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Article

You Know I've Been Holding On: Exploring the Lived Experiences of Black Women Teachers and Influencing Factors for Retention

Maiya Turner[a] and Virginia Redwine Johnson[b]

[a] Texas A&M University, maturner14@tamu.edu, vredwinejohnson@tamu.edu

ABSTRACT

This study explores the challenges and experiences faced by Black women teachers in urban schools that contribute to high attrition rates. Guided by Patricia Hill Collins' Black Feminist Thought, the study investigates the intersectionality of race, gender, and class with the Black teacher's experiences. The study captures their stories and insights using qualitative narrative inquiry to understand the dynamics influencing their retention. The findings uncover intense stress levels and desired resources for sustainability. In addressing these challenges, policymakers and stakeholders can focus on creating supportive environments leading to the retention of Black women teachers.

KEYWORDS: Urban, Retention, Black women, Teachers

> *You know I've been holdin' on, Try to make me weak but I still stay strong -Mary J. Blige*
> *(Blige, 2006)*

INTRODUCTION

The number of Black teachers in U.S. public schools has steadily declined since the landmark 1954 Brown v. Board of Education decision that shifted the foundation of education for Black people, particularly in the South. According to the National Center for Educational Statistics (2020), Black teachers currently make up approximately 7% of all educators, a stark contrast to the overwhelmingly white teacher workforce. Additionally, when compared to other racial groups, Black educators show very little evidence of growth over time that mirrors the population of Black teachers in the United States. This disparity means many students may never have a Black teacher despite the well-documented benefits of having at least one during the K-12 school experience (Villegas et al., 2012).

Culturally responsive teaching remains a critical focus in educational research as a means to support students of color. However, professional development in culturally responsive teaching often overlooks the severe shortage of Black educators, instead focusing on teaching the overwhelmingly white teacher workforce how to interact with students of color. It is imperative that educators can create meaningful relationships with their students by including elements of their culture in the curriculum (Ladson-Billings, 2000). The Black community has shown unwavering dedication to educating Black students despite sociopolitical challenges affecting their ability to serve them efficiently. This commitment is historically significant, shaping our educational system and fostering the growth of the Black teacher workforce. Black educators, particularly women, bring their students invaluable cultural knowledge and perspectives (Du Bois, 1935; Milner, 2006).

Black women have historically been at the forefront of education and social justice movements in the United States (Anderson, 1988). Despite their critical role, recent years have seen a decline in the presence of Black female educators. Research centering Black male educators has perpetuated the myth that Black female educators are thriving in the profession (Young & Easton-Brooks, 2020). However, the reality is that Black women educators are experiencing burnout at an alarming rate (Turner, 2024). Research has indicated invaluable advantages, experiences, strong rapport and relationships with students, and perspectives Black women teachers bring to education. However, they often face unique challenges contributing to high attrition rates, including intense stress and a lack of necessary resources (Farinde et al., 2016; Farinde-Wu & Fitchett, 2018).

This study aims to explore the lived experiences of Black women teachers in urban schools, focusing on the factors influencing their retention. By capturing their narratives, we seek to understand the dynamics contributing to their decision to stay, move, or leave the teaching profession. Addressing these challenges is crucial for policymakers and stakeholders to create supportive environments that enhance the retention of Black women teachers.

Literature Review

Burnout in the Teaching Profession

Burnout is a significant issue in the education field, raising concerns about the sustainability of the teaching profession. Research indicates that teacher burnout is linked to various problems, including low job satisfaction, high absenteeism rates, and anxiety, among other health complications (Domitrovich et al., 2016; Roeser et al., 2013; Wolf et al., 2015). While stress is an inherent aspect of the job due to its demanding nature (Gray et al., 2017), it is crucial to critically examine the racialized, gendered, and class-based experiences of Black female educators that exacerbate their burnout. High levels of burnout among educators significantly diminish job satisfaction and increase the risk of mental health issues (Glazzard & Rose, 2019; Kidger et al., 2016; Stansfeld et al., 2011).

The National Center for Education Statistics (2022) reports that Black educators are more likely than any other group to leave the profession due to personal life circumstances, salary and benefits, and school-related challenges. Farinde-Wu (2018) found that Black female educators often opt to teach in urban schools because of the diversity within the school community, their educational backgrounds, and a desire to address critical needs in their communities. However, contextual factors such as lack of administrative support, inadequate salaries, student behavior issues, and limited opportunities for career advancement contribute to their diminished job satisfaction and burnout (Farinde et al., 2016; Farinde-Wu & Fitchett, 2018).

While these studies provide valuable insights into the causes of burnout, they often fail to address the intersectional nature of the challenges faced by Black female educators. Future research should focus on the specific experiences of Black women in the teaching profession and develop targeted interventions to support their well-being and retention.

One such area that warrants deeper exploration is the role of culturally responsive teaching in shaping these experiences. While culturally responsive teaching is widely promoted as a tool to support diverse learners, it can be both empowering and exhausting for Black women educators. On one hand, culturally responsive teaching aligns with many Black women teachers' desire to uplift their students and communities, offering purpose and connection that can buffer against burnout. As Gay (2018) emphasizes, culturally responsive teaching is not just about pedagogy but about deeply affirming students' identities and lived experiences, which is an approach many Black women educators naturally embody. However, when culturally responsive teaching is implemented without systemic support

such as curriculum flexibility, adequate training, or shared responsibility among staff, it can add to the emotional labor these teachers already face (Gay, 2013). Black women teachers often find themselves expected to lead equity initiatives, mentor colleagues, and advocate for students of color, all while managing their full teaching load. This expectation to serve as both cultural broker and educator without institutional backing contributes to the stress and burnout they report. Thus, culturally responsive teaching is not a one-size-fits-all solution; without structural changes, it may unintentionally intensify the very burnout it aims to combat, particularly for Black women educators who are often seen as natural culture bearers and expected to lead this work. These demands, while rooted in their strengths, further highlight the complex and vital role Black women teachers play in schools today.

ROLE OF BLACK WOMEN TEACHERS

From the inception of education for Black people, Black women have been at the forefront of developing educational programs and institutions (Perkins, 1988). Black women teachers have played pivotal and multifaceted roles since the landmark 1954 Brown v. Board of Education Supreme Court decision (Ladson-Billings, 2024). Their influence extends beyond traditional teaching duties to include content delivery, mentorship, and serving as role models (Bristol & Carver-Thomas, 2024; Bristol & Martin-Fernandez, 2019; Irvine, 1989). For Black students, Black teachers serve as vital role models, fostering an environment where students can see reflections of themselves. This role is crucial for inspiring and motivating students through their presence and actions, providing countless possibilities and opportunities for achievement (Gershenson et al., 2017).

Black teachers tailor their instruction to meet the distinctive needs of their students. Culturally relevant teaching methods and cultural competence, grounded in shared backgrounds and experiences, are essential for enhancing student engagement and understanding across various topics (Gay, 2018). These practices bridge cultural gaps and validate Black students' cultural identities, fostering a sense of belonging and confidence in their academic abilities (Ladson-Billings, 1995). By integrating culturally responsive pedagogy, Black teachers make learning more meaningful and relevant, promoting an inclusive educational environment that respects and celebrates diversity (James-Gallaway & Harris, 2021; Paris & Alim, 2017).

Although the literature highlights the positive impact of Black teachers, it often overlooks the systemic barriers they face. More research is needed on how these educators navigate and resist these barriers and how their unique contributions can be better supported and leveraged within the education system.

COMMITMENT TO STUDENTS & FAMILIES

Black teachers are deeply committed to the well-being and development of their students. They form unique and significant relationships with their students, often positioning themselves as extended family members (Irvine, 1989; Ladson-Billings, 2009). Most Black teachers see their work as an act of social justice and their way of uplifting the community (Dixson, 2003). For Black female teachers, this kinship often takes the form of surrogate motherhood, where they care for their Black students (Mosley, 2018). This role includes providing emotional support, creating safe spaces for students to express themselves, and fostering resilience (Beauboef-Lafontant, 2002; Milner, 2006; Thompson, 1998). This connection to their students and communities makes Black women educators a valuable resource to the students they teach.

Community engagement is another critical component of their role. By strengthening partnerships with families, Black teachers support students' emotional development and improve their schooling outcomes (Foster, 1997; Legette et al., 2022). This dedication to the community and emotional support helps students facing racial trauma and other stressors, contributing to their academic success and well-being. Therefore, sustaining Black teachers is not just about representation but also about improving educational outcomes and learning environments for Black students.

While Black teachers' commitment to their students and communities is well-documented, the literature often fails to address the additional emotional labor this entails. Future studies should explore how this emotional labor impacts Black teachers' well-being and what support systems can be implemented to alleviate this burden.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study is grounded in Black Feminist Thought (BFT), a theoretical framework developed by Patricia Hill Collins (1990). BFT provides a lens to understand the unique experiences of Black women by examining the

intersections of race, gender, and class. This framework is particularly relevant for exploring the lived experiences of Black women teachers, as it highlights the systemic oppression they face and their strategies for resistance.

By framing this study within BFT, we can better understand how the intersecting identities of Black women teachers influence their experiences in urban schools. This framework guides the research questions and methodology, ensuring that the study captures the complexity of their lived realities based on four core ideas of oppression, epistemic agency, social justice, and intersectionality:

- Oppression: The study examines how systemic racism, sexism, and classism manifest in the professional lives of Black women teachers, contributing to their stress and burnout.
- Epistemic Agency: Through qualitative narrative inquiry, the study amplifies the voices of Black women teachers, allowing them to share their stories and insights. This approach validates their experiences and provides a platform for them to advocate for necessary changes.
- Social Justice: This study's findings aim to inform policymakers and stakeholders about the specific challenges Black women teachers face. The study seeks to promote social justice and equity in the education system by addressing these challenges.
- Intersectionality: The study's focus on the intersectionality of race, gender, and class provides a comprehensive understanding of the unique factors influencing the retention of Black women teachers. This approach helps identify targeted interventions that can support their professional sustainability.

By utilizing Black Feminist Thought as the theoretical framework, this study highlights the systemic issues affecting Black women teachers and underscores their resilience and agency. This framework is essential for developing a nuanced understanding of their experiences and advocating for meaningful educational system changes.

METHODOLOGY

This study aims to identify and examine the factors that lead to Black women teachers' attrition in K-12 schools. Specifically, it focuses on the intense levels of stress that Black women educators face, how they contend with these experiences, and the solutions and resources they desire access to. To this end, we address the following research questions:

1. What are the main factors leading Black women teachers out of the classroom?
2. What factors influence the probability of Black women teachers' sustainability in urban K-12 schools?

RESEARCH DESIGN

This study employs a qualitative narrative inquiry approach to capture the lived experiences of Black women teachers in urban schools. Narrative inquiry is particularly suited for this research as it allows for an in-depth exploration of personal stories and experiences, providing rich, contextual insights into the participants' lives.

PARTICIPANTS

The participants were Black or African American women teachers currently working in K-12 schools in the United States. The study initially reached out to potential participants through various social media platforms (Facebook, X (formerly known as Twitter), Instagram, and LinkedIn). The survey yielded 41 participants, from whom 26 responded and registered for a semi-structured focus group.

Table 1 *Demographic Information* of Black Female Educators (n=11)

Name	Years of Experience	Current Role	Plans for 2022-2023 Academic Year*
Jennifer	6.5	Elementary Teacher	To remain in the classroom.
Miranda	19	Math Interventionist	Completing final year in a formal educational space.
Brittany	10	Dance Teacher	To remain in the classroom.
Monica	9	Instructional Coach	To remain in her administrative role.

Jessica	8	Math Teacher	Undecided. Has applied to other jobs outside of education.
Summer	11	English Teacher	Undecided. Has turned in letter of resignation to school district.
Sirah	10	ESL Pre-K Teacher	Has turned in letter of resignation to school district and applied to other jobs outside of education.
Kim	5	Special Education Case Manager/Inclusion Specialist for US History and Resource Reading Teacher	To remain in the classroom.
Angele	15	Science Teacher	To remain in the classroom.
Kendra	8	Assistant Principal	Applied to a job outside of education but has chosen to remain in her administrative role.
Carley	6	Instructional Coach	To remain in her administrative role.

*At time of the focus group

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

This study followed ethical research standards for human subjects. All participants were informed of the study's purpose, their voluntary participation, and their right to withdraw at any time without consequence. Informed consent was obtained prior to data collection, and pseudonyms were used to protect participants' identities. Focus group recordings and transcripts were stored on secure, password-protected devices accessible only to the research team.

DATA COLLECTION

Survey: An initial survey was disseminated through social media platforms, guiding participants to reflect on their time as students, their motivations for entering the teaching profession, and their motivations for staying in the profession.

Focus Groups: Semi-structured focus groups were conducted during the summer of 2022, allowing participants to discuss their survey responses in more detail. These focus groups were conducted via Zoom and facilitated by a member of the research team. The focus groups provided a platform for participants to share their experiences and insights collaboratively.

DATA ANALYSIS

The data was analyzed using a phenomenological approach, focusing on the lived experiences of Black female teachers. The analysis was guided by the five anchors of Radical Healing in Communities of Color (Williams et al., 2023): (1) collectivism, (2) critical consciousness, (3) radical hope, (4) strength and resistance, (5) cultural authenticity and self-knowledge. During the coding process, subcategories were created to identify the main contributors to stress for Black women within the classroom. These subcategories included 1) feeling unappreciated, 2) lack of administrative support, and 3) Being held to a higher standard.

This qualitative study uses narrative inquiry. This research method of teachers' stories allows for their stories to give context to teacher knowledge through their individual knowledge and experiences, the landscapes in which they work, and how these landscapes relate to their teaching practice (Clandinin & Connelly, 1996). By grounding this research in narrative inquiry, we can better examine the factors that impact the Black female teachers' experiences within the context of their schools, sociopolitical climate, and personal experiences. This frames the current research

in a way that authentically tells the whole truth. The research team collaborated on coding to ensure consensus and reliability. Member checks were performed during each focus group to validate the findings and ensure accuracy.

POSITIONALITY

As former teachers who both identify as Black women, the researchers have a vested interest in the teachers' experiences in this study. This positionality allows the researchers to view the participants' experiences through different generational lenses, providing a rich data source to explore the needs and stressors of Black women teachers.

FINDINGS

The findings from the focus groups reveal two significant themes: Common Stressors Among Black Women Educators and Black Women Educators' Acts of Resistance. These themes highlight the unique challenges Black women teachers face and their strategies for coping with and resisting systemic issues.

COMMON STRESSORS AMONG BLACK WOMEN EDUCATORS

The Black women educators in this study reported experiencing severe burnout due to a lack of administrative support, feeling unappreciated, and being held to higher standards than their counterparts.

FEELING UNAPPRECIATED

A significant theme among the participants was the feeling of being unappreciated. Many Black women teachers felt they were responsible for keeping everything together for everyone else, even if it wasn't part of their job. Monica attributed many teachers leaving her campus to a lack of appreciation despite the loyalty many Black women have shown to the district:

"And that's why I feel like right now, and I did see why a lot of people are leaving, there's no appreciation; There's no appreciation for loyalty number one, and there's no appreciation for what we do on an everyday basis you know, and I just wish administration would understand it."

Monica further explained that this lack of appreciation caused her to resent going to work and look forward to the days she could take off to get a break from school.

Additionally, Sirah expressed pride in attending professional development and growing herself as a teacher for her students. However, she felt that much of this effort went unnoticed by the administration, which allowed mediocrity from other teachers and staff members:

"…it cannot just be well what else have you done teacher. I have done every acrobatic circus trick I know. I have used every bit of professional development that you've caught me to do. I have confided in Jesus cause he is my Lord and Savior and the only reason I'm still employed. I just I need you to know that other people have to be held accountable to do the work, and I think the burnout comes from wanting so much more than what is actually accessible and not desiring or holding anyone else in expectation."

HELD TO A HIGHER STANDARD

Many Black women spoke about their work environment and how often they had to contend with code-switching, choices with their attire, and how they presented themselves. While they did not take issue with these concessions, they felt their administration held their teaching to a higher standard than other teachers at their school. Jessica described how a meeting with administrators about her teaching performance was overshadowed by a post on her private social media, which featured a photo of her and her child at the beach:

"You hold teachers to such a high standard I can't even post a picture of me in my bathing suit on vacation on Facebook."

According to Jessica, other teachers had similar posts following a long break, but they were not called out in the same fashion as she was. This experience left her feeling distrustful of her administrative team.

Monica described being frequently called away from her duties as an instructional coach to assist administrators with additional tasks such as parent meetings:

"We are held at a higher standard. We have to deal with a lot of discipline issues you know, like in my school, a lot of the times they will call me in if it's an irate black parent and I'm like you're the administrator you know you need to deal with it. Why am I here? Because you want them to see somebody that looks like them to know you

know to be culturally relevant? I don't know but I just know it's it's it's a different world for African American teachers, it really is, and unless you're in the process, you really don't know what we deal with."

This additional burden created an even more stressful environment for Monica and other Black women teachers, who often found themselves responsible for helping non-Black teachers with disciplinary issues, lesson planning, and other tasks that the administration brushed off on them.

LACK OF ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT

The role of administration was pivotal for the Black women in this study, who looked to them for support in their teaching. Monica explained that she believed a bulk of the stress came directly from the administration:

"I think that a lot of the burnout sometimes has to do with administration, you know, your administration can make or break you. You know, if you have a good administration, it can motivate you to stay a little longer and deal with a lot of stuff. But if you have an administration that is, they don't train you, you can't give me something on Tuesday and expect me to implement it on Wednesday and have the students on Friday, it just doesn't work that way you have to have an administration that knows that it takes years to become a good teacher, it takes years to learn a grade level, it takes years to learn a curriculum."

Sirah added that administration constantly asked teachers to meet certain goals while piling on new tasks:

"While administration and everybody on top of them just kind of like piles on, it's very overwhelming in a way, that doesn't make sense, because it's like, you want these metrics to look a certain way, but only so many people can do the things that you're asking them to do."

Similarly, Kim noted:

"Like the adults are who are running people off, for whatever reason, and I don't think we'll ever truly understand that. That was literally one of the reasons I left my campus was the lack of support from the administrators, to be effective in the classroom, to do what's best practice for our kids that have proven, time and time again that these things work specifically building relationships with our kids."

Each focus group had multiple examples of administration being the reason for their departure from their campus or the teaching profession as a whole.

Black Women Educators' Acts of Resistance

Despite the challenges, the Black women in this study showed signs of resistance in several ways, with an increased focus on their mental health. For some of the teachers, their mental health was beginning to push them out of the field of education. For some, this meant staying in the profession, but being mindful of the way they are being treated and how they are treating themselves. Of the participants, three had already decided to pursue careers outside of education.

Based on Hill Collins' four core ideas of Black Feminist Thought, oppression, epistemic agency, social justice, and intersectionality, Table 2 shows examples of ways Black female educators display acts of resistance in their educational contexts.

Table 2
Black Women Educators' Acts of Resistance

Oppression	Epistemic Agency	Social Justice	Intersectionality
push back against oppression	*practice epistemic agency by using their voices*	*commit to social justice*	*understand the intersectional nature of oppression*

"My mental health is more important, you know, because if I'm if I close my eyes and I'm no longer here, I can't serve anybody anyway so um I am definitely keeping that in mind."	"…we wanted that unified vision, so that we can go out and support our departments so we kind of feel like we were coaching him [the principal] to be a leader and to be that ultimate leader."	"…things that you see on the news and things that you just know that's going on within the profession and the Community. I think those of us who choose to stay really need to know and feel that we can be the change that we wish to see."	"Like yes everybody is replaceable but black teachers are not really replaceable so like what do you think needs like, how do we get more Blacks into teaching."

As these Black women educators practice acts of resistance through Black Feminist Thought, even if not on purpose, this inadvertently keeps them grounded in the field and maintains their careers as teachers. In a sense, teaching, despite the unappreciation, lack of support from the administration, and higher standards, is an act of resistance when many of these women are qualified to be employed elsewhere.

DISCUSSION

The findings from this study underscore the multifaceted challenges that Black women educators face in urban schools, which contribute significantly to their high attrition rates. The themes of feeling unappreciated, being held to higher standards, and lacking administrative support are not just isolated issues but are deeply interconnected and reflective of broader systemic inequities. Black women educators are more likely to teach in schools with large concentrations of Black students despite a school's label of urban, suburban, or rural (NCES, 2022). However, many Black women choose urban schools as a means to fulfill a need for resources and representation for the students (Dixson, 2003; Farinde-Wu, 2018). As such, the attrition of Black students has dire implications on the Black teacher workforce in urban schools and students in suburban and rural areas with large concentrations of Black students. As such, understanding the experiences of Black women teacher in order to help retain them is extremely important.

The sense of being undervalued, the higher standards they are held to, and the lack of administrative support are not independent issues. These stressors intersect and compound each other, creating a more challenging work environment. For instance, the lack of administrative support exacerbates feelings of being unappreciated, as teachers do not receive the recognition or resources they need to succeed. This intersectionality highlights the need for a holistic approach to addressing these challenges. Monica's experience of being called away from her instructional duties to handle disciplinary issues illustrates how administrative expectations can add to the burden of Black women educators. This additional responsibility, coupled with a lack of appreciation, leads to increased stress and burnout.

Comparing the experiences of Black women educators with those of other demographic groups can provide a clearer picture of the unique challenges they face. For instance, while Black male educators also face significant challenges, the intersection of race and gender creates a distinct set of stressors for Black women educators. Similarly, white female educators may not experience the same level of racial bias, highlighting the compounded nature of the challenges faced by Black women. Analyzing experiences across different urban areas can reveal regional differences in support and challenges. For example, some urban districts may have better support systems in place, leading to lower attrition rates among Black women educators. Understanding these regional differences can help identify best practices that can be implemented more broadly.

The stressors faced by Black women educators have a direct impact on their students' academic and emotional outcomes. High levels of teacher burnout can lead to lower student engagement and achievement. Additionally, the absence of Black women educators deprives students of valuable role models who can provide culturally relevant

instruction and support. Black women educators serve as crucial role models for Black students, helping to foster a sense of belonging and confidence. Their presence in the classroom can inspire Black students to pursue academic success and see themselves in professional roles. The loss of these educators can have a detrimental effect on students' aspirations and self-esteem.

To address the high attrition rates among Black women educators, specific policy recommendations are needed. These could include administrative training programs focused on cultural competence, changes in evaluation criteria to ensure fairness, and the implementation of mentorship programs that provide support and guidance for Black women educators. Hill Collins (1990) posits that systemic change is required to achieve justice for Black women. As such, long-term strategies for systemic change should include pipeline programs to encourage more Black women to enter and stay in the teaching profession. These programs can provide scholarships, mentorship, and professional development opportunities to support Black women educators throughout their careers. Further, the pathways to teaching that keep Black women, and Black teachers as a whole, out of specific programs, whether traditional or alternative, need to be examined.

The findings contribute to Black Feminist Thought by highlighting the intersectional nature of the challenges faced by Black women educators. The experiences of these educators align with the core ideas of oppression, epistemic agency, social justice, and intersectionality. By centering their voices, this study underscores the need for systemic change to address the unique challenges they face. The study also suggests the need for new theoretical frameworks that better capture the experiences of Black women educators. These frameworks should consider the intersectionality of race, gender, and class, and how these factors interact to create unique challenges and opportunities for resistance.

Supplementing the qualitative findings with quantitative data can provide a more comprehensive understanding of the challenges faced by Black women educators. This could include statistics on attrition rates, job satisfaction scores, and survey results from a larger sample. Quantitative data can help to validate the qualitative findings and provide a broader context for the experiences of Black women educators.

Future research should explore areas that were beyond the scope of this study. This could include longitudinal studies to track changes over time, studies focusing on different educational levels (e.g., elementary vs. high school), and research on the experiences of Black women educators in rural or suburban settings. Additionally, exploring the impact of specific interventions and support programs can provide valuable insights into practical strategies for retaining Black women educators.

CONCLUSION

Knowledge is a garden. If it isn't cultivated, you can't harvest it." – African Proverb

This study captures the experiences shared by Black women teachers in urban schools, highlighting the significant challenges they face, including feeling unappreciated, being held to higher standards than their colleagues, and experiencing a lack of administrative support. These challenges are deeply intertwined, creating a work environment that exacerbates stress and burnout, ultimately contributing to high attrition rates among Black women educators.

Despite these adversities, Black women teachers persist in their roles, driven by a profound commitment to their students' well-being and academic success. They continue to serve as essential role models, advocates, and sources of emotional support, providing culturally relevant instruction that inspires Black students to excel. Their resilience and dedication are acts of resistance against systemic inequities, underscoring the critical need for systemic change.

To improve the retention of Black women educators, it is imperative for policymakers and stakeholders to create supportive and equitable environments. This includes implementing targeted support systems that recognize and address the unique challenges Black women educators face. Specific recommendations include:

Administrative Training Programs: Focus on cultural competence and equitable practices to ensure that Black women educators receive the support and recognition they deserve.

Mentorship Programs: Establish mentorship and support networks tailored to the needs of Black women educators, providing platforms for sharing experiences and fostering a sense of community and belonging.

Policy Reforms: Advocate for changes in evaluation criteria and other policies that disproportionately impact Black women educators, ensuring fairness and equity in the workplace.

Pipeline Programs: Develop long-term strategies to encourage more Black women to enter and stay in the teaching profession, including scholarships, professional development opportunities, and career advancement pathways.

By addressing these issues, we can not only improve the retention of Black women educators but also enhance the educational experiences of their students. Black women educators play a crucial role in providing culturally relevant instruction and serving as role models and advocates for their students. Ensuring their well-being and job satisfaction is essential for fostering a more inclusive and equitable educational system.

The findings of this study contribute to the broader discourse on educational equity and the importance of supporting marginalized groups within the teaching profession. Future research should continue to explore the intersectional challenges faced by Black women educators and identify effective strategies for creating supportive and sustainable work environments. By centering the voices and experiences of Black women educators, we can work towards a more just and equitable educational landscape for all.

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