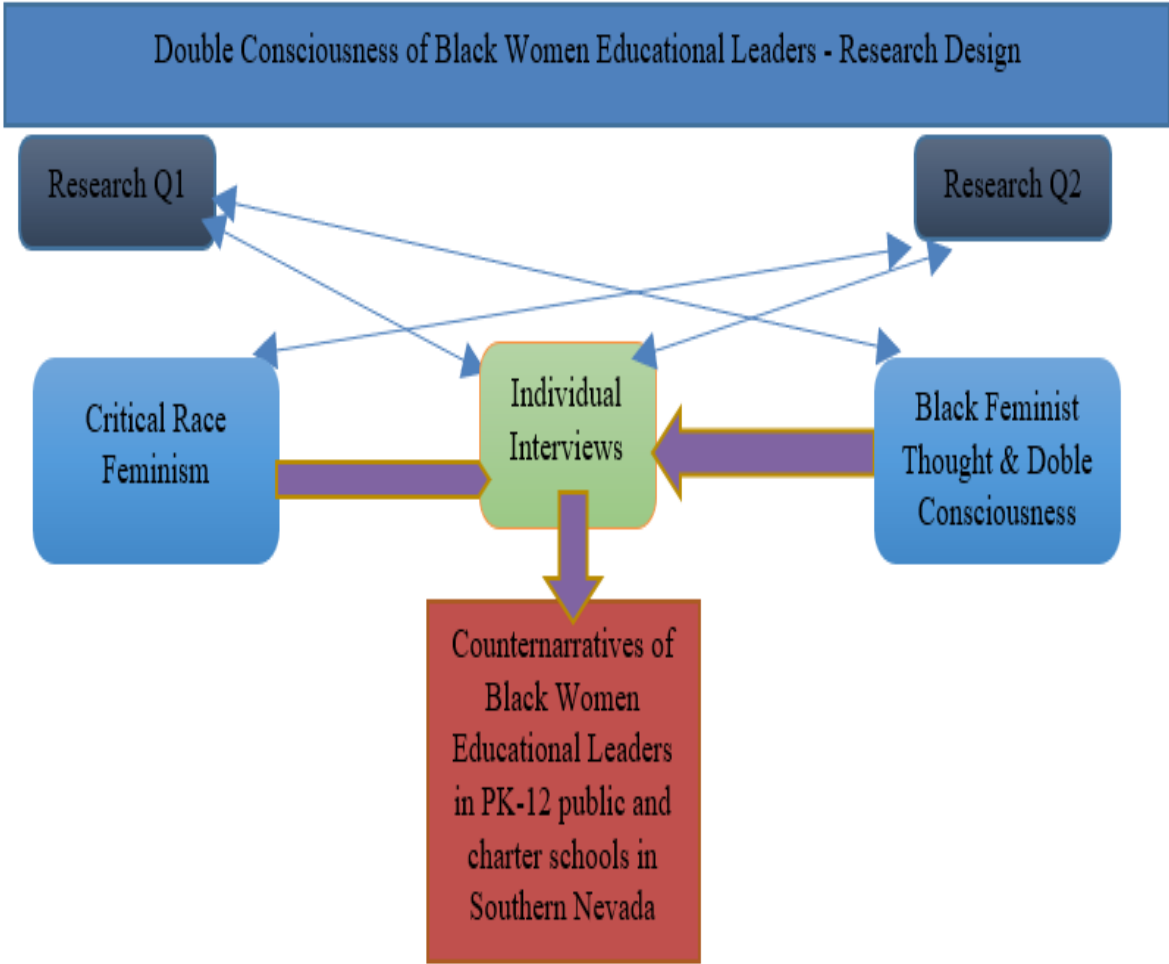


Table 1: Timeline for Data Collection

Research Questions	Data Source & (Timeline)
1. How is Black Women Educational leaders' double consciousness manifested through their leadership?	Individual Interviews (October 2023) Document Analysis (November 2023)
2. What are Black Women Educational Leaders' experiences of their double consciousness?	Individual Interviews (October 2023) Document Analysis (November 2023)

Sampling Techniques

This research study examined how the double consciousness of Black Women Educational Leaders in PK-12 in Southwestern United States influences how they lead schools. To that end, all females and males of different ethnic/racial groups were excluded from this study. As the only researcher, I was responsible for all aspects of recruitment for the research study. Probability sampling is usually considered the most rigorous sampling, but it is not appropriate in a qualitative study because the participants to be sampled are not known ahead of time (Ritchie et al., 2013). I selected convenience sampling for use in this multiple case study on the double consciousness of Black Women Educational Leaders in PK-12 in the Southwestern United States because it granted me easy access to available research subjects and within shorter time frames to select the samples (Marshall & Rossman, 1999). In the section about the role of the researcher, I describe the process that was followed to be transparent throughout the entire research process, including sampling research participants.

After beginning my study with convenience sampling, I used snowball sampling. This is the process by which informants introduce the researcher to potential participants in the study who continue the snowball effect (Emerson, 2015; Noy, 2008; Ritchie et al., 2013). This process aids the researcher in expanding the participant pool using field informants, even though this can affect participant diversity (Ritchie et al., 2013). However, this was not a concern in this study as participants were from a specific and limited group in the first place. Snowball sampling was my secondary sampling technique because participants recommended other participants for participation. Voluntary sampling was also a secondary sampling technique used because potential participants volunteered to participate as well.

After obtaining a sizable sample, I explained the purpose of the research study and walked through the informed consent document and process. Participants were asked to review and ask any questions they may have about the purpose, process, or risks associated with participating in the study. I gave participants 48 hours (about 2 days) to work through this process, after which I collected the signed consent forms from those who agreed to participate. Lastly, I provided the accompanying confidentiality agreement form to each participant individually. Each accepted participant received a welcome email stating they could withdraw from the program at any time from the study.

Researcher's Role in the Study

Case study researchers must demonstrate specific qualities to lead a case study successfully. Case study researchers should 1) know about the phenomenon, 2) have the ability to compose and ask good questions, 3) have excellent listening skills, 4) have sensitivity, and 5) have flexibility (Yin, 1984, p. 15). These qualities are important because they allow researchers to grasp the complete picture of the phenomenon they seek to research and develop a positive rapport with study participants. I have been working on mindfulness as a tool to self-reflect on developing these qualities to prepare for my role as a researcher in this study.

Researchers have the authority and responsibility to demonstrate intellectual rigor and professional integrity during the research process. This results in critical meaning-making around the studied phenomenon (Stake, 1995, p. 17). This results in critical meaning-making around the phenomenon being studied (Patton, 2014). As part of my self-reflection process as a researcher, I analyzed my values, cultural biases, and assumptions to ensure my attitude was flexible and open to all outcomes.

I continued to use mindfulness and self-reflection throughout the research process to identify biases or pre-existing judgments that may arise as the research progresses. To aid in my self-reflection routine, I kept a journal for bracketing (see Appendix E). I employed this journal to record my thoughts and reflections about the research. Moreover, I utilized my reflections as I wrote the study results. I developed the research study's standardized open-ended questions, the data collection and analysis, and the interpretation of the results with an ethic of critical care.

I have been working in the same school district where I conducted the study for four years and have an extensive professional network. Following approval from the Institutional Review Board for my proposal, I utilized my professional networks to email Black Women school leaders in PK-12 in Southwestern United States via email to explain the research study and determine if they are interested in participating. Additionally, I asked Black Women Educational Leaders in PK-12 in Southwestern United States to recommend other Black Women Educational Leaders with whom I could speak about possibly participating in the research study.

Research Participants

Participant Demographics

The research study participants were Black Women Educational Leaders who are or were in leadership positions in PK-12 public and charter school sites in Southwestern United States. An educational leadership position is a central office administrator, executive cabinet administrator, superintendent, assistant superintendent, principal, assistant principal, SEIF, or student success coordinator. Participants self-identified as Black women. There were no age restrictions for participants. Finally, the participants provided informed consent to participate in the research study. They were informed throughout the study that they could leave the research study at any time and for any reason.

Data Management

Trustworthiness

The trustworthiness of the study was my priority as a researcher. Trustworthiness in study outcomes is a priority for researchers and members of the academia (Phillips et al., 2019). To assess trustworthiness, researchers must create credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 2002). Researchers should employ prolonged engagement, peer debriefing, member checking, thick descriptions, auditing, and reflexivity to enrich their trustworthiness (Lincoln & Guba, 2002). I was responsible for the trustworthiness of this research study and employed the appropriate techniques to enhance it.

Marshall and Rossman (1999) argue that a plan for retrieving, analyzing, and interpreting the data is essential, adding to the research's trustworthiness. However, a balance must be struck between the need for a predetermined retrieval system to collect data for analysis and the flexibility needed to adjust the predefined categories for data management and analysis according to the results.

Despite rigorous techniques and methods, the creative process of qualitative analysis results in distrust for the qualitative research process; thus, the researcher must be transparent to increase trustworthiness (Patton, 2014). As a researcher, I approached this research with the belief that every stage in educational research is critical, especially data administration. I developed a credible and flexible data management plan after selecting the research study participants and receiving their informed consent.

Data Collection

There are two broad categories for data collection: naturally occurring data and generative data (Ritchie et al., 2013). Participant observation, observation, documentary analysis, discourse analysis, and conversation analysis represent some of the avenues to collect naturally occurring data. Generative data refers to the instances where participants recount the phenomenon (Ritchie et al., 2013). The meanings that participants attach to their experiences are considered of utmost importance. Biographies, individual interviews, and paired interviews are examples of mechanics used to gather generative data.

In this research study, generative data collection, e.g., one-to-one interviews, was the primary technique for data collection, while naturally occurring data collection, e.g., document analysis, served as a secondary technique.

Stake (1995) stated that data collection has no starting point because data collection, including backgrounding, takes place before deciding to pursue a research study (Stake, 1995). As an administrator and teacher in this school district, I have had informal conversations about my research topic with colleagues. Individual interviews took place via Zoom. Data from the individual one-to-one interviews was recorded via audio. The structured, open-ended interview questions focused on issues and themes from existing literature (see Chapter 2). The interview transcripts were then reviewed for errors and coded by the researcher. The researcher shared this information during follow-ups with each research study participant. Additional transcription and coding occurred, and the final transcriptions were sent to each participant for final input.

Hand-written notes, subsequently referred to as a journal, were used to supplement the audio recordings. This researcher's journal provided additional context to the spoken words recorded via audio. The context referenced here involves nonverbal communication cues (e.g.,

facial expressions and gestures) that may have been exhibited by the research study participants during the individual interviews. Stake (1995) asserts that the time needed to complete document review is ambiguous. However, I shared a timeline for data collection and analysis of twelve weeks beginning in October 2023 and presented in Table 2.

Conducting Zoom Interviews

Advantages and Challenges of Online Interviews.

The benefit of online interviews is that they facilitate connections with participants through flexible scheduling and effective time utilization for researchers (Tuttas, 2014). The challenge of using technology to conduct interviews and collect data is ensuring participants have a device and internet access to participate. Additionally, participants need a stable internet connection to participate uninterrupted. Once participants were identified, I worked with each one to ensure these conditions were met et

Utilizing Zoom for Interviews.

The researcher conducted each interview using Zoom. Zoom allows for one-to-one video calling and displays written materials on each caller's computer monitor. I have used Zoom for many years to host and participate in meetings. Lastly, Zoom allows me to record and transcribe the meetings (Gaiser, 1997; Kenny, 2005; Williams & Reid, 2012).

Table 2: Timeline of Study

Start Date	End Date	Activity
June 2023	August 2023	IRB Review and Approval
October 2023	November 2023	Individual Interviews ($n = 4-6$)
November 2023	November 2023	Transcription of Individual Interview Data
November 2023	November 2023	Document Analysis
November 2023	November 2023	Member Checks (Individual Interviews)
December 2023	December 2023	Individual Interview Reconciliation of Initial Transcriptions and Member Checks
December 2023	December 2023	Cross Check (All Data)
January 2024	March 2024	Organize and write up results

Data Analysis

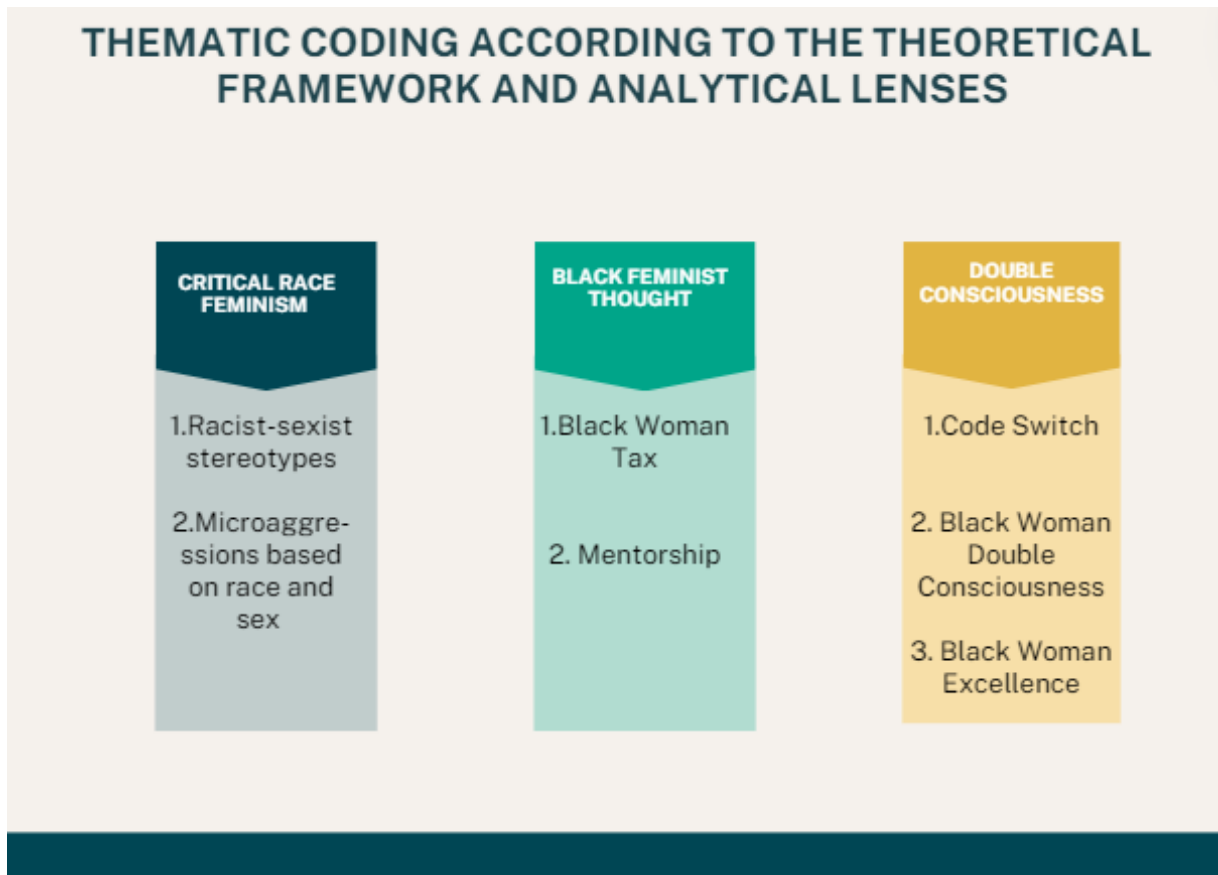
Conducting and analyzing data can be likened to going down a rabbit hole. Research data analysis is not always linear (Marshall & Rossman, 1999). To assist in the data analysis process, I utilized the theoretical framework of Critical Race Feminism accompanied by the analytical lenses of Black Feminist Thought and Double Consciousness lenses (Dubois, 1903, p. 9). Data from all the individual interviews was analyzed throughout the research study to ensure critical reflexivity was part of the process.

I employed these questions to remain centered in my data analysis: a) Which themes cluster around specific items? b) What deviations are present in the themes? c) What stories bring more clarity to the broader research questions? Is more follow-up needed from the data collected? and e) What connections are revealed, if any, to existing studies? (Pell Institute, 2017, para 5).

In my quest to answer the guiding question above, I began the data analysis by listening to all the recordings and reviewing the interview notes. The audio recordings were transcribed automatically using Zoom transcripts. Then, I reviewed the transcriptions and the original audio recordings to ensure transcription accuracy and make any necessary changes.

Lastly, I used transcript drafts and the analysis from the document reviews to distill the emergent themes in accordance with the Pell Institute (2017) process using MAXQDA. I uploaded each one of the interview transcripts to MAXQDA for coding. The process began by labeling the data sources' words, phrases, or sections to create thematic codes or clusters aligned with the theoretical framework and the analytical lenses is pictured in the figure below.

Figure 3.6: Thematic Coding According to the Theoretical Framework & Analytical Lenses

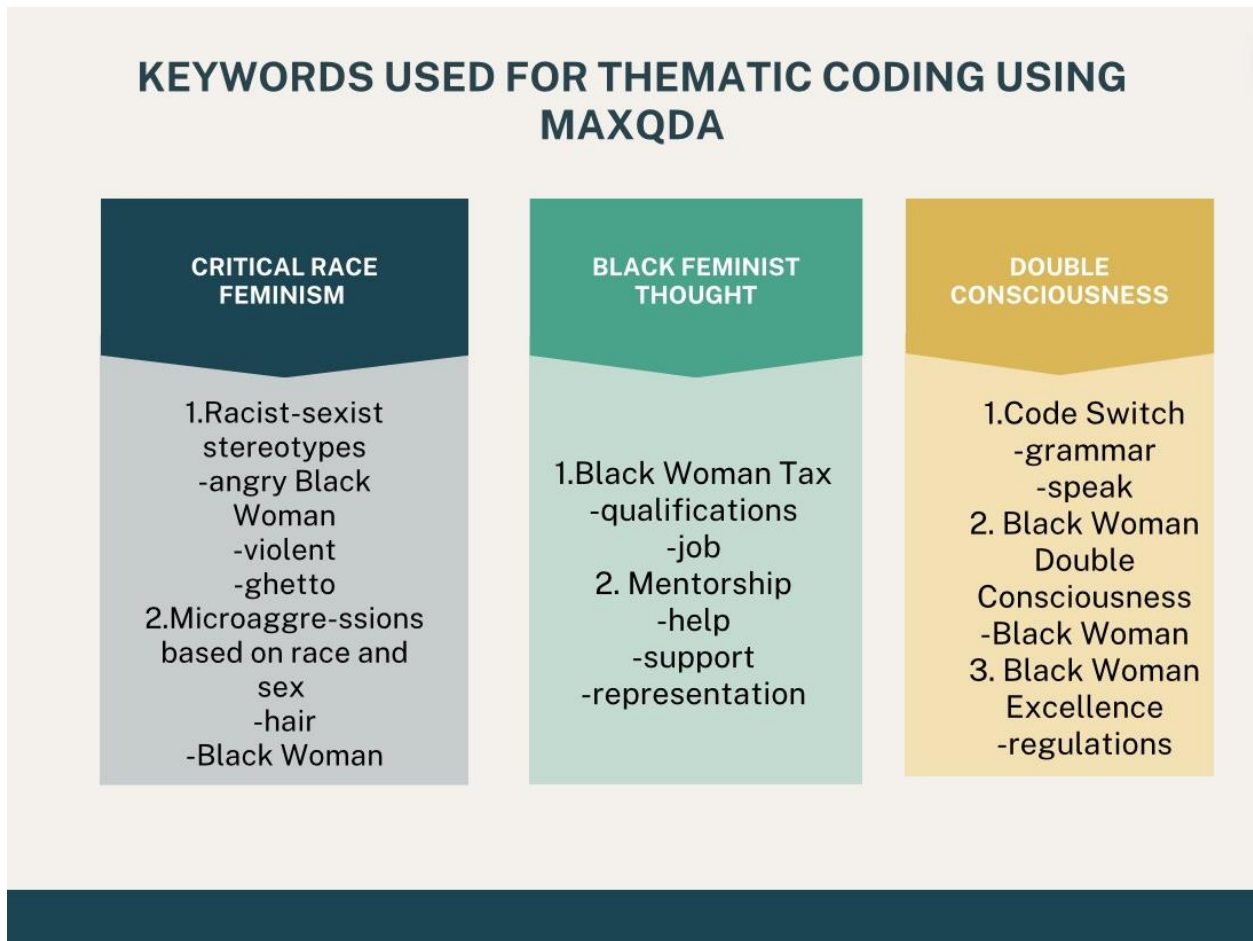


Member checks were also part of the data triangulation process to minimize researcher bias and over-interpret of the findings. Participants were contacted via the researcher's secure school email address, and a copy of the transcripts and coding was provided to elicit their input and feedback. The feedback provided by the participants served as the basis for the recategorization of the themes if needed.

The Pell Institute process (2017) helped me analyze the data thoroughly to distill the information I needed to answer the research questions. I selected sources that brought more clarity to my broad research questions and looked for connections to existing research. This process also helped me identify gaps in literature. This extensive data analysis plan for the

research study gave me the information required to progress to Chapters 4 and 5. I recorded the findings and documented the conclusions and suggestions for future research. After I entered each one of the themes, I used for thematic coding in MAXQDA, I selected key words to use for each one of the theme clusters. The words I used for coding are shown below in the graphic. It is important to note the process of thematic coding was fluid and in many cases several sections were coded under more than one code due to the nature of the overlapping of the theoretical framework and conceptual lenses.

Figure 3.7: Keywords Used for the Thematic Coding Using MAXQDA



Ethical Considerations

Ethical Protection of Participants

Researchers have a moral obligation toward participants, making research ethics extremely complex (Silverman, 2015). After IRB approval, due to the intricacy of human subjects' research, I carefully detailed the purpose of the research study to all the participants and provided a detailed account of the research study consent form. Participants were asked to review the form and ask any questions they may have about the purpose, process, or risks associated with participating in the study.

As noted in the section on Sampling Techniques, participants received detailed explanations throughout the process, were encouraged to ask questions, and received written Informed Consent and Confidentiality Agreement forms to sign. I documented their decisions to participate and developed a list of study participants.

Each participant received a welcome email restating the study's purpose and clearly stating that they could withdraw from the study at any time. The researcher expected minimal psychological risks to be presented by participating in the study. Sometimes, talking about and reflecting on the past can be uncomfortable, depending on the circumstances of the participants' youth, but it can also be therapeutic. Zero physical risk was anticipated because of participating in this study. Social risks were minimal, too, because the researcher conducted interviews via Zoom.

The one-to-one interviews occurred in private meeting rooms (virtually) where only the researcher and the participants were present. The true identities of the study's participants were only available to the research study's principal researcher. Identifiable data was maintained in the dissertation committee chair's campus office at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV). Any soft copies of data will be protected via multi-factor authorization technology. Once the storage period has elapsed (five years), all the data will be shredded on campus at UNLV. The soft copies of data and the audio recordings will be permanently deleted.

Participants were told their participation was voluntary and reminded throughout the study they could leave at any time. Additionally, since the interview questions are structured and open-ended, the researcher invited the participants to provide feedback about what works best for them to minimize potential risks. Furthermore, the questionnaires were designed to better

understand participants' experiences of double consciousness as Black Women Educational Leaders in PK-12 public schools in Southwestern United States.

Therefore, probing questions about personal backgrounds were kept to a minimum, thus reducing potential psychological risks. The total time commitment for each participant was two to three hours as follows:

- 1) 5 - 10 minutes to review the initial email.
- 2) 5 - 10 minutes to review the welcome email.
- 3) 30 minutes to read the consent form (the form was submitted by the participant to the researcher 48 hours after initial receipt).
- 4) 60 - 90 minutes for the one-to-one interview.
- 5) 60 - 90 minutes for the member checks on the transcription of the interviews.

Chapter 3 Summary & Transition

In Chapter 1, I discussed the background, statement of the problem, personal connection, purpose, theoretical framework, and the scholarly significance of the study. Chapter 2 explored the relevant literature related to double consciousness, Black education, critical feminism, and Black Women Educational Leaders to understand the gap in research. Afterward, Chapter 3 outlined the way the framework were operationalized for the research, the research design and methodology chosen for data collection and completing the research. The study aimed to analyze how the double consciousness of Black Women Educational Leaders in PK-12 in the Southwestern United States influences how they lead schools. Therefore, the multiple case study methodology discussed in this chapter was selected to answer the research questions. Upon approval from the IRB for this research study, I began the data collection process as outlined in the timeline, constantly referring to the guiding questions from the Pell Institute that stipulated a feedback loop throughout the process. After that, I conducted data analysis as outlined in Chapter 3, documented the findings in Chapter 4, and presented my conclusions in Chapter 5.

Chapter 4: The Voices of Black Women Educational Leaders

Introduction

"Fugitive pedagogy in its ancient and modern historical meanings generally refers to the enslaved fleeing from the dominant protocols of teaching and learning and the narrative scripts that structure these experiences" (Givens, 2021, p. 25).

The study aimed to analyze how the double consciousness of Black Women Educational Leaders in PK-12 public schools in Southwestern United States influences how they lead schools. In Chapter 1, I discussed the background, problem statement, personal connection, purpose, theoretical framework, and the scholarly significance of the study. Chapter 2 explored the relevant literature related to double consciousness, Black education, critical feminism, and Black Women Educational Leaders to understand the gap in research. Afterward, Chapter 3 outlined the research design and methodology chosen for data collection and completing the research. In Chapter 4, I will document the introduction to the participants and participant profiles, a brief introduction to the findings, theme introductions and descriptions, discussion, and analysis. In Chapter 5, I will present the findings, implications, recommendations for further research, recommendations for education policy and practice, study significance, and conclusion.

Restatement of Purpose

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to analyze the double consciousness of Black Women Educational Leaders as it is experienced by BWEL and manifested in their leadership. This study aimed to contribute to the literature on the importance of the double consciousness of Black Women Educational Leaders in PK-12 public education to increase the representation of BWEL. This qualitative multiple case study was analyzed using a Critical Race Feminism theoretical framework and analytical lenses rooted in Black Feminist

Thought and Double Consciousness to explore the themes emerging from the counter-narratives of BWEL by inquiring about their inner experiences with double consciousness and the outer manifestations of their double consciousness. Henceforth, this study addressed the problem of the low representation of Black Women Educational Leaders in PK-12 public schools in Southwestern United States by giving Black Women Educational Leaders a space to self-define and self-value their experiences with double consciousness through counter-storytelling.

Research Questions

This research explored the experiences of Black Women Educational Leaders and their double consciousness. The study sought to answer the following research questions:

- 1) How, if at all, is Black Women Educational leaders' double consciousness manifested through their leadership?
- 2) How, if at all, do Black Women Educational Leaders experience their double consciousness, both generally and specifically as they lead?

These questions helped the researcher explore the counter-narratives of Black Women Educational Leaders with a focus on their double consciousness. Data was collected through interviews with four Black Women Educational Leaders in PK-12 public education in Southwestern United States. The first question inquired about the external manifestation of double consciousness in the leadership practices of Black Women Educational Leaders in PK-12. The second question inquired about their inner experiences of double consciousness as they engage in leadership.

This research nuanced existing narratives of Black Women Educational Leaders in PK-12 public schools in Southwestern United States by recovering memories of Black education and identifying how these experiences thread themselves across the life stories of Black Women

Educational Leaders in PK-12 public schools in Southwestern United States through the inner and outer manifestations of their double consciousness. This work centers on the experiences of Black Women. It creates a space for them to theorize how Black Women Educational Leaders in PK12 public schools in Southwestern United States experience their double consciousness in their leadership. Through their counter-narratives, we can aspire to create more supportive and transformative school climates for Black Women Educational Leaders in PK-12 in Southwestern United States to thrive and positively impact their school communities.

Introduction to the Research Participants

This study focused on the interviews of four BWELs in Southwestern United States. The BWELs in this study were a diverse group that included two Assistant Principals, a Chief Instructional Officer, and a Retired Associate Superintendent. All participants had over 15 years of experience as BWELs. Participants were mostly middle-aged Black women who moved to the study's location as transplants from other states. Table 3 shows the pseudonyms for each participant, the highest-held positions as leaders, and their years of experience. Below the table, the research participants were introduced with a brief overview of their life stories.

Table 3: Research Participants

Pseudonym	Current Position/Highest Position Held	Years as a BWEL in Southern Nevada
Michelle	Assistant Principal	16 years
Angela	Assistant Principal	15 years
Mrs. Diversity	Chief Instructional Officer	23 years
Mrs. Retired Associate Superintendent	Associate Superintendent	25 years

The Life Stories of the Participants

Angela

Angela is a middle-aged Black woman who has worked in the same school district for over twenty years in a variety of positions. Originally from a big city in the Midwest, she moved to the place where the study took place to attend college and eventually ended up staying. She has had a variety of job titles in the sphere of PK-12 public education such as assistant teacher, teacher, and learning strategist before she became assistant principal. She has taught classes for leadership preparation programs within the school district and has mentored other Black Women as they stepped into leadership positions. She was mentored by another BWEL who was her first principal and hired her when she became assistant principal. She shared how she is always

conscious of being a Black woman in her leadership role and this causes her to have a high standard of excellence in her professional life.

Michelle

Michelle is a middle-aged Black woman who is native to the state and city where the study was conducted. She stated she grew in the part of town called the Westside, where a majority of Black people used to live back in her time. She has worked for the school district for more than 20 years. She started working as a lunch attendant at her neighborhood school where her children attended. She shared how she was able to start her journey in education thanks to the encouragement from her principal who was a BWEL and is still her mentor in education. This BWEL wrote a grant for her to attend school and become a teacher assistant and then a licensed teacher. She shared how she worked for many years in her neighborhood school which was composed primarily of Black people. She used her insider knowledge and cultural capital to connect with the families and students. For this very reason, many times she chose not to code switch. However, when she was viewed as unintelligent or ghetto when she did this because her teaching peers were mostly white women and they did not understand Black culture.

Mrs. Diversity

Mrs. Diversity is a middle-aged Black woman who worked in PK-12 public schools in the city where the study was located for more than 23 years. She is currently retired but she is still very much involved in the world of education in the location. She began the interview by sharing her background by stating she is not originally from the city and state where the study was conducted. She shared how her parents' valued education so they always pushed her to excel in that area of her life. She told me the story of how she lived through the period of mandatory

school integration in North Carolina and this experience left a profound impression in her which made her want to become a civil rights lawyer when she grew up. However, her high school counselor told her she could never be an attorney because of the way she spoke. After speaking with her parents, she decided to attend Howard University and majored in education. She said attending Howard University changed the trajectory of her life. She started her professional career in North Carolina and worked her way up from teacher to high-school principal. She arrived to the location where the study was conducted after being offered a position to work in PK-12 public education at the location where the study was conducted. Her highest position in PK-12 public schools where the study was conducted was Chief Instructional Officer.

Mrs. Retired Associate Superintendent

Mrs. Retired Associate Superintendent is a retired Black woman in her late 70s who is not native to the city where the study was conducted. She shared how she is originally from Texas and she is a Cowboys fan. However, she grew up in South Georgia during the Jim Crow era. She stated her parents were educators, but she never wanted to become a teacher. Instead, she was dreaming about becoming a nurse. However, she had a French teacher she loved in high school who was a Black woman and because of this teacher she decided to become a teacher too. She shared how she had applied to go to college at HBCUs in Georgia and Alabama and a counselor at her school encouraged her to apply for a scholarship to attend Wilberforce University in Ohio. She was proud to share Wilberforce University is the oldest HBCU in the nation and is also a place where W.E.B Dubois taught for a couple of years. Wilberforce University was the first historically Black University to be created in the United States before the Civil War. She stated attending an HBCU changed her life. After graduating college, she taught for a year in Georgia and then ended up settling back in Dayton, Ohio and starting her career in

education there. She shared how she went from being a teacher to being a principal even though it took her eight years to become a principal. She retired from that school district as an Associate Superintendent of Secondary Education after more than 20 years of service. After retirement, she went back to work in establishing a charter school and then she taught in Yale for a few years. That is where she found out about the associate superintendent position opening at the city where this study was conducted. She stated she applied for the position and got it but her arrival to the school district was very controversial because she felt like an outsider and people treated her as such since she was the first woman and African-American woman to occupy such a position of leadership within the school district. People questioned her professional qualifications for the position because they felt that job should have gone to a white man. She said she experienced a lot of opposition and this was a difficult time for her but she is strong so she did not react to any acts of racism and discrimination. Her highest ranked role in this school district was associate superintendent.

The voices amplified in this research study include a diverse array of perspectives, from Black Women Educational Leaders in PK-12 public schools in Southwestern United States who fulfilled diverse leadership roles such as Chief Instructional Officer, Associate Superintendent, and Assistant Principal, as provided 4.1. Their stories share one communal thread: their experiences and expressions of double consciousness as they lead. They each told their stories as counternarratives to the existing Black Women Leadership narratives. They challenged the misconceptions that exist around the lives of Black Women Educational Leaders in PK-12 public education in the United States.

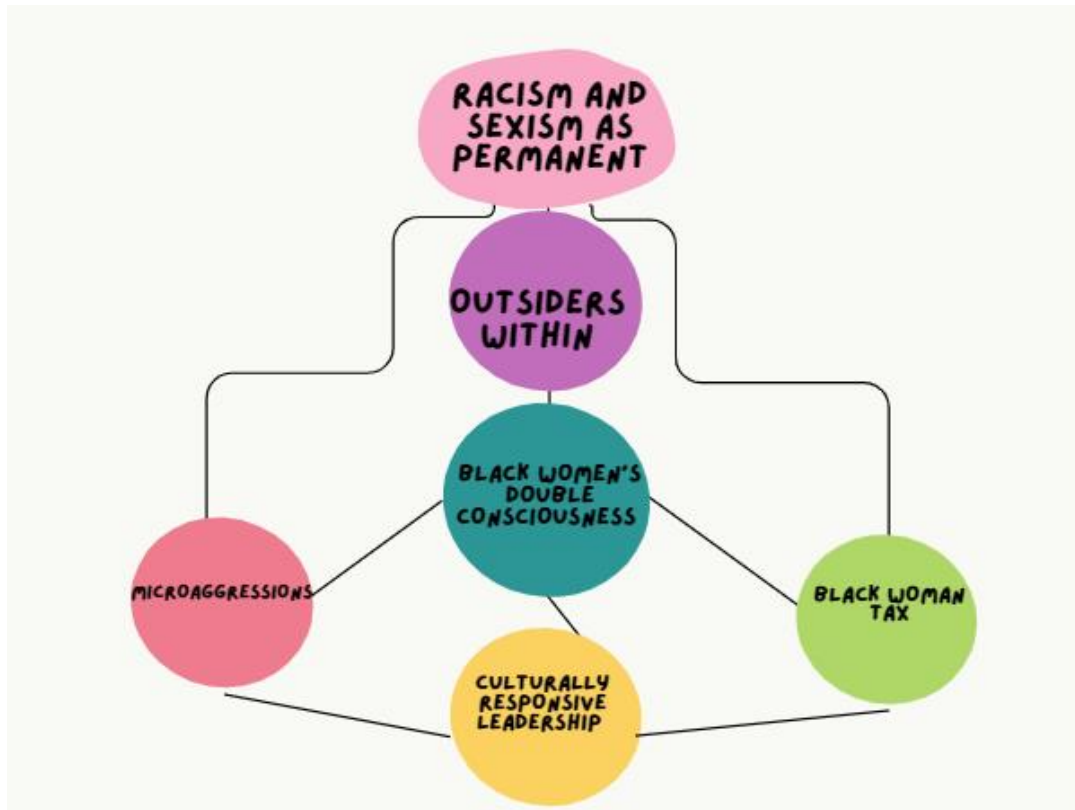
Opposing hegemonic narratives of who Black Women are, each participant expressed having experienced significant racism and sexism in their positions despite their academic and

professional excellence. Some participants were born into middle class, and some were working class. Participants rose from humble beginnings to their leadership positions. However, they each were compelled to pursue higher education and leadership paths in the United States public educational system to improve their lives and contribute to their communities.

Brief Overview of Findings

The conceptual map below shows the study's conceptual findings. The map begins with the Critical Race Feminism tenet of racism and sexism as permanent as a pre-existing condition that led to the BWEL in this study to develop their double consciousness through having this constant feeling of being “outsiders within” (Collins, 1992) in their leadership roles. This notion of double consciousness helped them fight obstacles they encountered in their roles which are manifestations of racism and systemic racism, such as microaggressions and the Black Woman Tax. However, it also led them to develop culturally responsive leadership practices.

Figure 4.1: Conceptual Findings Map



The voices of BWEL in this section displayed how the mentorship of other BWEL and Women of Color made a difference in their leadership development. They felt supported and affirmed by someone who understood the intricacies of experiencing life at the intersection of race and gender. Participants shared how they gained confidence and strength as leaders by observing their mentors' examples of leadership.

Theme 1: From Microaggressions to Culturally Responsive Leadership

Theme 1 was identified based on the need for further research on how Black school leaders' double consciousness—as concomitantly Black and as agents of a school system that racially oppresses Black and Latinx students—influences how they lead (Goings et al., 2018;

Lomotey, 2019). A second mutual theme across interviews was the microaggressions experienced by Black Women Educational Leaders in PK-12 in Southwestern United States. Black Women Educational Leaders play a unique role in confronting racism because of their intimate knowledge of oppression and racism in the shape of microaggressions. The experiences of the BWEL in this study are of value because of how they responded to the microaggressions they experienced by developing culturally responsive leadership practices because of their insider awareness of how systemic racism affects Black leaders, Black teachers, and Black students (Goings & Bianco, 2016).

The interviewees described how they faced numerous instances of racism and sexism as leaders, such as receiving microaggressions, fighting racial stereotypes, and having to pay a Black Woman tax in their positions of power. This is consistent with previous research on BWEL, which recommended further research on how Black Women Educational Leaders face microaggressions, fight the racial stereotype of being an angry Black Woman, and have to consistently prove themselves adequate for their leadership positions despite their extensive professional and educational qualifications (Decuir & Gunby, 2016; Goings et al., 2018; Lewis et al., 2013, 2016; Warikoo, 2016).

Below, you will find the voices of the BWEL who participated in this study, telling their stories related to their experiences of microaggressions and culturally responsive leadership. The participants shared how they are always conscious of their race and gender due to the constant microaggressions they experience. They tell how this constant awareness of their double consciousness informs their interactions with subordinates, peers, and supervisors and forces them to adjust their behavior according to the receiver and the circumstances.

Angela, an assistant principal participant, shared how race and gender impact her daily interactions as a BWEL. She stated, "Race and gender are always in my mind in 90% of my daily interactions". Angela discusses how her racial and gender identity influences her interactions with others, especially in disciplinary and supervisory situations. She also shares instances of microaggressions and being misperceived, which has led her to be more conscious of her actions and communication. Overall, she constantly thinks about race and gender in her role as an assistant principal, especially when making decisions and interacting with others. She details how some of the constant microaggressions she receives are related to her speech and hair. She shared:

"When the first thing that someone says is, oh, I love your hair. You know, it's just it.

That's the first thing you notice, not a Good morning? How are you? It is interesting that the first comment, sometimes it's about my hair".

In another instance, she remembered how she gave a professional development presentation to aspiring educational leaders in the school district, and participants wrote letters complaining about her grammar and speech because she used African American Black Vernacular a few times during her presentation. This is an example of how microaggressions show racism by denying the humanity of Black women through the constant judgment of their hair and speech.

Angela stated that microaggressions are the reason why her race and gender are always on her mind, especially when she is in a room with primarily non-Black people, and this causes her to move differently. She said she must think about that because of the trust factor and how it is easy for someone to complain about her just because she is a BWEL and "she does not have the complexion for the protection," as she called it. This causes her to have to triple-check that she is

following the rules. As she stated, she is always asking herself, "Am I dotting my eyes and crossing my T's? Because I have a harder chance of what you say being protected. It's a constant thing on my mind."

Similarly, Mrs. Diversity discusses the pushback she received from colleagues and the community and the internal and external struggles she faced when climbing up the ladder as an educational leader. She describes how her qualifications were always questioned as she went up the leadership ladder. She also reflects on the impact of her race and gender on her decision-making and interactions with others in her role as an educational leader. She shares her experiences of feeling devalued through microaggressions. Overall, the conversation highlights the complexities and challenges faced by the interviewee as a BWEL. She recalled how she was the first female and the first Black woman to have the position of Chief Instructional Officer in the location where the study was conducted. When she received the promotion, people questioned her, saying she was only chosen for it because she was Black, not because of her qualifications and leadership experiences. She stated they were trying to discredit her because there were lots of men who felt that because they had been high school principals, they deserved that job. She stated, "That position had nothing to do with your experience as a principal, but everyone questioned my qualifications." So, she felt she was questioned because of her gender and then because of her race. Similarly, she stated that when she held another leadership position and became the director of the diversity and equity department, her coworkers' mindset and feeling were, "Oh, she just got that job because she's Black." Nobody thought to consider that she had gotten the position because she was intelligent and qualified.

Michelle, another assistant principal participant, discussed the impact of her racial and gender identities on her interactions with supervisors, peers, teachers, students, and families. She

shares instances where she had to be conscious of her race and gender in decision-making, disciplinary actions, and leadership roles. She also spoke about the expectations of behaving in a non-culturally responsive way as a leader in the education system. Michelle's interview provides insight into the challenges and complexities of being a Black Woman in a leadership position in PK-12 in Southern Nevada. She describes how she used her insider knowledge of her culture to connect with the parents in her community, which was 80% African American at the time because her school was in the Westside, a predominantly Black neighborhood.

Furthermore, Michelle described how she did not find it challenging to communicate with the parents or the students because she felt they spoke "the same language." She stated that even though she can speak standard English, she used what she called "our slang," which refers to African American vernacular, to get her parents to understand her. This made her feel connected with the parents, the students, and the community, so she stopped code-switching. This resulted in one of her supervisors telling her she spoke too "ghetto" even though, for her, it was not wrong; it was just the way she spoke. She shared that she always had to be conscious of her race and gender and how she is perceived in social and professional interactions. She shared:

"I'm very conscious of that. Yeah, this is natural. Because of how I was raised and what I saw as a child coming up, the perceptions of Black Women, the perceptions of Black people in general in education is like they can't be competent and talk like that".

Additionally, Mrs. Retired Associate Superintendent, a retired BWEL who was a Superintendent in this school district, discusses the racial and gender dynamics she faced in her role. This included feeling like "an outsider" in the school district and facing microaggressions from colleagues and community members. Mrs. Retired Associate Superintendent also discussed the extra effort she felt she had to put in to prove herself. She also discusses specific instances

where she felt her race and gender were factors in her interactions and decision-making. She stated:

"Some people were surprised that an African American woman got one of the associate superintendent positions. Some people felt that it should have gone to a man. So yes, there were those kinds of issues for me".

She describes an instance in which she met with a group of high school principals, who were all men except for one female. There were two females at the table, a white female and herself. The white female, a high school principal, started to challenge her authority by warning her not to try to control her. She stated that the school this white female ran was the worst one on the table. She knew that she said it to get a rise out of her. The males at the table froze and did not say a word. However, Mrs. Retired Associate Superintendent decided to look at her and smile. Moreover, she went right on with what she was doing. The white female never saw any reaction that she wanted from making that statement.

This BWEL continued to supervise and meet with her regularly, but she ended up retiring because her school needed to do better and needed to meet the annual progress measures set by the district. She stated that when this white female principal retired, she never spoke about the incident. She finalized recounting this incident by stating, "I didn't get where I was being thin-skinned and falling apart because somebody said something that wasn't nice", to exemplify how she had to develop resiliency to deal with microaggressions in her role to advance professionally.

I use the phrase from microaggressions to culturally responsive leadership to describe this theme to name how the Black Women Educational Leaders in this case study experience and practice leadership by using their experiences of double consciousness as fuel to become culturally responsive leaders and fight against the notion that leadership should be a synonym of

whiteness by finding a way to be true to their culture while functioning in a white supremacist system. This finding adds to previous literature on the topic that concluded BWEL are better equipped to be culturally responsive leaders due to their intersectional marginalized identities, which equip them with the capacity to listen to different points of view, the critical care and compassion to see the suffering of others as their own, and the accountability to be warm demanders to themselves and others (Sims & Carter, 2019; Plachowski, 2019).

The interviewees described how they faced numerous obstacles as leaders, such as receiving microaggressions about their hair, speech, grammar, and professional and academic qualifications in their roles as educational leaders. This is consistent with previous research on microaggressions and Black Women Educational Leaders (Decuir & Gunby, 2016; Goings et al., 2018; Lewis et al., 2013, 2016; Warikoo, 2016). However, these microaggressions did not deter them from continuing to further excel in their roles as Black Women Educational Leaders. On the contrary, these microaggressions led them apply their warm demander philosophy to their own work by being the best leaders for their school communities.

Experiencing microaggressions has led BWEL to become culturally responsive leaders who created highly effective, successful organizations by looking at situations from several points of view, learning to problem-solve creatively, demanding excellence from themselves, and developing resilience and persistence in the face of adversity. Various researchers have identified the need for research on Black Women Educational Leaders, including on the rate of promotion of Black women to educational leadership positions in schools, especially because of adjacent research documenting the positive impact of Black Women Educational Leaders on their schools' teachers abilities to effectively meet the academic needs of Black students (Bailes & Guthery, 2020; Goings & Bianco, 2016; Grissom et al., 2021; Marrun et al., 2023; Soland et al.,

2021). This study adds to the literature on BWEL by showing how their experiences of microaggressions and intersectional marginalities can transform them into culturally responsive leaders through the use of their double consciousness to navigate oppression and marginalization in leadership spaces

This section shared the stories of BWEL who participated in this study, concerning their experiences of microaggressions and double consciousness. They shared how their constant awareness of their race and gender shaped their interactions with others in their leadership roles and how their double consciousness unequivocally influenced their leadership by shaping their adaptability, resiliency, flexibility, and spiritual fortitude as leaders.

Theme 2: From Black Woman Tax to Culturally Responsive Leadership

The second common theme amongst all interviews was discussing what one of the interviewees referred to as the Black Woman Tax. Participants described this Black Woman Tax in various ways relating to the pressure to prove themselves worthy and capable of fulfilling their roles as Black Women Educational Leaders despite their professional and academic qualifications. The notion of the Black Woman Tax refers to the added invisible, unpaid labor that Black Women are forced to experience in white institutional spaces to cope with racial and gender violence (Melaku, 2022; Melaku & Beeman, 2023).

This Black Woman Tax is what BWEL must pay to lead in racist and sexist, non-culturally responsive environments, and it is embodied by the burden to work harder and aim for perfection in all areas because of the necessity to prove themselves in their positions as leaders to combat racial stereotypes. This has been mentioned in previous research as stereotype threat (Steele & Aronson, 1998). Some of these stereotypes are the external perception that they are in their positions of leadership due to their race and not their qualifications or the belief that all

Black Women are angry Black Women regardless of how they act. Colloquially, Black Women Tax refers to the typical expression as stated by one of the participants: "We have to work twice as hard to get half as much," which refers to the reality of the unpaid emotional and physical labor of BWEL when they must constantly prove they deserve to be in white institutional spaces such as the realm of educational leadership (Jones, 2023). These findings are consistent with previous research on the topic of the Black Woman Tax, which revealed the internal and external perception that being intelligent and qualified is not enough when you are a Black woman in a position of power because you will constantly be questioned and judged in your position of power just as it happened for the BWEL who participated in this study (Lewis et al., 2016).

Following this theme introduction, you will find the primary accounts of the participants who express their understanding of the "Black Woman Tax" and how it has affected their leadership concerning their double consciousness. As a critical researcher using a Critical Race Feminist framework with Black Feminist Thought and Double Consciousness as lenses, I chose this way of presenting the themes that I distilled from the interviews to allow the stories of the BWEL in this study to speak for themselves and about themselves while revealing and applying their Black Women epistemologies through their counternarratives.

Angela, an assistant principal in this school district, initially pursued microbiology in college but struggled with math and switched to education after seeing a student's project. She eventually became a reading interventionist, literacy specialist, instructional coach, and assistant principal. Angela begins by stating, "I don't think about being a woman. Hardly ever. I think about being a Black Woman." This illustrates how Black Women experience life through their intersectional and multiply marginalized identities. As a Black woman, she feels the need to constantly prove herself and pay an extra "Black Woman Tax" at work. As a part of this Black

Woman Tax, she discusses the constant pressure of proving herself as a Black woman, which she feels is a necessary burden. She feels this is a tax she must pay because she is a Black woman, and she must pay it to exist as a leader in a white supremacist system. She described it as "having to pay extra to get the bare minimum".

In her interview, Angela reflected on how race and gender affect her interactions with others. She shared how she feels more authentic when speaking to parents and students but may avoid interacting with a majority white group to avoid being stereotyped. She stated she thinks about being a Black Woman when handling discipline at work. She shared, "I'm more restorative and approaches with discipline when it comes to minorities, especially minority boys. So, um, I think about race a lot when I discipline". As a supervisor, she tries to understand where their employees are coming from and investigate situations before jumping to conclusions due to her experiences of being targeted only for being a Black woman. She shared:

"I think that it affects the way that I supervise because I tend to have more understanding for even though I follow the rules, I tend to have more of an understanding of where someone that's like me is coming from because we have similar values, beliefs, morals, culture."

She feels the need to be more severe and direct when disciplining someone of a different race in her role as a supervisor. She shared how she had both Black and white supervisors in her career, and her Black supervisors taught her to be effective while her white supervisors always engaged in microaggressions toward her. Throughout the interview, Angela continued to reflect on how her race and gender consciousness affect how she leads. She shared how the experience of having to pay this Black Woman Tax affects how she supervises others because she tends to be more understanding while following the policies and regulations.

For example, she had someone who was of the same race that she supervised, not the same gender, but the same race and several white people were telling her that he was lazy. She used her insider awareness of being a Black woman and microaggressions to make sense of the situation and realized white people were judging according to a stereotype. Even though this Black male did not engage the way that the white co-workers wanted, he was not lazy. She finished by explaining how her insider awareness of marginality and oppression has taught her to look at situations from several points of view and to think of the other person's objective in professional interactions. She shared, "It makes me investigate or look at it from all sides, so to speak, before jumping to conclusions". In other words, having to constantly "pay" this "Black Woman Tax" has led to the development of her culturally responsive leadership practices such as the ones described above.

This is consistent with previous research on the topic of Black Women, Black Woman Tax, and microaggressions, which states that Black Women develop specific leadership dispositions such as compassion, critical care, and accountability due to their personal experiences with their intersectional marginalized identities (Marrun et al., 2023; Plachowski, 2019; Sims & Carter, 2019).

Mrs. Diversity shares a similar experience concerning the Black Woman Tax. She begins the conversation by saying, "I wish I had the privilege of not being aware of being a Black Woman all the time. But I don't have that privilege". Mrs. Diversity, a retired executive leader in this school district, discusses the Black woman tax she had to pay as the first woman and the first Black woman occupying an executive leadership role in this school district in South Western United States.

Mrs. Diversity shared how she was always aware of her racial and gender identities in her professional interactions. However, the sexism became more apparent as she climbed the leadership ladder. She shared how some of the people she had been working with for years still doubted her professional qualities when she took over the role of Chief Instructional Officer for the school district. She stated:

"We all pretty much grew up in the system together. I was kind of blindsided that some of did not see me as their leader in a favorable, positive manner. I said, oh my goodness, we worked together. I've helped you get yourself promoted. We've been around each other 20 to 25 years".

Mrs. Diversity continued to recount a situation in which the racism and sexism she faced became apparent in front of her eyes to the point where she could no longer deny its existence. This occurred at a Board of Trustees meeting when she called a white woman, she supervised to deliver a presentation they had been working on together. This subordinate, who was the content expert, refused to do the presentation. Mrs. Diversity had to present and respond to the questions instead of her subordinate. She shared, "Thank goodness I knew my business". When the board meeting was over, several individuals told her that her subordinate was outside in the lobby crying, and she kept saying Mrs. Diversity took credit for something she didn't do and that the position of Chief Instructional Officer should have been hers. Mrs. Diversity recounts:

"She kept saying I only got the job because I was Black and explicitly stated I was not intelligent or qualified for the job. The irony was that we both had doctorate degrees and had been in the district for about the same time".

Mrs. Diversity shared how she realized this individual was purposefully insubordinate to her in front of top leadership in the school district because she was angry at her. After all, she

was a Black Woman in a position of leadership. Despite facing numerous challenges, such as internal opposition from her subordinates, Mrs. Diversity still excelled. She was considered a highly effective leader because of her commitment to advocating for students and families. She shared that the Superintendent and the Board of Trustees had promoted her because they saw her strength in advocating for students. Therefore, they charged her with creating the first transgender policy in this district because even though they were the largest district in the state, they did not have one. This situation described is comparable to the experiences described by the other participants because they all had to pay this Black Woman tax in their positions of leadership earlier and aligned with literature on the topic of microaggressions and Black Women tax (Cyr et al., 2021; Horsford & Tillman, 2012; Reed & Evans, 2008; Reed, 2012; Thomas et al., 2008).

Michelle, an assistant principal in the same school district, reflects on the Black Woman Tax she had to pay by stating that she could not act authentically because of how others perceived her as a leader. She begins by saying, "They just put you in a box," to explain how she is expected to behave as a leader in this district. She shared how, despite her professional qualifications, she always had to be conscious of how she spoke and acted to be perceived as a competent educational leader. She speaks about her ability to code switch as a leadership asset she developed due to her constant consciousness of being a BWEL.

She described the Black Woman Tax she had to pay as always having to behave in a specific way to fit in as a leader in this school district. Michelle shared that if she presented herself as being from the neighborhood, they perceived her as not being fit to be a leader due to how she dressed and spoke. She described being deemed unintelligent multiple times if she chose not to code-switch. She detailed how whiteness is upheld as one of the leadership qualities

in this school district because everyone is expected to speak the same way and react in the same way, following codes related to white supremacist culture, which are not authentic to Black culture.

In Michelle's case, the Black tax she had to pay related to her cultural identity and cultural authenticity, and when she expressed her authentic self, she was instantly deemed unintelligent. The situation described by Michelle mirrors the experiences presented by Angela and Mrs. Diversity, who shared that they were constantly having to pay this "Black Woman Tax" by having to prove themselves in their positions because others questioned their intelligence and professional qualifications as BWEL.

Mrs. Retired Associate Superintendent recalled how she had to pay a Black Woman Tax as an Associate Superintendent for no reason other than being a Black Woman. She described how she faced opposition just for being the only Black woman superintendent. However, she did not let it affect her professional performance. She stated, "There was a school board member who was white and did not even say hello to me before she decided she did not like me."

Mrs. Retired Associate Superintendent supervised most of the schools from the ward where this board member was elected. She shared how this school board member would walk into a room and speak to everyone except her. The board member did not even address Mrs. Retired Associate Superintendent directly in Board Meetings but would address her assistant instead. Mrs. Retired Associate Superintendent decided she would not interject and let her assistant superintendent answer all the questions even if the answer provided needed to be corrected. She stated the following: "And what I decided to do was, well, if she called that person up there, I'm going to let that person answer the question whether the answer is correct or not."

This continuous microaggression continued until a new Board of Trustees member was elected. Mrs. Retired Associate Superintendent recounts how, shortly after that, the former board member called her and set up a meeting. The former board member told her that the purpose of the meeting was to talk about why they did not get along and what they could do about it. Mrs. Retired Associate Superintendent stated she never had a problem with this former board member, and she was hurt by some of this board member's actions, such as not being acknowledged and appropriately greeted when this person came into the room. Mrs. Retired Associate Superintendent stated, "She did not apologize or anything, but at least she knew I knew."

Despite facing numerous instances in which she was forced to pay this "Black Woman Tax," Mrs. Retired Associate Superintendent always remained professional and cordial in all her interactions with this board member. The Black Woman Tax participants had to pay was to accept the denial of their humanity in a professional environment. This is consistent with previous research on Black Woman Tax in white spaces (Melaku et al., 2022; Melaku & Beeman, 2022).

Findings

This section shared the stories of the BWEL who participated in this study concerning their experiences of Black Woman Tax and anti-racist leadership. They shared how the "Black Woman Tax" was another form of microaggression related to their intelligence and professional qualifications because of being BWEL which resulted in constant awareness of their double consciousness, particularly an awareness of their race and gender, which affected their leadership by forcing them to develop specific leadership dispositions such as hyper self-vigilance about

their behaviors and the self-imposed pressure to excel in all circumstances (Delgado & Stefanic, 2001; Nadal et al., 2015; Sue et al., 2007).

Discussion

The BWEL in this study shared how they are always conscious of their race and gender in professional interactions. This double consciousness proves to be an inner experience that manifests in how they conduct themselves as leaders. Their experiences with racial stereotypes, microaggressions, and Black woman tax heightened their sense of double consciousness while also shaping how they lead. Their double consciousness manifested in thinking about situations from different points of view before deciding, building community connections, developing the ability to connect with different cultures, equity practices, capacity for restorative dialogue, and ability to handle criticism and opposition when conducting initiatives to benefit students, ability to connect with others who also share marginalized identities, and willingness to understand and connect with other cultures. Their inner experiences of double consciousness as BWEL resulted in excellence in their leadership because of the constant need to work harder to prove themselves as effective, intelligent leaders in environments dominated by white male leaders. BWELs in this study manifested their double consciousness by always dotting their "Is and crossing their Ts" because of their awareness of not having the "right complexion for the protection." Table 4 shows the keywords and phrases that were identified as related to the research questions in the findings.

Table 4: Interview Keywords & Findings

Participants	Research Question 1	Research Question 2
Angela	Thinking about a situation from different points of view before making a decision; building community connections; careful to not show favoritism to one race over another one when making disciplinary and supervisory decisions	Constant consciousness of being a BWEL and not having the right complexion for the protection manifested in the need to work harder to protect herself
Michelle	Connecting with the community in which she leads because she represents them; ability to code switch according to the audience; effort for unbiased decision making	Constant inner awareness about being a BWEL manifest in need to defeat stereotypes such as being an angry Black Woman by demonstrating excellence in leadership
Mrs. Diversity	Community connection; Having an open-door policy with others including non-supporters and ability to handle challenging projects which awakened lots of criticism from the school community and stakeholders	Constant inner awareness of being a BWEL in white male dominated spaces manifesting needing to always show excellence in her work to demonstrate she belonged
Mrs. Retired Superintendent	Ability to sit down with people of different points of view to discuss issues; care to not benefit one race over another when making supervisory decisions; community connection	Consciousness of being an outsider as a BWEL manifesting in needing to cross all Ts and dot all Is to prove I belong there

The mere existence of BWEL in white spaces challenges the hegemonic narrative that all educational leaders should be either a) white or b) white males (Alston, 2005; Dillard, 1995; McCluskey, 1997). Thus, in these leadership spaces, BWEL, who live in the intersection of race and sex, encountered gendered racism in their functions as leaders (Crenshaw, 1989). They used their double consciousness as a manifestation of their fugivity to protect themselves against the oppression resulting from the manifestations of racism-sexism they experienced by remaining hyper-vigilant of the way they are perceived by others and adjusting their behavior according to

their audience while holding on to their cultural values and ways of communicating and displaying them in safe environments. They described their experiences of racism and sexism always interlocked with each other. They encountered microaggressions as expressions of racism-sexism in white supremacist leadership spaces (Lewis et al., 2013, 2016). This intimate experience of oppression equipped them to develop culturally responsive leadership practices (Santamaría & Santamaría, 2015; Ylimaki & Jacobson, 2013).

Additionally, they had to pay what they described as "Black Woman tax" in their leadership positions, which meant they had to continuously prove themselves worthy and qualified for their leadership positions despite their academic and professional achievements. This led to the development of highly effective leadership practices, which they referred to as "crossing all Ts and dotting all Is" to ensure they only deliver highly effective leadership practices (Peters & Nash, 2021). Through the study, the BWEL interviewed expressed how they practiced and experienced fugitive leadership by sharing how other BWEL mentored them to become leaders and how they resisted racism-sexism in their current positions by taking the pain they faced and transformed it into anti-racist leadership practices.

Chapter 4 Summary & Transition

The memories of Black Woman Educational Leaders in PK-12 public schools in Southwestern United States who told their stories of Black Womanhood and Black Leadership are complex, multidimensional, and deeply connected to their educational experiences. In this Chapter, I offered a thematic analysis of the interviews and identified three significant findings.

- 1) BWEL live lives and lead as outsiders within which leads them to practice fugitive leadership by finding way to affirm their identities using their Black Women Double Consciousness to navigate systemic racism and resist oppression;

- 2) Being targets of constant racial stereotypes and microaggressions prepare BWEL to be culturally responsive leaders because they know firsthand what it feels to exist as intersectional, marginalized individuals in non-culturally responsive environments;
- 3) BWEL pay a Black Woman Tax as leaders, resulting in culturally responsive leadership practices.

This study found that BWEL had retained vivid memories of other BWEL who mentored them on their paths to becoming educational leaders. Through these testimonies, BWEL were able to voice an otherwise invisible and otherized experience and disclose the nuanced subtleties that occur within the lived experiences of Black Women Educational Leaders in PK-12 public schools in Southwestern United States about the importance of mentoring for BWEL. Chapter 5 will offer findings, implications, recommendations for further research, educational policy and practice, study significance, and conclusion.

Chapter 5: The Future of BWEL

In Chapter 1, I discussed the background, statement of the problem, personal connection, purpose, theoretical framework, and the scholarly significance of the study. Chapter 2 explored the relevant literature related to double consciousness, Black education, critical feminism, and Black Women Educational Leaders to understand the gap in research. Afterward, Chapter 3 outlined the research design and methodology chosen for data collection and completing the research. Chapter 4 introduced the participants and explored the significant memories of Black Woman Educational Leaders in PK-12 in Southwestern United States who told their stories of Black Womanhood and Black Leadership. These women told stories that are complex, multidimensional, and deeply connected to their educational experiences. In chapter 4, I introduced the participants and shared their backgrounds, offered a thematic analysis of the interviews, and identified three significant findings:

1. BWEL live lives as outsiders within which leads them to practice fugitive leadership through the use of their double consciousness.
2. Being targets of constant microaggressions in the form of gendered racial stereotypes prepares BWEL to be culturally responsive leaders because they know firsthand what it feels to exist in non-culturally responsive environments.
3. BWEL pay a Black Woman Tax as leaders which results in the development of culturally responsive leadership practices.

In this Chapter, I explore the interpretation of the findings and implications of the research study to understand how it can inform educational practices, leadership practices, research, and policy, along with the study's significance and conclusion.

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to analyze the double consciousness of Black Women Educational Leaders in PK-12 in Southwestern United States. This study aimed to contribute to the literature on the importance of double consciousness of Black women educational leaders in PK-12 public education to close the achievement gap and increase the representation of Black women educational leaders in PK-12 (Tillman, 2004; 2009). This qualitative multiple case study was analyzed using a Critical Race Feminism theoretical framework and analytical lenses rooted in Black Feminist Thought and Double Consciousness to explore the themes emerging from the counter-narratives of Black Women school leaders by inquiring about their inner experiences with double consciousness and the outer manifestations of their double consciousness. Henceforth, this study addressed the problem of the low representation of Black Women Educational Leaders in PK-12 public schools in Southwestern United States by giving Black Women Educational Leaders a space to self-define and self-value their experiences with double consciousness through counter-storytelling.

I articulated the Critical Race Feminism framework first by creating a genealogy of BWEL in the United States through centering the counter-storytelling on the examples and life experiences of three BWEL who were pillars of Black Education in the United States and in the study's location: Septima Clark, Helen A. Toland, and Mabel Hoggard. Then, I used the examples of Septima Clark, Helen A. Toland, and Mabel Hoggard as building blocks to center the stories of the BWEL who participated in this study.

Research Questions

This research explored the experiences of Black Women Educational Leaders in PK-12 in Southwestern United States and their double consciousness. This study sought to answer the following research questions:

- 1) How, if at all, is Black Women Educational Leaders' double consciousness manifested through their leadership?
- 2) How, if at all, do Black Women Educational Leaders experience their double consciousness, both generally and specifically as they lead?

Implications

This research study has significant implications for our understanding of Black Women's Double Consciousness, its role in how Black Women Educational Leaders in PK-12 public schools conceptualize and actualize their leadership, and how educational organizations can better support Black educational leaders, Black teachers, and Black students. BWEL began theorizing about their manifestations and experiences of double consciousness through their interviews. They pursued a sense of rationality by connecting their educational and professional memories and critical consciousness (hooks, 1989). They also named how they used their agency as leaders to challenge white supremacy and resist oppression to reimagine and normalize their positions of power as Black Women Educational Leaders (Moorosi et al., 2017, 2018; Reed, 2012). Black leadership exists in constant conflict with the status quo of white supremacy (Goings et al., 2018; Rogers-Ard & Knaus, 2020). This study builds on existing literature that discusses how educational leadership spaces in the United States are built on white supremacist values (Genao & Mercedes, 2021). This results in educational systems, structures, and policies

that cement and promote whiteness while criminalizing expressions of Black culture (Genao & Mercedes, 2021; Jang & Alexander, 2022).

As a consequence of the gendered racialized oppression the BWEL interviewed in this study had to face in their positions of leadership, they developed fugitive leadership practices. Fugitive leadership is based on a liberatory framework stemming from the concept of fugitive pedagogy developed by Givens (2021). BWELs practice fugitive leadership practices by using their double consciousness as a cultural vehicle to navigate and push against oppression. Their double consciousness is manifested through using code-switching, being warm-demanders, and executing culturally responsive, highly-effective, leadership practices despite the adversities they experience because of their race and gender.

To create culturally responsive leadership spaces in PK-12 public schools in the U.S., we must center Black culture and Black excellence while recognizing and affirming Black culture. What would a school that centers Black culture and Black excellence look like? It is a place where Black professionals, Black students, and Black families can be authentic without worrying about being judged for their cultural expressions. A place where Black Women don't need to code-switch to fit in leadership positions. A place where Black women and Black students can wear their hair in any style, they prefer without worrying about being judged. A place where microaggressions are not tolerated, and there are healing spaces to confront our racism as it shows up in our interactions with others. A space in which Black Women Educational Leaders do not have to constantly pay a "Black Woman Tax" to prove and explain they are qualified to lead educational organizations. A space in which Blackness is celebrated and where Black cultural capital is appreciated through leadership, curriculum, programming, and instruction. A

place where everyone is warmly held to high standards, and therefore, Black excellence is abundant in every corner.

Interpretation of the Findings

The findings were analyzed by utilizing the theoretical framework of Critical Race Feminism and the analytical lenses of Black Feminist Thought, and Double Consciousness to answer the two research questions that guided this study. This section is organized according to each research question after a brief review of the theoretical frameworks.

Theoretical Frameworks

Critical Race Feminism & Intersectionality

CRF pinpoints the unique gendered racialized experiences of Black Women through recognizing racism and sexism as permanently affecting Black women's lives intersectionally (Crenshaw, 1989). A CRF framework centers on Black women and analyzes their experiences using intersectionality as a tool to empower and amplify the voices of Black women by understanding their gendered racialized experiences are always intertwined (Jones, 2021). Using intersectionality to look at the lived experiences of Black Women allowed the researcher to ground the experiences of Black Women Educational Leaders in PK-12 public schools in the Southwestern United States by using the CRF tenet which states racism and sexism are permanent. This aids in situating this research in the historical and cultural context and to understand the experiences of the participants are the result of systemic racism present locally in the public school system and globally in the foundations of American society.

Black Feminist Thought & Outsider Within

Black Feminist Thought (BFT) is a theory that stands against the oppression of white male hegemony. It was first organized as a movement by Ruby Doris Smith in 1973 with the

establishment of the National Black Feminist Organization (Johnson, 2015). Black women were organized due to their need to be grouped separately from white women and Black men because they felt neither group understood their struggle as existing as Black women in a white supremacist world built upon white male middle-class values (Collins, 2000). Black feminists believe Black women are valuable and possess unique knowledge that stems from the lived experiences they face due to multiple oppression for being Black women in a white supremacist society (Hull et al., 1982).

The tenets of BFT are 1) self-definition and self-valuation of Black women's lived experience through dialogue, critical care, and accountability, 2) the interlocking nature of oppression, and 3) redefinition of culture (Collins, 1986, 1992, 2000). Black feminism must include community work and resistance to dominant cultural norms that emphasize whiteness as the norm (James, 1999).

The use of BFT as an analytical lens served to understand and contextualize the experiences of BWELs by understanding Black women's historical, cultural, and social experiences in the world (Davis, 1993). Through counter story-telling, the BWELs in this study shared their lived examples of dialogue, critical care, and accountability as well as shared experiences related to the interlocking nature of oppression. BFT was conceived as an Afrocentric framework based on valuing and affirming Afrocentric feminist knowledge with the goal of social change (Brewer, 1992). The themes of oppression and resistance are essential components of using a BFT analytical lens for a CRF framework as they are interrelated in essence and lend themselves to using counter-stories to give space for Black women to 'talk black' (hooks, 1989) their truths as Black women resisting oppression in a white supremacist world. The BWELs in this study shared instances in which they resisted gendered racial

microaggressions and oppression through the use of their double consciousness rooted in their Black woman epistemologies to create change through their presence within a system designed to oppress and marginalize Black lives.

The term “outsider within” is a term coined in Black Feminist thought to describe the unique positionality of Black women’s lived existences as outsiders within a system of oppression (Collins, 1986). Seminal work in Black Feminist Thought suggests that Black women exist as outsiders within and develop a particular way of experiencing life looking at themselves from the outside looking in and from the inside out as a result of being marginalized through racism and sexism (hooks, 1989; White, 1999). The development of a Black woman consciousness of oppression as “outsider within” is intrinsically linked to concept of Double Consciousness because they both describe similar processes of self-consciousness and outsider consciousness that are part of the Black women experience in resisting oppression and reclaiming their humanity (Collins, 1986; Dubois, 1903, p. 9). The concept “outsider within” conceptualizes the findings by providing the researcher with a deeper understanding of the effects of racism and sexism on the consciousness of BWELs. The participants in the study reported feeling as outsiders within in their positions of leadership.

Double Consciousness & The Veil

In *The souls of black folk*, Dubois discusses racism by informing the reader how racism was instituted through slavery and how racism is a problem that persists globally (Dubois, 1903). He explains inequality in simple terms by stating that darker-skinned individuals are more aware of their positions in society than their lighter counterparts (Dubois, 1903). He calls this the "color line" and details how race can be described through a subjective lens by introducing the concepts of the veil and double consciousness (Dubois, 1903). The “veil” can be explained as a colorblind

mentality which prevents white people from seeing their racist behaviors and their position of privilege and power in a white supremacist society (Dubois, 1903). The effect of the veil is that it creates an obstacle for Black people to express their racial identity without retaliation from the indoctrinated non- Black individuals in a white supremacist society and it keeps Black and white individuals living in parallel but separate realities.

Double consciousness is used to capture the feeling created by the tension within the Black experience in the United States between the American and Black identities who exist in constant conflict with each other (Dubois, 1903). Double consciousness as an analytical lens captures the reality of the Black American experience beyond the Black people and white people duality of oppression and marginalization because being a Black person in America is to exist constantly thinking about how Black lives are perceived and assessed through the eyes of non-Black others in the context of a white supremacist society and how Black lives are self-perceived as influenced by “the veil” (Dubois, 1903). Together, the theoretical framework of CRF and analytical lenses of Black Feminist Thought and Double Consciousness provided a dynamic context for examining the issues related to Black Women Educational Leaders' Double Consciousness and for opportunities to scaffold this study's findings as I advanced through the various stages of the research process.

First Research Question

How, if at all, is Black Women Educational leaders' double consciousness manifested through their leadership?

Double consciousness experienced by Black women school leaders who often feel the need to act “less” Black and code switch to be successful in leadership roles was discussed by researchers as a factor influencing the leadership of Black women school leaders (DuBois, 1903;

Goings et al., 2018; Lomotey, 2019). Research recommendations included the need for further qualitative research on the double consciousness of Black Women educational leaders who must cope with their position as agents of the system that criminalizes Blackness and agents for racially oppressed students while also attempting to cope with their Blackness and the racism in the public school system (Goings et al., 2018).

The four BWEL interviewed expressed their double consciousness by stating they are always thinking about how they are perceived by others as Black Women as they lead their organizations. They expressed they seldomly ever thought about being a woman; however, they were always conscious of being a Black Woman and how others perceived their actions. They shared how they adjust how they act according to their audience by engaging in code-switching when they have a majority white audience. Additionally, they shared their constant state of consciousness to not let their actions and behaviors fall into the "angry Black woman" stereotype. Research refers to this as the stereotype threat (Lewis et al., 2016).

For example, Michelle was explicit when she shared how she was always conscious of her position as a BWEL and had to fight stereotypes regarding Black women not being intelligent or educated by code-switching. She also shared how her superior reprimanded her for "being too angry" towards teachers for a lack of teacher supervision during a field trip in which 20 teachers decided to go to Starbucks and leave 250 kids under the supervision of 1 teacher. Michelle shared how leadership preparation programs in the study's location emphasize whiteness as a normative for leadership behavior by expecting leaders to dress and talk a certain way and not allowing them to express their cultural identities through their leadership.

Angela, too, had a similar experience when presenting professional development for aspiring educational leaders. She received feedback from peers criticizing her grammar and

speech. She shared how she always thinks about her speech and grammar when she talks and writes official correspondence as part of her job. This created stress and hypervigilance on her part. Additionally, she shared how she received complaints from staff members and was reprimanded by her superior for being perceived as "too aggressive" when using her hands to talk and illustrate a point in a conversation with a group of staff members.

Mrs. Diversity shared how she dreaded meetings with the executive leadership panel and board meetings because she was always nervous when presenting on her office's progress, and her non-white accent would filter through. Also, she shared how, as a high-ranking leader in this school district, she had to always be conscious of how she addressed her subordinates by not being too direct to not be perceived as an "angry Black Woman." Yet, despite all her efforts, she too received complaints from her subordinates who stated she was acting like an "angry Black bitch".

Mrs. Retired Assistant Superintendent shared how she was always aware of the judgment people passed on her for being a BWEL, but she expressed she did not get to where she got professionally by being "thin-skinned." She stated how white women often acted in a specific way to expect a reaction out of her. However, despite her hurt and anger, she always conducted herself with the highest decorum to not give anyone the satisfaction of knowing they got to her.

These examples show how BWELs manifest their double consciousness through making professional choices in the way they express and present themselves because they experience life through "the veil" (DuBois, 1903). Their double consciousness functions as a protective vehicle which allows them to travel between different cultural worlds and excel. BWELs adjust their behavior due to stereotype threat (Lewis et al., 2016) to not be perceived as "angry Black Women" or "aggressive" by people who do not understand their cultural norms. These are coping

mechanisms born from their constant double-consciousness awareness fueled by the constant microaggressions they experience in their positions as educational leaders. As "outsiders within", BWEL are constantly experiencing life with the added weight of always seeing themselves through the eyes of their oppressors as outsiders within their roles as educational leaders (Collins, 2000).

Second Research Question

How, if at all, do Black Women Educational Leaders experience their double consciousness, both generally and specifically as they lead?

Angela stated that due to her experiences with oppression and marginalization, she considers multiple points of view when she is dealing with someone she supervises. She stated she does this because she went through a lot when people made assumptions about her behaviors without looking at who she is as a leader from multiple points of view. In this case, her experience of double consciousness aids in developing culturally responsive leadership dispositions in which she tries to understand where people from other cultures and backgrounds come from in their professions. She said that when having disciplinary supervisory meetings, she takes extra consideration to be direct and to the point, so others don't misinterpret her words or actions. She said she needs to do this because "she doesn't have the complexion for protection" if she ever messes up and stated how she had to pay a "Black Woman Tax" as her experience of double consciousness in professional situations. She likened the experience of paying a "Black Tax" to constantly proving herself capable of doing her job despite her academic and professional qualifications.

Michelle shared how she experiences her double consciousness by using her ability to code-switch as an asset to connect with the Black students and families in her community and to

gain their trust. She stated how she is respected by Black parents and Black families in her role as a BWEL, even when she does not code-switch. However, she needs to code-switch when on an admin team or in a professional environment. She shared how this constant feeling of living and thinking in two realities helps her find points of connection with Latinx families and students by using culturally responsive leadership in how she communicates with these families.

Mrs. Diversity explained how she never gets the privilege to walk through life unaware of being a Black Woman. She cannot completely turn off her double consciousness in her role as a BWEL. She detailed how she uses her double consciousness to connect with other BWEL and minority women educational leaders in the school district and have open conversations with them about any conflicts that arise. In this case, her double consciousness serves as a leadership asset to connect with others who are marginalized.

Mrs. Retired Associate Superintendent stated she experienced her double consciousness as a constant awareness of the criticism she would receive from others regarding disciplining and hiring practices. This constant awareness of how she is perceived by others led her to have always extra caution when she would promote someone to become a principal because she never wanted anyone to say she promoted someone because they were Black or a Black woman. She stated she did this because she heard other people in this district say she only got the job because of Affirmative Action despite her vast academic and professional experience, which qualified her for her position.

Recommendations for Policy and Practice

Based on these findings, the recommendation that emerges from this study is to structure leadership preparation programs to integrate and address the perspectives of BWELs by providing aspiring leaders with adequate training on systemic racism, double consciousness,

racial stereotypes, microaggressions, and Black Woman tax as essential components of culturally responsive, anti-racist leadership practices. This study demonstrates that BWELs double consciousness produces significant vulnerabilities for Black Women but they use it as a navigational tool to resist oppression and persevere in advancing their leadership careers in a white supremacist world. Despite these vulnerabilities, BWELs resist being fragmented by hegemonic stories by using their double consciousness to write their own narratives of Black Woman leadership by practicing culturally responsive leadership. Furthermore, school districts and schools continue to play an essential role in the integration of BWELs into their positions of leadership. A recommendation emerging from this study is to create affinity spaces for BWELs to connect with other BWELs as peers to share resources to navigate educational leadership as well as pairing BWELs with mentors who understand their experiences of double consciousness and can support them in establishing their sense of trust and belonging in the world of educational leadership while affirming their identities as Black Women.

Another recommendation for practice is to make changes to leadership preparation programs so they can become culturally responsive spaces for aspiring leaders. Aspiring educational leaders should receive appropriate training on microaggressions, stereotype threat, double consciousness, and culturally responsive leadership. These classes should be a mandatory requirement of teacher and leadership preparation programs to ensure educational leaders from all cultural backgrounds are prepared to lead diverse student populations. Likewise, current educational leaders should also receive similar training, so they are prepared to deal with racial and cultural conflicts that may arise between staff members or students and know how to affirm Black teachers and Black leaders

Implications for Future Research

In this research study, I interviewed BWEL in PK-12 public schools in Southwestern United States. Due to the challenges presented, I had only four participants. Future research could explore how BWEL interviewed engage with the experiences of other BWELs being interviewed to see if they share similar experiences of their double consciousness as it relates to their leadership in their dialogues with each other. Additionally, there is much to be explored in understanding how BWEL use their double consciousness as a leadership asset that allows them to become transformational leaders.

Through the interviews, some participants mentioned how this constant feeling of being outsiders within and their inner experiences of double consciousness had affected their mental and physical health. It would be worth investigating how the feeling of having to constantly explain and prove themselves affects their mental and physical health. Although this study centers on the experiences of the double consciousness of BWEL in PK-12 in Southwestern United States, I would encourage other scholars to dig deeper into this notion of BWEL feeling like "outsiders within" as a factor in the way they articulate and live their double consciousness in other large school districts in the United States to understand the similarities and differences according to each location and location's history (Collins, 2000).

Limitations

BWEL were recruited through UNLV listserv email lists and community networks (see Appendix A; Appendix B). Efforts were made to include an inclusive range of BWEL identities. However, there is a risk of sampling bias. This study used a small sample size, which is typical for critical qualitative research. This means this study only captures a tiny portion of the vast array of BWEL experience. This study did, however, de-center solely on principals as a

significant amount of scholarship primarily already focuses on that experience. Instead, it included testimonies from assistant principals, principals, assistant superintendents, and executive leaders within the school district. The experiences included here do not pretend to be representative of the experiences of all BWEL in PK-12 public schools in Southwestern United States or the United States.

The research study was limited because it depended upon the unabridged cooperation of Black Women Educational Leaders who meet the criteria outlined in Chapter 3. However, the researcher used professional judgment to ensure these limitations were minimized and/or facilitated the appropriate options (e.g., maintain a list of alternative participants to pull from or reschedule interviews to better accommodate the needs of study participants. Limitations do exist within the research study and include the fact that it focuses only on Black Women Educational leaders, not on other non-majority groups, including Latinx Women Educational leaders, who are also marginalized in similar ways. The lived experiences of BWEL might not resonate with other minorities reading this study.

As a Latinx woman researcher working with a group of participants as a cultural outsider, my understanding of the nuances related to the lived experiences of BWELs was limited. This resulted in a limitation in the study in different ways. After the participants self-identified as Black women in the interest form, I did not ask them further questions to self-identify themselves before the interviews started. I missed a chance to understand the generational nuances that might have come up if I had given them the space to explain further if they identify as Black women or African American women and their rationale for choosing each one of those terms. Additionally, I did not ask directly if they ever experienced traumatic experiences in their jobs as leaders because I wanted the participants to feel free to talk about their experiences in a

comfortable environment. As a researcher that does not belong to the cultural group I am researching, I wanted to show my respect by not re-triggering gendered racial trauma through my interview questions. Lastly, my lack of understanding as a cultural outsider led me to miss out on the generational nuances that might have come up during the interviews in relation to how the mentors of the BWELs advised the BWELs in the study to deal with instances of racism they might have encountered in their roles as leaders.

Delimitations

Despite this study's grounding in Critical Race Feminism, Intersectionality, Double Consciousness, and Black Feminist Thought, I had to remind myself to allow open conversations with the BWELs I interviewed so that they could tell their true stories without allowing my own confirmation bias or assumptions to influence the way I interpreted their experiences. Through reflexive work and talks with the interviewees, I was compelled to entirely reimagine the patterns I was seeing and, ultimately, the findings I offered through this study.

I am so grateful to have learned alongside BWEL, and I urge future scholars to create space for BWEL so their truths can be heard and honored. Scholars like Collins, 2000; Givens, 2021; Evans-Winters & Twyman Hoff, 2011; hooks, 1989; Lomotey, 2019; Moorosi, 2018; Tillman, 2004, 2009) and many others have paved the way for this research. This work results from a long legacy of Black education, fugitive pedagogies, and Black educational leadership carried out by numerous Black scholars and leadership practitioners in the United States. Future research would benefit from intentionally taking up this work and amplifying it to include experiences of BWEL in PK-12 in other parts of the United States to see if their experiences are congruent with the experiences of BWEL in this study.

Significance

Systemic racism in the public education system is color evasive (Annamma, Jackson & Morrison, 2017). It coexists with racist evasiveness within racist systems and structures in education even though our society continues to believe discrimination is individual and not systemic (Pak, 2021). Ignoring or denying the existence of systemic racism only contributes to maintaining systems based on whiteness as the norm. Racism and systemic racism manifests in U.S. PK-12 schools through the lack of access to diverse school leaders who can be representatives of their school communities and student body population.

This study is significant because public education in the United States is in crisis, and BWEL's experiences could offer a solution to some of the problems in this educational system. Research on culturally sustaining school leadership asserts culturally responsive educational leaders are needed to increase student educational equity in PK-12 education in the United States (Santamaría & Santamaría, 2015). School leaders need training in culturally responsive leadership to become motivated to close and be effective in closing the racialized achievement gap in their schools; thus, there is a need for more research on culturally responsive leadership and BWELs (Ylimaki & Jacobson, 2013). This study adds to the literature on culturally responsive leadership by including the perspectives of BWEL as leaders who develop culturally responsive practices as a result of using their to their double consciousness to resist and navigate racist structures and systems as educational leaders in public schools in the United States.

Conclusion

The memories of Black Woman Educational Leaders in PK-12 public schools in Southwestern United States who told their stories of Black Womanhood and Black Leadership are complex, multidimensional, and deeply connected to their educational experiences. In

Chapter 1, I discussed the background, problem statement, personal connection, purpose, theoretical framework, and the scholarly significance of the study. Chapter 2 explored the relevant literature related to double consciousness, Black education, critical feminism, and Black Women Educational Leaders to understand the gap in research. Afterward, Chapter 3 outlined the research design and methodology chosen for data collection and completing the research. Chapter 4 explored the significant memories of Black Woman Educational Leaders in PK-12 public schools in Southwestern United States who told their stories of Black Womanhood and Black Leadership.

These women told stories that are complex, multidimensional, and deeply connected to their educational experiences. I offered a thematic analysis of the interviews and identified three significant findings:

1. BWEL live lives as outsiders within which leads them to practice fugitive leadership by using their double consciousness as a tool to resist marginalization and navigate oppressive spaces.
2. Being targets of constant microaggressions and fighting stereotype threat prepares BWEL to be culturally responsive leaders because they know firsthand what it feels to exist in non-culturally responsive environments.
3. BWEL pay a Black Woman Tax as leaders which results in their development as highly effective culturally responsive leaders.

In Chapter 5, I explored the implications of the research study to understand how it can inform educational practices, leadership practices, research, and policy. Through telling their counter-stories, BWEL were able to voice an otherwise invisible and otherized experience and

disclose the nuanced subtleties that occur within the lived experiences of Black Women Educational Leaders in PK-12 public schools in Southwestern United States

The history of Black education in the United States was made possible by the contributions of Black Women teachers and educational leaders. Black communities in the United States have historically been oppressed by being denied access to literacy and quality education. The scholarship shows that despite the cruelty and inhumanity of racism, it has not and will not eradicate the excellence and brilliance of Black women educators and Black women educational leaders.

On the contrary, BWEL have found ways to transform their pain into the very source that makes them highly effective, culturally responsive, anti-racist leaders. Racism, in all its forms, has proven to be a futile weapon that cannot measure up to the capacity of Black Women to resist, transform, and succeed. Despite the most hostile conditions, BWEL have risen above them and produced changes in their communities. Even when the oppressor convinces themselves that they have blocked every path, BWEL continue to find a way to overcome those barriers.

In these interviews, BWEL recognized the absurdity of the racist assumptions related to how leaders should look or how leaders should act, which legitimize and allow for continued oppression through building leadership spaces centered around white supremacist cultural values. The U.S. public educational system was designed this way. The U.S. has a long history of systematically de-culturalizing communities of color under the pretext of integration when it is reserving the privilege of full humanity to white people only while wholly denying it to all others.

When the powers that be attempt to wash their hands of their culpability in oppressing Black people by pathologizing these harms and naturalizing them as inherent conditions of their lives,

the words of these Black women will serve as proof that Black Women Educational Leaders are the key to creating educational environments in which everyone including students, families, and staff, can thrive. The interviews I have shared with you here are accounts of empowered Black Women who have been witnesses and participants of the public educational system in the United States. Their words are their way of fighting back at the very attempt to dehumanize Black Women, Black communities, and Black families. The desire to render Black Women silent and defenseless is an attempt to remove culpability from the actual arbitrators of injustice: the United States government and its complicity in producing anti-Black policies that forcibly impact Black communities across the country.

The bodies, spirits, and minds of BWEL are evidence of how leadership culture, systems, and processes attempt to dehumanize BWEL by fragmenting their identities by forcing them to act less Black to fit into leadership positions and advance their careers as educational leaders. However, BWEL continue to resist gendered racial oppression by telling their stories and not conceding to white supremacy the satisfaction of destroying Black womanhood. These Black women 'talk back' their truths by transforming their double consciousness into powerful tools to fight oppression through these interviews.

Appendix A: Interest Survey

Thank you for your interest in participating in this research study examining the double consciousness of Black Women Educational Leaders in PK-12 public schools and charter schools in Clark County School District (CCSD). Through individual interviews, this proposed study will explore the double consciousness of Black Women Educational Leaders in PK-12 public schools in CCSD by looking at the lived experiences of Black Women Educational Leaders. To be eligible to participate in this study, you must be able to answer YES to Questions 1A and 1B below. In the event that you do not meet either of these study participation requirements (also known as study inclusion criteria), the data you enter on this survey will be discarded. Study participation involves an approximately 90-minute interview with the possibility of a follow-up Zoom-based individual approximately 90-minute interview; interviews will be audio and video-recorded. If you are selected to participate in this study the research team will work with you to protect the privacy and confidentiality of your identities in a manner that honors your individuality. Your answers to the other survey questions will be used to choose a diverse body of participants with diverse experiences/understandings related to the study's focus on the double consciousness of Black Women Educational Leaders in PK-12 public schools in Clark County School District in the event that more people express interest in participating in this study than the study can accommodate. If interest in the study is high, the study may be repeated in the future.

Appendix B: Email Scripts

Email Subject Line: CALL FOR PARTICIPANTS: UNLV Study on the Double Consciousness of Black Women Educational Leaders in Southern Nevada in PK-12 public or charter schools.

Body of Email:

Please Share with Your Networks!

Am I Eligible to Participate?

You are eligible to participate in this study if you are:

- 1) a PK-12 administrator in a public or charter school in Southern Nevada (principal, assistant principal, SEIF, central office administrator, student success coordinator).

AND

- 2) a self-identified Black woman

What's the Study About?

This study examines the double consciousness of Black Women Educational Leaders in PK-12 in Southern Nevada. Dubois (1903) stated:

“It is a peculiar sensation, this double consciousness, this sense of always looking at oneself through the eyes of others, of measuring one’s soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity. One feels his two-ness, — an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder. The history of the American Negro is the history

of this strife, — this longing to attain self-conscious manhood, to merge his double self into a better and truer self’.

Benefits

The potential benefits of this study encompass increasing student achievement for Black and Latinx students in Southern Nevada through increasing the representation of Black Women School Leaders in PK-12 public schools.

Cost & Compensation

There is no cost or compensation involved in participating in the study.

What Does Participation Involve?

- One 90-minute zoom-based individual interview.
- A possible follow-up 90-minute zoom-based individual interview.
- Interviews will be audio recorded and video recorded (if the participant feels comfortable with video recording)

Interested in Participating?

Please Fill Out the Study Interest Form: <https://forms.gle/udpBmZqbhPEa3Lwe6> using a personal email address. Since this is a UNLV study, queries received from a professional email address will not be considered in accordance with IRB protocols.

Need More Information?

Please contact Malena Baizan, Student Researcher, PhD candidate (baizan@unlv.nevada.edu)

Researcher Information

Christine Clark, Principal Investigator, UNLV Professor (chris.clark@unlv.edu)

Malena Baizan, Student Researcher, PhD candidate (baizan@unlv.nevada.edu)

Researcher Positionality:

While researcher positionality is always important to attend to in critical research, in this study my researcher positionality is especially important to acknowledge and engage with because I am not part of the group I am researching. Instead, I describe myself as having a complexly adjacent positionality to the group at focus in my research: Black Women Educational Leaders. I am a white-passing Argentinian immigrant to the United States. I am raced “other” only when I open my mouth to reveal that I speak English as a second language and with an accent. This othering led me to live and work in close proximity with mostly Black and Afro-Latinx people upon my arrival in the United States, but is something I have pro-actively chosen to continue because of these early experiences of othering and my continued sense of connectedness to this community that welcomed and supported me when I needed it most—first as an individual, and subsequently as the sole parent of a visibly Afro-Latina girl who, like many Black-presenting girls, faces constant assaults on her identity.

Through my proximity to Black women as neighbors, co-workers, and friends I learned critical race conscious mothering practices to support my daughter’s wholeness in the world. As a 15-year veteran schoolteacher, first in East Harlem, New York and

currently in North Las Vegas, I have worked with and for an array of Black women teachers and educational leaders. Through all these experiences I have been a witness to the transformative power of Black women, especially Black Women Educational Leaders. This witnessing has led me—as a person, mother, teacher, scholar, and educational activist—to dedicate my life to the achievement of global Black Liberation. While this objective may seem idealistic, as a student of history, I know that all social, political, economic (and other forms of) systemic change, no matter how great or small, often starts with the revolution of spirit (being), mind (knowing), and body (doing) of one individual and/or a small group of people working in community(ies)—in the case of this study, in school communities. Engaging in research that extends documentation of the transformative power of Black Women Educational Leaders has the potential to increase the representation of Black women in school leadership positions. This study seeks to highlight Black Women Educational Leaders’ double consciousness, specifically how it can contribute to Black liberation in school communities and beyond.

Appendix C: Interview Protocols

The Double Consciousness of Black Women Educational Leaders in PK-12 public schools

Individual Interview Protocols

(Note: Not all questions will be asked in all interviews; additionally, relevant follow-up questions that emerge during any interview may be asked in real-time or in a future interview)

The purpose of the study is to analyze how the double consciousness of Black Women Educational Leaders in PK-12 public schools influences the way in which they lead schools. Particularly, this study will seek to extend what is known about double consciousness through the examination of the lived experiences of Black Women educational leaders in PK-12. Double consciousness (DuBois, 1903) experienced by Black women school leaders who often feel the need to act “less” Black and code switch to be successful in leadership roles was discussed by researchers as a factor influencing the leadership of Black women school leaders (Lomotey, 2019; Goings et al., 2018). Further research recommendations centered on the need to study the double consciousness of Black Women educational leaders (Goings et al., 2018).

Individual Interview Protocol

Introductions

The interviewer will begin by sharing her story with each participant, to build rapport, including by sharing her racial and gender positionality given its relevance to the study focus.

1. Tell me about yourself. Who are you? What do you want me to know about you?
2. If you did not already cover it in your answer to the prior question or you have more to add, tell me about your experiences growing up? Where is home for you?

3. Again, if you did not already cover it in your answer to the prior questions or you have more to add, tell me about your PK-12 school experiences? Who were your teachers? Who were your classmates? What, if any, were your favorite subjects in school? Why?
4. Can you describe your personal, academic, and professional pathway to becoming an educational leader?
5. When did you decide and what inspired you to take on an educational leadership role?
6. Describe your most joyful and your most difficult experiences as an educational leader.

Social Interactions

How are Black Female educational leaders in K-12 impacted by the experience of their double consciousness as they interact with superiors, colleagues, staff, students, parents, and the community?

- 1) How, if at all, do you notice your racial and/or gender identities influencing your interactions with 1) supervisors (e.g., school-level, district-level administrators), 2) peers (e.g., educational leaders who are at the same or similar level as you), 3) teachers, 4) students' family members, 5) students, and/or 6) community stakeholders? [Discuss these groups individually and in aggregate]
- 2) If you have not already or fully addressed in your answer to the first question, do you notice differences in these interactions when you are interacting with other Black people versus non-Black people? With other People of Color versus white people? With females versus males [think about non-binary here]? If so, please describe the differences. If not, why not?
- 3) Can you differentiate these influences as coming from you (how you feel/ behave in the interactions) and/or from others (how they feel/ behave in the interactions)? [Again, discuss the groups in individually and in aggregate]

Instructional Leadership

How, if at all, does double consciousness impact the day-to-day instructional leadership role of Black female PK-12 educational leaders?

1) How often do you think consciously about race generally and your race specifically when you are at work? Are there specific times when you are likely to think about either more or less? If so, when? If not, why any thoughts about why not?

[Prompt with examples if needed, e.g., When you are walking around the school? When are you attending a gathering/meeting but not leading it? When are you leading a gathering/meeting? (with whom? the whole school? teachers? peers? superiors? others?); school or district level, meetings, assemblies, ceremonies, professional development sessions, etc. When are you conducting observations? When are you having meetings with teachers?]

2) How often do you think consciously about gender generally and your gender specifically when you are at work? Are there specific times when you are likely to think about either more or less? If so, when? If not, why any thoughts about why not? [Again, prompt with examples if needed]

3) How often do you think consciously about race and gender together generally and your race and gender together specifically when you are at work? Are there specific times when you are likely to think about either of these together more or less? If so, when? If not, why any thoughts about why not? [Again, prompt with examples if needed]

Decision Making

How, if at all, does double consciousness impact the decision-making of Black Female PK-12 educational leaders?

1) How often do you think consciously about race generally and your race specifically when you are making decisions at work? Are there specific decisions you have to make when you are likely to think about race either more or less? If so, when? If not, why any thoughts about why not?

[Prompt with examples if needed, e.g., When you are making instructional decisions? When are you making operational decisions? When are you making disciplinary decisions? When are you making budgetary decisions? When are you making supervisory decisions?]

2) How often do you think consciously about gender generally and your gender specifically when you are making decisions? Are there specific times when you are likely to think about it more or less? If so, when? If not, why any thoughts about why not? [Again, prompt with examples if needed]

3) How often do you think consciously about race and gender together generally and your race and gender together specifically when you are making decisions at work? Are there specific times when you are likely to think about either of these together more or less? If so, when? If not, why any thoughts about why not? [Again, prompt with examples if needed]

Appendix D: Coding Frameworks

A collaborative, team-based approach will guide qualitative data collection and thematic analysis. Each research team member will independently analyze interview transcripts, course syllabi, and artifacts for themes, after that the research team as a whole will meet to discuss the themes identified. More specifically, team members will keep track of individually identified themes on different pages of a shared document and then meet to discuss each team member's identification process to identify areas of thematic discrepancy. After comparing and contrasting themes, team members will then inductively identify similar/common themes to build thematic Consensus.

Data analysis will be guided by Critical Race Feminism as a framework. Double Consciousness and Black Feminist Thought will be used as analytical lenses to guide the analysis.

Critical Race Feminist data analysis will rely on Critical Race Feminist tenets to:

- 1) focus on how the forces of racism and sexism circulate interdependently, often in neutralized and invisible ways, to uphold notions of whiteness and maleness as normalcy in educational leadership in PK-12 public schools in Clark County School District;
- 2) value multidimensional identities and trouble singular notions of identity such as race or class or gender or sexuality;
- 3) emphasize the social constructions of race and gender while also recognizing the material and psychological impacts of being a Black Woman Educational Leader, which sets one outside of the Western cultural norms of leadership;
- 4) privilege voices of marginalized populations, traditionally not acknowledged within research considering legal and historical aspects of racism and sexism and how both have been used separately and together to deny the rights of some citizens;

5) recognize whiteness as property in the sphere of leadership and that gains for Black women have largely been made as the results of interest convergence of white, middle-class citizens (Harris,1993);

and,

6) support all forms of activism and resistance.

7) affirm the Double Consciousness of Black Women Educational Leaders in PK-12 as a leadership asset

Using a Critical Feminist lens requires the research team to center the experiences of Black Women and understand the role of their double consciousness in their leadership rooted in racist and sexist frameworks. These tenets will be used to code interview transcripts for themes.

Critical Feminism as a theoretical framework considers how the confluence of sexism and racism places Black Women at a crossroads of multiple oppressions in a white supremacist world that considers whiteness the norm for behavior across contexts including leadership. Black Feminist thought as an analytical lens centers on the epistemologies of Black Women. Double Consciousness as an analytical lens centers on the double consciousness of Black people in the United States both as American and as people of African descent being a part of a society built to oppress Black people. Using Critical Feminism affords research team members a framework through which they will be able to make sense of study participants' experiences navigating racism and sexism and simultaneously name the specific mechanisms in which intelligence and ability are racialized constructs as these experiences and mechanisms manifest in interview transcripts.

Together, Critical Race Feminism, Double Consciousness, and Black Feminist Thought provide a lens to understand how Black Women Educational Leaders approach their leadership and what makes their leadership style unique and effective.

Critical Race Feminism, Double consciousness, and Black Feminist Thought enable the examination of participants' awareness of, and workings with or against, intersectional oppressions.

Critical Race Feminism informed data analysis will rely on the analysis of the tenet of whiteness as property in leadership.

Double Consciousness-informed data analysis will rely on the concept of the veil to discuss how Black women experience and exercise leadership through the veil separating Black and white leadership experiences in America.

Black Feminist Thought-informed data analysis will rely on centering the experiences of Black women by amplifying their voices as they “talk back” about their experiences.

Interview transcripts will be coded for evidence of components of the theoretical framework (CRF) and analytical lenses (DC and BFT).

The researcher will braid together Critical Race Feminism, Double Consciousness, and Black Feminist Thought to unpack assumptions and expose racist and sexist dominant narratives that determine whose bodies, minds, and behaviors have value as leaders and whose presence is needed to lead our PK-12 public schools.

Appendix E: Journal Notes

Dissertation themes

1. I don't have the right complexion for the protection - from double consciousness to black woman excellence

Because other people make the same decisions, say the same things. It's just they are not Black.

2. I didn't get where I am being thin skinned
- micro aggressions-

My responses and how people respond perceive them- that's from being a Black woman.

3. She saw I had something special -black woman mentoring

4. This brought up the race card- racial stereotypes

They are gonna call and say oh she was an angry Black woman, and she did this or that.

5. I knew I was an outsider and I wanted to prove that whether I'm an outsider or not, I'm qualified for this job, and I can do it - double consciousness

6. Being conscious of what you say and how you say it is a thing for me as a Black woman. -

7. It's sad that you can't be exactly who you are and still lead- fugitive leadership

8. I ran my office like it was my home- this is how I was raised; these are the expectations.

Microaggressions and Code Switch to Double Consciousness to Black Woman Excellence to Culturally Responsive Leadership

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Curriculum Vitae

Malena Baizan

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Malena Baizan is an Established and innovative leader with over 10 years of experience in developmental planning, operations analysis, process improvement, budgeting, literacy instruction & supervision, mathematics supervision, and risk mitigation for thought leaders in the educational space. She holds Master of Arts in Early Childhood Special and General Education. Additionally, she also holds a Master of Arts in Leadership and School Administration. Her experiences working with K-12 students and their families, as well as working as an assistant principal has given her a unique perspective on the lived experiences of Women of Color working in educational settings. She is completing a PhD. in Cultural Studies, International Education, and Multicultural Education in Curriculum and Instruction at the University of Nevada Las Vegas. Her research focuses on the double consciousness of Black women in educational leadership. She has expansive experience working in Mathematics Intervention, Hip-Hop Entrepreneurship, Hip Hop and Hydroponics, and Gang Intervention Programs for K-12 youth. During her tenure as a manager in these various programs she increased program efficiency by using agile methodologies. She has also demonstrated her deep commitment to restorative justice methods by creating a literacy-based gang intervention program to address the socio-emotional and educational needs of youth impacted by the juvenile justice system.

CURRENT POSITION

Adjunct Professor, University of Nevada Las Vegas, College of Education

TEACHING AND RESEARCH AREAS

Educational Equity, Positive Interventions and Supports; Special Education; Educational Leadership, Black Feminism, Critical Race Feminism, Double Consciousness, Equity in Education, Diversity Educator

Education

2024 PhD. Candidate, University of Nevada, Las Vegas

Cultural Studies, Multicultural Education, and International Education in Curriculum and Instruction.

Dissertation: Black Women Educational Leaders in PK-12th: A Multiple Case Study on the Double Consciousness of Black Women Educational Leaders in a school district in Southern Nevada

2018 M.A. Leadership and School Administration

2011 ESL Advanced Certificate

2008 M.A. Early Childhood Special Education and General Education

2006 B.A. Liberal Arts

Professional Appointments

2022 -Present Adjunct Professor

College of Education, Department of Teaching and Learning

University of Nevada, Las Vegas

2022-Present Lead Teacher

Jo Mackey Academy, Clark County School District

Las Vegas, Nevada

2020–2022 Assistant Principal

Western High School, Clark County School District

Las Vegas, Nevada

2019-2020 Literacy Specialist

Jo Mackey Academy, Clark County School District

Las Vegas, Nevada

2018-2019 Literacy Specialist

Gilbert Academy, Clark County School District

Las Vegas, Nevada

2016-2019 First Grade Teacher

Jeffers Elementary School, Clark County School District

North Las Vegas, Nevada

2014-2016 Academic Support Director

Harbor Science and Arts Charter School, Clark County School District

East Harlem, New York

2010-2016 ESL Program Director

Harbor Science and Arts Charter School, Clark County School District
East Harlem, New York

2007-2012 Lower School (K-6th Grade) Special Education Teacher
Harbor Science and Arts Charter School, Clark County School District
East Harlem, New York

Professional Certifications

NYS Students with Disabilities K-2nd Grade

NYS Students with Disabilities 1-6th Grade

NYS Early Childhood General Education K-2nd Grade

NYS Primary Education 1-6th Grade

NYS English Language Learners Endorsement K-12th Grade

NV Primary Education with ELL Endorsement 1-6th Grade

NV Administration Endorsement K-12th Grade