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Georgia School Principals' Experiences with Racial Minority Teacher Recruitment

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GEORGIA SCHOOL PRINCIPALS' EXPERIENCES WITH RACIAL MINORITY
TEACHER RECRUITMENT

by

SHEADRIC D. BARBRA

(Under the Direction of Walter Polka)

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to examine the experiences of Georgia school principals with racial minority teacher recruitment. Although it is important that the teacher workforce reflects that of its diverse population, there has been limited research on the experiences of Georgia school principals with racial minority teacher recruitment. After conducting a thorough review of the literature in the area of minority teacher recruitment, it became evident that having a teacher workforce that is representative of the student population is important. The literature that the researcher examined discussed minority teacher recruitment along with the shortage of minority teachers.

The method of data collection in this study included three focus group interviews at the elementary, middle, and high school levels. At each level the focus group interview consisted of three principals. The responses gathered from the three focus group interviews were recorded and reported in narrative form.

INDEX WORDS: Minority teacher recruitment, Minority teacher shortage, Teacher diversity, Student diversity

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this study to my deceased mother Gwendolyn Diane Drake.

Even though you are gone you have inspired me to transcend and to be the best that I can be. Thanks for your spiritual guidance here on earth in the absence of your physical being. I truly hope that I have made you proud, and I love you dearly. I would also like to dedicate this work to my daughter Zariyah Nicole Barbra and my nephews and nieces. As your uncle Dr. Zheadric Barbra has often told you, education is the pathway to freedom; so continue to strive and build upon the great legacy that we have started for you. Love to you all!

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Introduction

“A society that reflects the full participation of all its citizens will be difficult to accomplish if only 1 in 20 teachers is a member of a minority group. At this rate, the average student will have only two minority teachers out of about 40 during his or her k-12 school years” (Haselkorn and Calkins, 1993). In the age of accountability, the wide achievement gap that separates minority students and non-white students is one of the most serious problems that face public schools today. The reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Act (ESEA), now known as the “No Child Left Behind” (NCLB) act was passed by Congress under President George Bush in January of 2002. The primary purpose of NCLB is to improve the academic performance of all students, while at the same time close achievement gaps between students from different ethnic groups and economic backgrounds (National Collaborative on Diversity in the Teaching Force, 2004). NCLB holds schools accountable for making “adequate yearly progress” for demographic subgroups on state tests. Narrowing the achievement gap by increasing minority student achievement could possibly improve educational attainment rates among minority students (National Collaborative on Diversity in the Teaching Force). NCLB includes a number of elements considered essential for reaching this goal, one of which includes that all teachers will be “highly qualified”. Although one of the elements of NCLB addresses teacher quality, little attention has been given to the issues of teacher diversity and cultural competence (National Collaborative on Diversity in the Teaching Force). Due to the lack of attention given to this issue the purpose of this study is to

examine Georgia School principals' experiences with racial minority teacher recruitment and retention.

African American Teacher Shortage

During the last three decades, the United States has become increasingly diverse racially and ethnically. As a direct result, school systems across the United States have diversified k-12 student populations that are steadily increasing. In 2000, minority students made up 37 percent of all elementary and secondary school enrollments, while 90% of the teachers were Caucasian (Coeyman, 2000).

America's public school systems are experiencing a shortage of teachers of color, especially African American teachers (Daurte, 2000). The number of ethnically diverse teachers is declining tremendously. The lack of a diverse teaching force has deprived this country's minority student population of qualified and certified role models who have the same cultural background in the classrooms. "While the nation's students represent more and more racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds, their teachers do not reflect this diversity" (National Teacher Recruitment Clearinghouse, 2002). According to the Georgia Professional Standards Commission, in 2005-2006 there were approximately 1,598,461 million students enrolled in public schools in the state of Georgia (Georgia Professional Standards Commission, 2006). Of these students 48% were white, 38.3% black, 8.4% Hispanic, 2.7% Asian Indian/Pacific Islander, 2.4 multi-racial, and 0.1% American Indian/Alaskan Native. During the same year, Georgia's teacher workforce consisted of 109,507 teachers, with 76.7% being white, 21.3% black, 1.1% Hispanic, 0.6% Asian/Pacific Islander, 0.2% multi-racial, 0% American Indian/Alaskan Native.

With African American representation in America's multicultural classrooms,

African Americans as well as other minority students are provided with role models that help enhance their educational achievement and success. This gives African American students the necessary incentive to perform at a level of excellence on a daily basis. Schlesinger, Jr. (1995) argued, “Children from nonwhite minorities so long persuaded of their inferiority by the white hegemony [sic], need the support and inspiration that identification with role models of the same color will give them” (p. 228-229). Monk (1998), who completed a synthesis of studies on the academic achievement of African American males at four-year institutions, reported that African American males at historically black colleges and universities earn higher grade point averages than African American males at predominantly white colleges and universities. Although there is no concrete evidence showing that the minority teacher shortage contributes to the underachievement of minority students, many educators feel that just as girls have benefited from knowledge of women in powerful positions, the success rate of African American students is greater when adult role models from their own backgrounds are leading their classrooms (Coeyman, 2000). Jimmar, who represents Lauderdale County School employees for the Alabama Education Association stated, “What does it say to the black child who never sees his or her own kind in those positions? Nothing positive comes of it” (Singleton-Rickman, 2002, p. 7).

Impact of Civil Rights Act on Minority Teacher Supply

In 1936 when Thurgood Marshall joined the NAACP’s legal staff, the association was divided over how to proceed against “separate but equal” (Tushnet, 1961). One way to attack the “separate but equal” practice was to emphasize “equal” in a litigation strategy that would force the school districts to spend money on improving facilities for

African Americans. The other way was to say outright that separate meant unequal, meaning that it was unconstitutional. Thurgood Marshall was no stranger to the Supreme Court by the time he argued *Brown v. Board of Education* in 1954. He had been there often and succeeded most of the time in the sixteen years before, patiently chipping away at the foundations of American apartheid so that the final blow, when struck, would bring down the entire edifice (Tushnet).

Another influential figure involved in the fight for integration was a lady by the name of Pauli Murray. Murray's devotion to Civil Rights began as a struggle to overcome segregation. After graduating from college, Murray worked for the National Urban League, the Works Progress Administration, and the Workers Defense League. Immersed in an interracial, interfaith community that formed the Civil Rights movement of the 1930's, Murray could envision the possibilities of interracial solidarity (Demeke, 2001). An integrationist in the 1930s and 1940s even while the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) was still working on the equal part of the "separate but equal", Murray developed pioneering arguments to use the equal protection clauses of the Fourteenth Amendment to fight discriminatory legislation. In 1951, she wrote *States' Laws on Race and Color* for the Women's Division of the Methodist Church, a work which Thurgood Marshall labeled it the Bible of the Civil Rights movement (Demeke).

The teaching profession has been significantly important to African Americans historically. In the early 1950's before the Civil Rights Act was enacted, most African Americans who were college graduates were employed as teachers (Brown, 1994). In 1954 there were 82,000 black teachers to teach 2 million African American public school

students. However, this number would drop drastically over the next ten years to 38,000 (Hudson & Holmes, 1994). The decrease in the number of African American teachers was an unintended result of the incomplete implementation of school desegregation that followed the *Brown v. Board of Education, Kansas* (1954) decision. While African American students were sent to predominantly white public schools as a result of the *Brown* decision African American teachers were not. As the African American student population declined in black schools the supply of African American teachers increased. Many of the African American teachers during this time would go to lose their jobs due to massive layoffs.

In a book entitled “Simple Justice”, Kluger (1977) covers the history of *Brown v. Board of Education* Supreme Court decision that outlawed school segregation. The *Brown* decision would reverse the *Plessy v. Ferguson* Supreme Court decision making the practice of “separate but equal” unconstitutional under the law. The *Brown v. Board of Education* decision would ultimately change public education forever and produce the truth that learning and education is fundamental to the exercise of liberty (Kluger). According to Kluger what should be taken from school desegregation cases is the idea that schools are the pillar of equality.

In the 1970’s minorities were the first to be dismissed when seniority became the criteria for teacher dismissal as student enrollment declined (Jacullo-Noto, 1991). In the 1980’s, the number of minority candidates entering teacher education programs was affected by legislative actions that limited the financial assistance available to students. Funds and programs that directly supported the education of minorities in public schools were cut or totally eliminated, as were federal dollars for grants, loans, and scholarships

for individuals pursuing higher education (Jacullo-Noto). Kusimo (1999) found more evidence that contributed to the loss of African American educators. In the old segregated school system, African American children attended schools that were predominantly operated by African American educators. When public schools were integrated, massive layoffs of African American educators would soon follow. Between 1954 and 1965, 38,000 African Americans in 17 states lost their positions as teachers and administrators, and this loss has never been regained (Kusimo).

Effects of Teacher Diversity on Minority Achievement

Many factors are related to the success of minority students within the public school population. According to Wieher (2000), previous research indicates that the academic performance of minority students improves when school faculties include minority teachers. There is mounting evidence that students are often more successful when their teachers have ethnic or racial backgrounds similar to their own (Bunce, 1996). According to Bunce, in 1996 about 90 percent of the men and women in teacher-education programs were Caucasian. In 2006, the U.S. Department of Education reports that only 8 percent of the nation's public school teachers are African American and only 3 percent are Hispanic. However, many cities in America have predominantly African American or Hispanic student populations. A study conducted by the Milwaukee school system showed that about 75 percent of the students were minority while 75 percent of the teachers were white. It was also found that 66 percent of the K-12 public school students in Buffalo, New York, were minorities, but 77 percent of the teachers were white (Bunce).

The National Collaborative on Diversity in the Teaching Force (2004) released a report on diversity in America's teaching force that included the results of an examination of the relationship between educational achievement and teacher diversity (National Education Association, 2005). The report was completed during a three day conference in 2001 and included more than 20 of the nation's leading education and advocacy organizations. The study specifically focused on the roles that ethnicity and cultural competence play in student achievement. Participants of this study reviewed research on the impact of culturally responsive pedagogy on children. The collaborative found that increasing the percentage of teachers of color in classrooms is connected directly to closing the achievement gap of students.

In a 1993 study of a diverse group of students conducted by New and Sleeter, student teachers found that Caucasian boys were perceived as most teachable, unless they behaved inappropriately and appeared to be from low-income households (Carr, 1996). Asian American children were viewed by the student teachers as being model children, while Hispanic children tended to be invisible, in that the student teachers who observed them had relatively little to say about them. The study concluded that teachers focus on children's non-academic behaviors rather than their academic work, and clearly express preferences for certain types of behaviors (Carr). According to Hilliard (1989), when teachers misunderstand the behavioral style of students, the results can be four-fold. Such misunderstandings lead educators to 1) make mistakes in estimating a student's or a cultural group's intellectual potential; 2) misread achievement in academic subjects such as creative expression; 3) misjudge students' language abilities; and 4) have difficulty establishing rapport and communication (Carr). Thus, it is important for teachers to have

a level of understanding and toleration for academic differences and learning styles of all students.

Meier and Stewart, Meier, Wrinkle, and Polinard (1991) conducted research in the state of Texas where they studied the relationship between minority teachers and the district/campus percentage of minority students who passed state achievement tests (Weiher, 2000). Data from 540 school districts and 668 campuses were used to conduct the study. Researchers found that there was a relationship between passive representation of minority students and student performance. This means minority student achievement on standardized tests improves as the percentage of teachers who are in the minority group increases. The researchers also found that as the disparity between district/campus minority teachers and district/campus minority students increased, the lower the percentage of district/campus minority students passing the state achievement test. According to Weiher, in order to design the research that was reported in this Texas study, the literature suggests that three considerations be made. The first consideration is that there should be a focus on the role of the social context of the schools. Secondly, the research design should assess the impact of teacher ethnicity to find out whether or not minority children are more successful in districts with complimentary minority teachers. The third consideration should be that if minority students are more successful in districts that employ minority teachers, why is that the case (Weiher)? Meier, Wrinkle, and Polinard concluded in their study that increases in the representation of minority teachers in public schools, actually enhance the academic achievement of both minority and white students (Nielsen & Wolf, 2001).

Eubanks and Weaver (1999) described three major arguments for teacher diversity that provide strong justification for a diverse approach. The first argument is that children of color need teachers who share similar cultural experiences and who can be role models in order to demonstrate the benefits of education. As cited by Eubanks and Weaver, research findings also suggest that minority teachers are more responsive to children's cultural backgrounds (Delpit, 1995; Hale-Benson, 1986), hold higher expectations of minority children (Irvine, 1992), and incorporate social reform into their teaching ((King, 1993). However, Eubanks and Weaver warn that to imply black children need black teachers and Hispanic children need Hispanic teachers undercuts the diversity argument. The second argument for diversity described by Eubanks and Weaver is that all children need diverse role models. Again Eubanks and Weaver warn that to suggest minority teachers' primary value is as "role models" does not address their most important function, which is to educate all children to meet the standards. The third and final argument for diversity described by Eubanks and Weaver is that it improves educational outcomes. In order to increase student achievement levels, teachers must not only meet academic needs of the children, but also their social and cultural needs.

Statement of the Problem

The number of minority students enrolled in the U.S. public school system is at an all-time high and projected to dramatically increase. At the same time the number of minority teachers is projected to decrease. Many of these students are from low-income families and impoverished communities where education is not valued. For educators, it is important that the issue of racial minority teacher recruitment is researched in order to

increase the quality of the teacher workforce that supports all students regardless of their ethnic background.

The number one goal of the NCLB is to decrease the achievement gap between whites and minority groups. According to this act, increased teacher quality will be instrumental in accomplishing this goal. However, the NCLB does not take into consideration the rapidly growing minority population and a teacher workforce that is not representative of this population of students.

It is important that school leaders are aware of the relationship between diverse teaching staffs and the achievement of all students. If principals were aware and were willing to actively recruit minority teachers, the achievement gap that exists between Caucasians and minority groups could possibly decrease. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to examine the experiences of Georgia school principals' with racial minority teacher recruitment.

Research Questions

Currently, research suggests a relationship between the underrepresentation of African American teachers and the achievement of African American students, the following research questions will guide this study:

Overarching Question

What are the experiences of Georgia school principals' with racial minority teacher recruitment?

1. How does the decreasing supply of minority teachers impact teacher recruitment for Georgia School Principals?

2. What are the perceptions about recruitment processes and retention rates of African American teachers?

Significance of the Study

The definition of diversity encompasses acceptance and respect. It means understanding that each individual is unique, and recognizing our individual differences. These can be along the dimensions of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, age, physical abilities, religious beliefs, political beliefs, or other ideologies. It is the exploration of these differences in a safe, positive, and nurturing environment. It is about understanding each other and moving beyond simple tolerance to embracing and celebrating the rich dimensions of diversity contained within each individual (<http://gladstone.uoregon.edu/~asuomca/diversityinit/definition.html>).

Research has shown that there is a need to address the growing shortage of minority teachers, especially African American teachers, in the United States (McMahon, 2001). “Student diversity must be met by a diverse teaching force if U. S. schools are to address the needs of all children in today’s classroom” (McNulty, 2000). Although all teachers must be equipped with adequate knowledge and a sufficient understanding of how to teach in a multicultural classroom, current research stresses the importance of “minority teachers as role models to both minority and majority students growing up in an environment of diverse cultures and ethnicity” (Otuya, 1988).

According to Clewell & Villegas (1998), there is little that confirms that more minority teachers in America’s classrooms improve student outcomes or that it does not. However, there is research that suggests that understanding the culture and experience of

students helps teachers provide context and meaning to instruction (Eubanks & Weaver, 1999).

However, according to Haberman (1996), simply recruiting more teachers for impoverished high-minority schools is not sufficient, and neither is the learning of content and standard pedagogy. Haberman developed what he refers to as “Dimensions of Effective Teaching,” which are the attributes of most of the urban school teachers. Haberman refers to teachers who teach in impoverished high-minority schools as “Star teachers of children in poverty.” The dimensions that Haberman refers to include the following: generating the desire to learn in others; taking responsibility for learning of at-risks students; forming generalizations from specific acts; taking a professional rather than a personal approach to the classroom; knowing what they must do to satisfy the school system and avoid burnout, and an awareness that teachers and students alike make serious errors. According to Haberman, the dimensions of effective teaching can be assessed by the structured interview that he developed.

After examining the experiences of Georgia school principals with racial minority teacher recruitment, it can be determined whether or not principals need additional staff development in the area of diversity recruitment. After receiving more training in the area of racial minority teacher recruitment, principals will be more likely to employ teaching staffs that are representative of their student populations, leading to improved student achievement for all students.

This study is also important to the field of educational administration because of the increased accountability for student achievement outlined in the “No Child Left Behind” act (2000). An impact of the NCLB is that the achievement gap between

minority students and white students will be closed by the year 2014 because all students are expected to be on grade level. Leaders in the field of education should continue to study this issue further in efforts to better understand the dynamics of the relationship between the ethnicity of teachers and their students. Understanding this relationship will ultimately prepare the field for the future when the current minority becomes the majority.

The study is important to the researcher because research shows that there is a relationship between teacher diversity and the achievement of minority students, but no attention has been given to principals receiving adequate training on the importance of diverse teaching staffs. The researcher's perception is that principals consciously attempt to diversify their teaching staffs without fully understanding the positive achievement outcomes for African American students.

The researcher does not support the notion that African American teachers' major role is to serve as role models for African American students. Instead the researcher holds that African American teachers act as instructional bridges through which the western values of education is transformed into a language whereby African American students can understand.

Limitations

This study is designed to examine the experiences of Georgia school principals with racial minority teacher recruitment. There is a possibility that the honesty of participants to respond accurately could skew the results.

Delimitations

This study will only examine the experiences of Georgia school principals with racial minority teacher recruitment. This study will only examine data obtained from structured interviews. This study will only focus on school principals in the metro non-rural areas of Georgia rather than all principals in the state of Georgia.

Procedures

Design

The research design for this study consisted of the qualitative method. Qualitative research methods require inductive reasoning by the researcher in order to generate theories (Stewart, 2002). In conducting qualitative research, the researcher begins by collecting detailed descriptions of practices, and then examining those practices for patterns or trends that might influence decision making. Additionally, qualitative research involves several methods of data collection, such as focus groups, field observations, in-depth interviews, and case studies (Dominick & Wimmer, 2003).

The justification for using the qualitative method in this study is because it allowed the researcher to interview nine school principals in non-rural metro Atlanta. The researcher interviewed three elementary school principals, three middle school principals, and three high school principals from the total population of Georgia school principals. At each level the researcher interviewed three principals together as a focus group. During the focus group interviews the researcher collected information regarding the principals' experiences with racial minority teacher recruitment. The researcher then presented responses from the focus group interviews in narrative form. The qualitative

research approach was used initially to establish the theory about the experiences of Georgia School principals with racial minority teacher recruitment.

Summary

In the age of accountability public school systems today have the ever challenging task of closing the achievement gap that exist between white students and minority students. Under the No Child Left Behind Act great emphasis has been placed on improving minority student achievement while at the same time little or no attention has been given to teacher diversity. Teachers play the most important role in the learning process because they relate to students' cultural and societal messages. By this being known, public school principals in the United States play a major role in the hiring of teachers who share similar ethnic and cultural backgrounds of the students that they teach. The minority student population is showing tremendous growth while the supply of minority teachers continues to decrease in the United States. Studies suggest a rapid increase in African American students attending public schools, as the number of teachers of the same race is at a constant decline (Casteel, 2000). For example, Georgia statistics show that African American students represent nearly 30% of the total student population while teachers of the same race barely make up 20% of Georgia's teaching force (Georgia Professional Standards Commission, 2001). Other studies report that minority students, who are mostly black, accounts for approximately 40% of the student population in the United States while the minority teaching force in this country is only about five percent (Shure, 2001). Despite the rapid growth of minority enrollment in public schools over the past decade, the gap between minority educators and minority students continue to widen (Carter, 2001). These implications suggest that a national

teaching force, in its current state already tremendously over-represented by white females, is threatened to become even more under-diversified within the next decade (Carter).

While this trend is occurring in public schools across the United States, growing concerns have been raised for the lack of minority role models for minority students. There is a need for teachers of color to serve as role models for all students in order to enhance the level of racial and ethnic diversity in this democratic society (Newby, Swift, & Newby, 2000). Yasin and Albert (1999) reported that a shortage or absence of black classroom teachers as role models has a negative impact on the academic achievement of black students. "Today's children come to school from a wide variety of backgrounds, and require teachers who can meet the rapidly expanding range of children's and parent's needs, abilities and perspectives" (National Teacher Recruitment Clearinghouse, 2002, p. 1). Evans (1997) suggests that even white teachers can benefit from the presence of African American teachers in that these teachers of color help white teachers obtain an understanding of effective ways to communicate and deal with African American students. African American teachers can not only serve as role models for students of color, but they must also aid the level of racial, ethnic and cultural awareness amongst their colleagues (Evans).

Definition of Terms

1. African American: Racial or ethnic group of African descent who are usually characterized as black or people with very dark skin pigmentation. For the purpose of this study, African American is often used interchangeably with Black and sometimes minority.

2. **Caucasian:** According to Barnhart and Barnhart (1988), this term describes a member of any of the white races of mankind. For the purpose of this study, Caucasian is often used interchangeably with white, white person, and non-minority group.
3. **Minority Group:** According to Barnhart and Barnhart (1988), this terminology relates to any group, especially a racial or ethnic group, occupying a subordinate position in a community and often subjected to discriminatory or unequal treatment. Jacullo-Noto (1991) describes minority groups as United States citizens belonging to the following racial or ethnic groups: Black, Hispanic, Native American, and Alaskan American.
4. **Racial and Ethnic Diversity:** According to Barnhart and Barnhart (1988), this term is the noticeable heterogeneity, variety, differences, or distinctive ways of living built up by a group of people.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The purpose of this study was to examine the experiences of Georgia School principals with racial minority teacher recruitment. The essence of this review is to establish the truth concerning the teacher shortage as it relates to and affects racial and ethnic minorities. In order to provide a clear and concise illustration of the facts, the literature focuses on the African American population in America as the primary minority group that is grossly underrepresented in public education. A portion of the information is the result of national research conducted by researchers who have worked diligently in the name of well-known colleges, universities, research centers, and private organizations. However, statistical data obtained from Georgia, its public school systems, and the racial and ethnic composition of its educators is used as the center of this review. Since the African American population in the United States has been the largest of all minority groups for many years, the majority of the research contained within this document used the terms minorities and African Americans interchangeably, both of which refer to America's Black people (Bunce, 1996).

During the past 20 years researchers have debated the issue of the teacher shortage in America, especially minority teachers (Newby, Swift, & Newby, 2000). One researcher struggled with the question of whether the teacher shortage is a myth or reality (Feistritzer, 1998). If there is a shortage, then what can be done to eliminate this trend? Are there programs in place to accommodate the need for qualified classroom instructors as well as the lack of minority professionals in America's school systems? Have successful recruitment and retention strategies been developed, implemented, and

evaluated? Will the same strategies be duplicated in order to meet the needs in areas with a short supply of minority educators? Does the shortage have anything to do with the idea that teachers across the United States are not paid what they are worth? Answers to these questions and many more lie within the literature obtained by several of the same researchers who for the past two decades have been studying and continue to study the supply and demand for teachers of different races, ethnicity, cultures and backgrounds. Some even attempt and succeed in developing faculties that are racially and ethnically proportionate with the students served.

Overview of the Teacher Shortage

In recent years government and school system officials have struggled to meet the alleged demand for qualified educators in America, while one researcher claimed that the shortage is nothing more than a myth (1998). Feistritzer (1998) reported that this nation has recruited and hired teachers at a rate of two million new teachers each decade. Dr. Emily Feistritzer (1998), who is president of a private research organization in Washington, D. C., gathered reports from The National Center for Educational Statistics that show only 66% of the 139,000 “new” public school teachers hired in 1993-94 were actually teaching for the first time. Feistritzer (1998) claimed that the remaining 34% could not be classified as new since those individuals were simply returning to the profession. Feistritzer also claimed that there are more than enough teachers in America in order to accommodate the so-called crisis. According to Feistritzer (1998), American institutions of higher learning issued over 100,000 education degrees in the 1990s. It was further noted that, six million people in the United States hold at least a bachelors degree in education, and four million hold education degrees but do not teach (1998). The

information gathered suggested that the idea of a teacher shortage in America is simply a misconception, and that the interest in a career in teaching is widespread among high school and college students, people from other occupations and former teachers. Despite this position from earlier years, Dr. Feistritzer (2001) stated in a later work that this nation is not only in need of more teachers, but school systems are in demand for better teachers as well.

The African American Teacher Shortage

If there is a national teacher shortage in America and the American teaching force is overwhelmingly white, this may suggest that the minority teaching force is suffering from an even greater shortage. According to Boatright and Bachtel (2001), minority groups represent 30.9% of Georgia's population with 28.7% being African Americans. However, Georgia's teaching force is nearly 79% Caucasian and only about 21% minority, with 20.23% being African American (Georgia Professional Standards Commission, 2001). Members of the Connecticut Commission on Teacher and School Administration Shortage and Minority Recruitment (2001) reported that there is a tremendously short supply of minority teachers and teachers who are willing to teach in poor communities and in certain subject areas. Schools in and near inner cities seem to have the highest demand for minority teachers as well as teachers in critical areas such as mathematics and science.

While the number of minority teachers continues to decrease in the United States, current research shows that the minority student population is growing at an astronomical rate (Lankard, 1994). According to Casteel (2000), there is a rapid increase in African American students attending public schools, and a decline in teachers of the same race.

Shure (2001) found that minority students account for approximately 40% of the student population in the United States while the minority teaching force in this country is only about five percent. This means that the American teaching force is becoming even more non-minority each year with the overwhelming majority being white females. “African American, Hispanic, Asian, and Native American-and even male-teachers are dangerously underrepresented in our schools” (Shure, 2001, p. 32). Contrary to these findings, Georgia reported an educator workforce increasing at a rate of 3% annually since 1997 (Georgia Professional Standards Commission, 2001). However, the race and ethnicity of these educators are in direct proportion with the numbers collected for the entire country. The demographic composition of Georgia teachers, for the 2000-2001 academic school year, provides an illustration of the profile of Georgia educators according to gender and ethnicity. An analysis of this data shows that Georgia educators during the 2000-2001 school year were predominately female at 82.39% and Caucasian at 78.49%. During the 2005-2006 school year the 1,598,461 million Georgia public school students were 48% Caucasian, 38.3% African American, 8.4% Hispanic, 2.7% Asian Indian/Pacific Islander, 2.4 multi-racial, and 0.1% American Indian/Alaskan Native. During the same year, Georgia’s teachers consisted of 109,507 teachers, with 76.7% being Caucasian, 21.3% African American, 1.1% Hispanic, 0.6% Asian/Pacific Islander, 0.2% multi-racial, 0% American Indian/Alaskan Native (Georgia Professional Standards Commission, 2006). These numbers are very close to those provided by national research findings.

This common trend is occurring across the United States and has raised growing concern for the lack of minority role models for minority students. According to Yasin and Albert, (1999) the academic underachievement of minority students is a direct result of the shortage or absence of ethnic role models. Green, Blasik, Hartshorn, & Schatten-Jones (2000) discovered research that identifies the lack of role models as one of the factors that contribute to racial and ethnic discrepancies in the sciences. Racial and ethnically diverse students need teachers who have experience, knowledge and an understanding of their culture, behavior and background (1994). Villegas and Clewell (1998) expressed the need for teachers of color to serve as role models for all students in order to enhance the level of racial and ethnic diversity in today's society. They argue this point:

The argument most frequently made for increasing the racial/ethnic diversity of the teaching force is that a democratic society needs teachers of color to serve as role models for all students....The presence of minority teachers gives students of color hope that they too can grow up to occupy responsible positions in our society. White students can also benefit from a racially and ethnically diverse teaching force. By seeing people of color in professional roles, white youngsters are helped to dispel myths of racial inferiority and incompetence that many have come to internalize about people of color. (pp. 121-122)

Kusimo (1999) believes that African American teachers play the role of parents, disciplinarians, counselors, role models, and advocates for African American children. Researchers believe that low-achieving African American students benefit most from relationships with African American teachers (Kusimo). This is not to imply that African

American and minority students cannot learn from and have a positive relationship with Caucasian teachers. However, because of their European background Caucasian teachers tend to adopt Eurocentric instructional practices. Geneva Gay (2001) explains that “who gets what kinds of opportunities to participate in what kinds of instructional talking correlates highly with the race, ethnicity, culture, language, ability, and gender of students” (p. 31). This means that the instructional delivery and interactions with students in the classrooms of Caucasian teachers are primarily directed toward and draw high expectations from English-speaking European American students-white or Caucasian students. What happens to the minority students in these same classrooms? This type of classroom climate is extremely detrimental to the academic achievement and social development of minority students. Gay (2001) described the frequent treatment of poor and students of color as follows:

Students who are poor and members of ethnic groups of color are frequently treated conversely; they receive fewer and lower-quality opportunities to engage in instructional interactions, and they are assisted less often and in less enabling ways in their academic problem solving. These “second-class instructional engagement opportunities” are a direct result of the failure of teachers to know, respect, and incorporate the culture and communicative styles of ethnically different students into classroom instruction. (p. 31)

“This issue is further exacerbated by the growing cultural gap between the increasingly diverse student population and a teaching faculty that is increasingly Euro-American” (Diaz, 2001, p.98). In many ways African American students suffer most, because the contributions of their descendants’ in American society is often omitted in classrooms

lead by Caucasian teachers. This is not to imply that all Caucasian teachers perform in such ways intentionally, but generally their actions may be the result of a lack of knowledge about the cultural backgrounds of their ethnically diverse students. In addition, most Caucasian teachers have insufficient knowledge about how to appropriately address diversity in their instructional practices.

The Effects on African American Students

Due to the rising representation of African American students in America's multicultural classrooms, African Americans as well as other minority students should be have role models who help to enhance their educational achievement and success. This gives African American students the necessary incentive to perform at a level of excellence on a daily basis. Schlesinger, Jr. (1995) argued "children from nonwhite minorities so long persuaded of their inferiority by the white hegemony [sic], need the support and inspiration that identification with role models of the same color will give them" (p. 228-229). Monk (1998), who completed a synthesis of studies on the academic achievement of African American males at four-year institutions, reported that African American males at historically black colleges and universities earn higher grade point averages than African American males at predominantly white colleges and universities. Although there is no concrete evidence showing that the minority teacher shortage contributes to the underachievement of minority students, many educators feel that just as girls have benefited from knowledge of women in powerful positions, the success rate of African American students is greater when adult role models from their own backgrounds are leading their classrooms (Coeyman, 2000). Jimmar, who represents Lauderdale County School employees for the Alabama Education Association, stated, "What does it

say to the black child who never sees his own kind in those positions? Nothing positive comes of it” (Singleton-Rickman, 2002, p. 7).

There is also concern that minority students may suffer from discrimination and lack of academic support from non-minority teachers. Nelson (2001) reported that minority college students feel that they receive less support from professors and they feel uncomfortable on predominantly white campuses. Minority students have even greater concerns about racist attitudes and behaviors by Caucasian instructors and staff members (Nelson, 2001). One study however, revealed evidence that contradicts these reports. Casteel’s (2000) study shows that even though Caucasian teachers are not completely free from bias in their treatment of African American students, the race of the teachers proved to be insignificant with African American suburban youths. Contrary to most literature on this subject, these African American suburban seventh graders from a low socio-economic area did not believe race was an issue in treatment, grading or punishment while in classrooms lead by Caucasian teachers (2000).

While Casteel’s (2000) findings may be significant for the one school in the study, most researchers believe that Caucasian educators have failed to acknowledge the validity of the culture of minority students, but rather unfairly and without reason label African American students and other minority youth as deficient. The tendency of African American students to express themselves in stylish and nonverbal ways is a part of their heritage (Pai, 1989). Caucasian teachers often misinterpret this behavior as African American children with bad attitudes who are displaying a blatant disrespect for authority, inadequate interest in learning, and a lack of self-confidence. The teachers’ perception of deficiency is not only a misunderstanding that ultimately hurts the students,

but it is also the result of what one author calls culture clashing (Viadero, 1996). Many educational specialists believe the implications produced by growing evidence which reveals that effective instruction is accomplished more often when the teacher and student have similar racial and ethnic backgrounds (Bounce, 1996). Race and ethnicity are factors that often shape and develop life experiences of all individuals, especially minorities. Having similar life experiences is often essential for teachers in their ability to relate to or reach their students. Several Caucasian professors have supported the opinion that several liberal whites types [like themselves] have trouble understanding where people like African Americans are coming from, due to their lack of similar experiences (Bounce, 1996). Casteel (2000) found that African American high school students frequently complain that Caucasian teachers do not relate very well to them. As a result, black students often remain in a state of rejection while in daily contact with Caucasian teachers. The consequence of these events is the hindering of the educational enhancement of African American children. In addition, African American students who maintain this attitude are often striving to avoid all behaviors associated with “acting white” including the use of “standard” English and any evidence of high academic performance in classes. “However, other African American students respond in a different way. These high-achieving African American students cite their awareness of racism and prejudice as a reason to excel, thus preparing themselves to fight these evils” (Kusimo, 1999, p. 4). Although some African American students adopt this attitude and demonstrate levels of academic achievement at or above that of their Caucasian counterparts, they are the minority among African Americans as well as other minority groups. Since ethnicity or race is one of the factors that influence the attitudes of African

American students toward their teachers, there is a need to recruit, educate, and retain a diverse population of teachers to instruct an increasingly multicultural student population (Diaz, 2001).

Minority Teacher Recruitment and Retention Programs

“Despite the need for teachers of color, their numbers remain low. Proponents contend that there is a legal and moral responsibility to recruit more minority teachers, and remove the obstacles preventing their entry into the field” (Yasin & Albert, 1990, p. 8). The state of Connecticut made its move by establishing a law that made recruiting minority teachers one of the top priorities of each school district in the state. The Commission on Teacher and School Administration Shortage and Minority Recruitment (2001) explained:

Connecticut law cites as one of the state’s educational interests that “in order to reduce racial, ethnic and economic isolation, each school district shall provide educational opportunities for its students to interact with students and teachers from other racial, ethnic, and economic backgrounds...” Each school district must also have a written plan for the recruitment of minority teachers. (p. 1)

During the 1999-2000 school year Connecticut’s minority professionals in education increased by 10% yet minorities represented only 7% of the public school personnel statewide.

Many organizations and institutions in various states are following Connecticut by taking steps toward eliminating social and financial obstacles that hinder minority students in their efforts to complete teacher education programs. For example, Texas A&M, University of Louisville and University of Texas-Austin have created models to

open social, academic and financial opportunities for minority students (Nelson, 2001). Other researchers are also exploring the idea of catering specifically to minority students.

Research shows that the demand for minority teachers can be satisfied using teacher recruitment and retention programs [ones like that which Connecticut law demands] that have proven to be successful in accommodating demographic shifts and changes in the population. According to Dr. Martin Haberman (1999), who is a distinguished professor and researcher at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, one such program, the Metropolitan Milwaukee Teacher Education Program (MMTEP), continuously provides evidence that minority teachers can be recruited, selected, prepared and retained in the metropolitan areas in which they are needed. This program seeks to provide a high-quality teacher preparation and certification opportunity to metropolitan residents who have earned at least a bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university. By tracking the graduates of this post baccalaureate urban teacher education program, now in its tenth year, Haberman (1999) found that "this program has a 94% retention rate and 96% of its graduates were rated satisfactory or exemplary by the principals" (p. 3). School districts encourage teacher's aides, substitutes, and other non-certified personnel to obtain the education that leads to certification. The study reports that 78% of the teachers prepared by this program are minorities and 94% continued to teach in Milwaukee public schools throughout the 10-year period of the study (Haberman). The success of this program proves that minority representation can be increased in metropolitan school districts by expanding the recruitment pool. Therefore, educational leaders and human resource personnel should consider the people with college degrees that already reside in areas where the demand is great.

In addition, school systems provide financial and academic support to eligible minority students in their districts. For example, Genzuk and Baca (1998) reported that the para-educator-to-teacher pipeline in Southern California recruits prospective candidates from its para-professionals and provide them with the necessary financial, social and academic support to enable them to complete the requirements for state certification. According to Genzuk (1997), such programs produce graduates who possess talents that are extremely valuable to the diverse classrooms of today. Many of these programs have begun to recognize the importance of finances to minority candidates, which has lead program directors to begin to provide total tuition for minority individuals who satisfy specifications for eligibility. Even though there have been successful efforts to place skilled minority educators in American classroom, African American students are treated differently than Caucasian students in recruiting efforts (Newby et. al., 2000). African American high school students are hardly ever encouraged to pursue teaching unless they obtain encouragement from teachers of their own race (2000). As a result, the racial composition of the students preparing to become teachers is overwhelmingly lopsided. “The average candidate preparing to teach at the undergraduate level is a young, white female who recently graduated from high school and is attending college full-time” (Feistritzer, 1999, p. 1). Eighty percent of teacher candidates in institutions of higher education are Caucasian, while only about 10% are African American, 3% are Asian, 2% are Natives and about 6% are Hispanic (Feistritzer, 1999).

According to Feistritzer (2001), people are expressing concern about the dwindling number of minority teachers who successfully complete traditional college-

based teacher education programs and more importantly the falling percentage of minority representation in the teaching force. Alternative routes have been established and used in order to accommodate the need to increase the minority presence in America's classrooms. Dr. Feistritzer (2001) suggested:

Alternative routes for preparing and licensing teachers are attracting large numbers of highly qualified, talented and enthusiastic individuals to the teaching profession. Applicants to these programs number in the thousands. Most are highly educated, life-experienced adults who want to teach and to improve America's educational system. They will do whatever is necessary in the way of preparation in order to accomplish those ends. Many of them think alternative routes not only make the most sense but also provide the best preparation for the real world of teaching. (p. 10)

Due to the success rate, many states are beginning to provide alternative routes to teacher certification. Dr. Feistritzer (2000) reported that 40 states now have programs developed and designed to accommodate people who need an alternative to traditional teacher training and licensing procedures, especially since these candidates usually already have a bachelor's degree. Feistritzer (2000) added:

These alternative teacher certification routes provide opportunities for people from various educational backgrounds and walks of life to become teachers. They have opened doors to teaching for persons from other careers, from the military, from liberal arts colleges, former teachers who want to upgrade their credentials and get back into teaching and for people who trained to teach years ago but never did. (p. 1)

“In comparing two groups of new hires, those having traditional certification and those having alternative forms of certification, minorities were found to constitute a higher percentage of the latter group” (Kowalski & Reitzug, 1993, p. 331). Teaching candidates who enter the teaching profession via alternative route programs have higher retention rates than those from traditional college-based programs. One major factor that influences these high retention rates is that the people who complete the program actually have a longing or overwhelming desire to work positively with children.

Mitchell (2000) reported that there is reliable evidence that competency testing poses special obstacles to minority teacher candidates. *Washington Post* columnist William Raspberry cited that the reason minority applicants fare worse on tests than Caucasians is that they themselves are victims of inferior teaching (Gifford, 1986). The opposing view to this position regarding this controversial issue is that such testing is essential to achieve quality in our future teachers. The Institute for Higher Education Policy (2000) generated a policy report under commission to the Alliance for Equity in Higher Education. The report described the professional assessment for beginning teachers the (PRAXIS) Series. The PRAXIS series is the most commonly administered teacher assessment used by the majority of the states to determine teacher competency.

In response to a call to raise cutoff scores of teaching and licensure examinations, Memory, Coleman, and Watkins (2003) examined scores on the Pre-Professional Skills Test (PPST) given in the state of Massachusetts; the test was given to a group of elementary teachers by their university supervisors. The researchers sought to explore what effect increasing the qualifying score by one point would have on the pool of qualified African American teaching candidates. They concluded that one of the negative

tradeoffs in raising basic skills cutoff scores for teacher licensure is severely reducing the size of the pool of qualified African American.

Justice and Hardy (2001) studied the effects of performance-based testing on minority teacher candidates taking the Examination for the Certification of Educators in Texas (ExCET). They studied the factors that led to success or failure on the test. The exam consists of a series of comprehensive examinations in the student's teaching field and in professional knowledge. Results indicated that GPA was a statistically significant but weak predictor of success and the test-taking skills and practice sessions led to positive outcomes. The study concluded that early intervention and continuous preparation for the exam was very important for African American and Hispanic students. In addition, they recommended that college faculty infuse critical thinking throughout the curriculum and use professional educational terms aligned with the competencies to be tested (Justice & Hardy).

Hood and Parker (1989) went even further than Cole, arguing that teacher testing was often biased against minorities because it lacked the necessary reliability and validity. They suggested that the use of standardized tests for initial teacher certification be reconsidered given the negative impact it has had on minorities. In a comparison study of the Illinois and Pennsylvania certification testing systems, they found that the inclusion of numerous African American test panelists in Illinois tended to reduce the bias in test questions. The Illinois Education Reform Act of 1985 specifically required that the test be racially neutral so as to avoid discrimination based on race or national origin. A conclusion of this study was that there needed to be extensive minority participation at each stage of the development of teacher testing (Hood & Parker).

Lemberger's (2001) case study reported the effects of raising certification standards on three experienced teachers in New York State who were not native English speakers. The author documented the teachers' struggles to pass what was for them a timed test unrelated to their competency in the classroom. Lemberger pointed out that the test requirements exacerbated teacher shortages by creating demands that disadvantaged minority language teachers who had otherwise excellent teaching records. Her recommendations included a careful review of the task demands of the current certification examinations and more support for the teachers taking them (Lemberger).

The state of Georgia also started programs designed to not only eliminate the teacher shortage in Georgia, but also to create alternate ways for educated professionals to enter the field of teaching. Georgia Teacher Alternative Preparation Program, Georgia TAPP, is a teacher induction program developed by Georgia school systems, colleges and universities, regional educational service agencies (RESA), and the professional standards commission in an effort to fill classrooms with skilled teachers. There have been 756 participants since its inception and 37% representing African Americans (Georgia Professional Standards Commission, 2002), Georgia TAPP has proven to be successful in respect to attracting minority personnel. However, this highly productive program that has been able to supply many areas of Georgia with much needed classroom instructors has fallen short of meeting the demand caused by a steady increase in a diverse population of students. "Teacher preparation programs in Georgia's public and private institutions of higher education are currently producing teachers at levels far too low to meet the current and growing demand for professional teachers" (Georgia Professional Standards Commission, 2002, p. 54).

Summary

There is no doubt that America is in need of quality educators in its classrooms. However, the greater need for most school systems seems to be the successful recruitment and retention of minority teachers, especially African Americans. Research has shown that this nation has an abundance of white teachers while the existing small percentage of minority teachers continues to decline year after year. It is not about affirmative action or providing African Americans and other minorities with special opportunities simply because of race. The recruitment and retention of minority educators, especially qualified and certified African Americans, is a national agenda. By placing these role models in American classrooms, the social, emotional, cultural and academic needs of roughly 40% of this nation's students-the percentage of American students represented by minorities will be accommodated while white students reap the benefits as well. The bottom line for the American government and school officials is to provide for the total development of all children, African Americans and other minorities included.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

According to Gall, Borg, and Gall (1996), the purpose of educational research is to describe educational phenomena or to investigate relationships between different phenomena. This study explored the experiences of Georgia school principals with regards to racial minority teacher recruitment. The areas of study that developed as a result of the previous review of literature included: teacher shortage, African American teacher shortage, effects of teacher shortage on African American students, and minority teacher recruitment and retention programs. This chapter presents research questions, research design, procedures for data collection, and data analysis.

Research Questions

Currently, research suggests a relationship between the underrepresentation of African American teachers and the achievement of African American students, the following research questions will guide this study:

1. How does the decreasing supply of minority teachers impact teacher recruitment for Georgia School Principals?
2. What are the perceptions about recruitment processes and retention rates of African American teachers?

Research Design

The research design used for this study was the qualitative method. The justification for using the qualitative method in this study is because it allowed the researcher to interview 9 Georgia school principals and examine their experiences with racial minority teacher recruitment and retention. Using focus groups the researcher

interviewed 3 elementary school principals, 3 middle school principals, and 3 high school principals from the total population of Georgia school principals. Responses given by the participants during the focus interviews were recorded and transcribed by the researcher. Entire and partial audio tapes can be transcribed and field notes derived as the researcher listens and re-listens to the recorded interviews (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000).

According to Patton (1990) qualitative interviews allow the researcher to obtain qualitative data through the use of open ended questions. The three focus group interviews consisted of 8 open-ended questions. The focus group interviews required that the selected principals respond according to their experiences, beliefs, thoughts with regards to racial minority teacher recruitment and retention.

Marshall & Rossman (1999) outline three general principles which are the major premise for the design of research collection strategies. The first principle to the data collection strategy is that data collection should relate closely to the specific type of information sought. Secondly, the researcher should determine the most practical, effective, and ethical manner in which to collect this information. Finally, the research proposal should demonstrate that the researcher is capable of designing and selecting data collection methods that are consistent with information needed, well organized, and specific to the degree that it can be replicated (Marshall & Rossman).

Data Collection

The data collection methods for this study were related to the type of information sought and consisted of three focus group interviews. Permission was requested by the researcher to conduct the study with each principal before any information was collected. Confidentiality was maintained by the researcher throughout the duration of the study.

After principals acknowledged the study and provided consent for participation, the researcher then scheduled the focus group interviews with the 9 principals. The interviews were completed at the researcher's school of employment. The focus group interview questions were designed by the researcher to gather information on the experiences of Georgia school principals with racial minority teacher recruitment and retention.

Participant Selection

The participants for this research study included principals from Northeastern Georgia schools. These principals were employed in public schools in the state of Georgia which serve kindergarten through twelfth grade students. The sample for this research study consisted of nine Georgia school principals from Northeast Georgia. For the focus group interviews three elementary school principals, three middle school principals, and three high school principals were used. In order to get the principals to participate, the researcher prepared a letter outlining the scope of the study and assured them that the researcher's intention was to strictly gather information. Generalizability from the research only applied to the state of Georgia. Before contacting any research participants, the researcher completed the mandatory Institutional Review Board (IRB) application of Georgia Southern University which determined that the research was allowable.

Data Analysis

In the research study data analysis consisted of the researcher presenting major themes discovered during three focus group interviews. The responses to the interview questions given by the selected principals and any significant findings were reported in

narrative form. Qualitative researchers use personal interpretation to analyze data collected and provide an explanation of the information and specifically what it means to the participants (Gay & Airasian, 2000).

Limitations

This study was designed to examine the experiences of Georgia school principals with racial minority teacher recruitment.

Delimitations

This study only examined the experiences of Georgia school principals with racial minority teacher recruitment. This study only examined data obtained from focus group interviews. Finally, this study also only focused on school principals in metro non-rural areas of Georgia rather than all principals in the state of Georgia.

Role of the Researcher

The researcher is currently employed with the Rockdale County Public School System as an assistant principal. Rockdale County is located east of Atlanta and is bordered by Dekalb, Henry, Gwinnett, and Newton counties. The researcher's role in the study included: determining which Georgia school principals were selected to participate in the study, gaining permission to survey the principals, interviewing principals to examine their experiences with racial minority teacher recruitment, and presenting the data in Chapter IV of the dissertation.

CHAPTER 4
REPORT OF DATA AND DATA ANALYSIS

Although an emphasis has been placed on closing the achievement that exist between Caucasian students and minority students as a result of the No Child Left Behind Act, no such emphasis has been placed on the ever increasing need for minority teachers in the teacher workforce. The researcher was interested in studying the experiences of Georgia school principals with racial minority teacher recruitment and retention. Additionally, the researcher also wanted to gain insight regarding the thoughts, beliefs, and feelings of Georgia school principals with regards to racial minority teacher recruitment.

When principals understand the implications and impact of having diversified teaching staffs on the academic success of all students, and develop personal philosophies regarding racial minority teacher recruitment and retention, they will become more inclined to hire teachers that are representative of the student populations. With this in mind the achievement gap that currently exists between white students and minority students could possibly decrease. Therefore, the purpose of this study has been to examine the experiences of Georgia school principals with racial minority teacher recruitment.

Currently, research suggests a relationship between the underrepresentation of African American teachers and the achievement of African American students, the following research questions will guide this study:

1. How does the decreasing supply of minority teachers impact teacher recruitment for Georgia School Principals?

2. What are the perceptions about recruitment processes and retention rates of African American teachers?

In the following chapter a presentation of the data obtained from focus group interviews conducted with 9 Georgia school principals is provided. This chapter will also present a demographic profile of the participants of included in the study. The researcher notes that in order to maintain anonymity amongst the participants, their schools and school districts have been coded with pseudonyms and will be referred to as such.

Information obtained from the structured interviews allowed the researcher to answer previously stated research questions. Along with the review of the interview questions by other school principals, the researcher conducted a practice interview with one additional principal to determine whether the information sought would be obtained through the interview items.

Respondent Demographic Profile

The participants in the research study consisted of four men and five women. The men participating in the study included two African Americans, one Mexican American and one White. Of the five women participating in the study, there were three African Americans, one Caucasian, and one biracial. Of the nine participants, one held a Doctorate of Education Degree, and the other eight held Specialist Degrees in Education. The average estimated age of each participant was 45 years old.

School Profiles

Elementary Schools

Morgan Elementary School is one of 14 schools in the Morgan County School System. The current student population consists of 704 students. The demographic profile of the student population is 49% African American, 45% Caucasian, 2% Hispanic, 2% Mixed Ethnicity, 1% Asian, and 1% Pacific Islander/Alaskan Native. The demographic profile of the teacher population is 65% Caucasian, 34% African American, 1% Mixed Ethnicity. Morgan Elementary met Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) standards for the 2005-06 school year. Morgan Elementary is located in a rural area east of Atlanta. Morgan Elementary serves as a Title I elementary school with 81% of its students receiving free-reduced priced meals.

Jackson Elementary School is one of 30 schools in the Jackson County School System. The current student population consists of 607 students. The demographic profile of the student population is 67% African American, 10% Caucasian, 16% Hispanic, 5% Mixed Ethnicity, and 2% Asian/Pacific Islander. The demographic profile of the teacher population is 69% African American and 31% Caucasian. Jackson Elementary met AYP standards for the 2005-2006 school year. Jackson Elementary is located in a non-rural area east of Atlanta. Jackson Elementary serves as a Title I elementary school with 75% of its students receiving free-reduced priced meals.

Forrest Creek Elementary School is one of 20 schools in the Creek County School System. The current student population consists of 626 students. The demographic profile of the student population is 75% African American, 15% Caucasian, 5% Mixed Ethnicity, 3% Hispanic, and 2% Asian/Pacific Islander. The demographic profile of the

teacher population is 63% Caucasian, 36% African American, and 1% Asian/Pacific Islander. Forrest Creek met AYP standards for the 2005-2006 school year. Forrest Creek Elementary is located in a non-rural area east of Atlanta. Forrest Creek Elementary serves as a Title I school with 53% of its students receiving free-reduced priced meals.

Middle Schools

Landing View Middle School is one of 14 schools in the Landing County School System. The current student population consists of 973 students. The demographic profile of the student population is 87% Caucasian, 7% African American, 3% Hispanic, 2% Mixed Ethnicity, and 1% Asian/Pacific Islander. The demographic profile of the teacher population is 88% Caucasian, 11%, African American, and 1% Mixed Ethnicity. Landing View Middle did not meet AYP standards for the 2005-2006 school year. Landing View Middle School is located in rural area east of Atlanta. Only 22% of the students who attend Landing View Middle School receive free-reduced priced meals.

Benjamin Middle School is one 40 schools in the Benjamin County School System. The current student population consists of 891 students. The demographic profile of the student population is 69% African American, 21% Caucasian, 5% Hispanic, and 4% Mixed Ethnicity. The demographic profile of the teacher population is 50% Caucasian, 49% African American, and 1% Hispanic. Benjamin Middle met AYP standards for the 2005-2006 school year. Benjamin Middle School is located in a non-rural area east of Atlanta. Benjamin Middle School serves as a Title I school with approximately 50% of its students receiving free-reduced price meals.

Langston Middle School is one of 23 schools in the Langston County School System. The current student population consists of 881 students. The demographic profile

of the student population is 42% African American, 35% Caucasian, 18% Hispanic, 4% Mixed Ethnicity, 1% Asian/Pacific Islander. The demographic profile of the teacher population is 62% Caucasian, 37% African American, and 1% Hispanic. During the 2005-2006 school year Langston Middle did meet AYP standards. Langston Middle School is located in a non-rural area east of Atlanta. Only 36% of the students who attend Langston Middle School receive free-reduced priced meals.

High Schools

Alcorn High School is one of 45 schools located in the Alcorn County School System. The current student population consists of 345 students. The demographic profile of the student population is 90% African American, 6% Caucasian, 3% Hispanic, and 1% Mixed Ethnicity. The demographic profile of the teacher population is 55% Caucasian, 43% African American, and 2% Mixed Ethnicity. During the 2005-2006 school year Alcorn High did not meet AYP standards. Alcorn High is located in a non-rural area in northeast Georgia. Alcorn High School serves as a Title I school with 87% of its students receiving free-reduced priced meals.

Calhoun High School is one of 65 schools located in the Calhoun County School System. The current student population consists of 2104 students. The demographic profile of the student population is 87% African American, 6% Caucasian, 3% Hispanic, 3% Mixed Ethnicity, 2% Asian/Pacific Islander, 1% American Indian/Alaskan. The demographic profile of the teacher population is 83% African American, 12% Caucasian, 4% Mixed Ethnicity, 1% Asian/Pacific Islander. During the 2005-2006 school year Calhoun High met AYP standards. Calhoun High is located in a metropolitan area of

Atlanta. Calhoun High School serves as a Title I school with 61% of its students receiving free-reduced priced meals.

Rayburn High School is one of 20 schools located in the Rayburn County School System. The current student population consists of 1410 students. The demographic profile of the student population is 53% African American, 40% Caucasian, 3% Hispanic, 2% Mixed Ethnicity, and 2% Asian/Pacific Islander. The demographic profile of the teacher population is 79% Caucasian, 20% African American, 1% Hispanic. During the 2005-2006 school year Rayburn High School met AYP standards. Rayburn High is located in a metropolitan area of Atlanta. Approximately 45% of the students who attend Rayburn High receive free-reduced priced meals.

Elementary School Principals

1. How has student ethnic demographics changed since you entered the field of education?

According to the principal of Morgan Elementary there has not been a great change in ethnic student demographics, but instead more emphasis has been placed on instructional strategies to expedite the academic progress of minority students. The principal of Jackson Elementary discussed the fact that he had seen ethnic demographic shifts in each of the four schools at which he had worked. Principal of Forest Creek pointed out the fact that research that she had read listed Hispanics as being the most represented ethnic group in the United States by the year 2011.

In analysis of responses from this interview question, the researcher notes that the participating elementary school principals are aware of the fact that the present and future representation of minority school students will surpass the representation of that of the current Caucasian majority.

2. Why are there a disproportionate number of minority teachers than there are Caucasian teachers in the state of Georgia?

Morgan Elementary School principal believe there are a disproportionate number of minority teachers than there are Caucasian teachers in the state of Georgia because many minorities are not seeking further education in teacher education. She also points out the fact that the disproportionate number of minority teachers to Caucasian teachers can be contributed to the disproportionate number of minority students attending college. Forest Creek Elementary School principal expressed frustration when responding to this interview question stating that, “I have interviewed great candidates, but have not been able to recommend them because of various certification issues.”

In analysis of responses from this interview question, the researcher notes that participating elementary school principals are aware of the fact that one of the major reasons for the shortage of highly qualified minority teachers is largely due to the fact that the number of minorities entering teacher preparation programs is very low and that many minorities who do complete teacher preparation programs have certification issues.

3. What are your thoughts and beliefs regarding the value of teacher diversity in schools?

Morgan Elementary School principal belief is that “the most effective teachers” should be in the classroom whether they are African American, Caucasian, or any other race, creed, or color. She also believes that teacher diversity is important because students are given the opportunity to see a representative from all races within a school. According to Morgan Elementary School principal teacher diversity builds a perception of “no matter

what race, creed, or color” we can work together for a common cause: *educating students at quality level.*

In analysis of responses from this interview question, the researcher notes that participating elementary school principals agree that all students should be educated by teachers who represent different ethnic groups and races. Through their responses participants also made it extremely clear that teacher diversity must be valued to ensure the success of all children.

4. How could school administrators benefit from minority teacher retention training?

Principal of Forest Creek Elementary discussed the fact that school administrators could benefit from understanding how all races of teachers bring special traits and knowledge into a school. She mentioned that having too much of one kind could possibly prevent a school from growing. Morgan Elementary School principal believes that as student demographics shift and become more diverse, teacher staffs should reflect this change as well. According to the principal of Jackson Elementary School, administrators could benefit from minority teacher retention training by becoming more successful in retaining those teachers that reflect the minority student populations in their schools. This training could have a high impact on student achievement.

In analysis of responses from this interview question, the researcher notes that participating elementary school principals believe that more training is needed in the area of minority teacher recruitment and retention.

5. Why is it important that minority teachers be recruited?

In her respond to this question principal of Morgan Elementary School re-emphasized the fact that it is important for students to see a representative of teachers from all races within a school. She also discussed the fact that the work force is global and students need the experience of working with people of all races when they enter the workforce. Principal of Jackson Elementary felt that minority teachers should be recruited to represent minority students in the school. He also felt that students tend to do better with highly qualified and certified teachers with whom they can relate. According to Forest Creek Elementary principal, each student should experience a variety of different teachers with regards to race and gender. She also discussed that recruiting minority teachers ensures that exposure occurs.

In analysis of responses from this interview question the researcher notes that participating elementary school principals believe that minority teachers should be recruited to ensure that all students are prepared for a diverse society and receive instruction from individuals they can relate to.

6. Explain whether or not central office personnel should recruit and hire teacher candidates?

Morgan Elementary School principal believes that central office and principals should work together to recruitment, hire, and retain minority teachers. She explained that active participants can troubleshoot and brainstorm better ways to recruit, hire, and retain minority teachers. Jackson Elementary School principal discussed the idea that the principal knows what is best for his/her school.

In analysis of responses from this interview question the researcher notes that participating elementary school principals believe that recruitment and hiring should be primarily done by building principals in conjunction with any available hiring and recruitment resources that the central office may have.

7. How might teacher diversity positively impact minority student achievement?

According to Forest Creek Elementary School principal, a diverse teacher staff could expose students to different cultures and experiences that they had never seen before. Responding to this question principal of Morgan Elementary discussed the idea that the students are able to receive instruction from a diverse population of teachers who bring various experiences into the classroom that enhance instructional styles. Principal of Forest Creek Elementary responded to this question by discussing the ways in which students relate and sometimes learn better from different teachers, and different teaching styles.

In analysis of responses from this interview question the researcher notes that participating elementary school principals see teacher diversity as being vital with regards to minority student achievement.

8. As a school principal how do you help your teachers to transform beliefs, practices, policies and procedures that nurture, challenge intellect, and promote the interests of all students?

Principal of Morgan Elementary, in responding to this question discussed that fact that she could do better with transforming beliefs, practices, policies and procedures that nurture, challenge intellect, and promote the interests of all students. Principal of Jackson Elementary discussed that fact he tries to model his expectations for teachers. Forest Creek Elementary

principal in responding to this question discussed the fact that it is important to hire those teachers that already believe in a educational philosophy that nurture, challenge intellect, and promote the interests of all students?

In analysis of responses from this interview question the researcher notes that participating elementary school principals do attempt to model beliefs, practices, policies, and procedures that nurture, challenge intellect, and promote the interest of all students. However, the researcher notes that the principal of Morgan Elementary believes that there is room for growth in this area which could manifest itself through racial minority teacher recruitment and training.

Middle School Principals

1. How has student ethnic demographics changed since you entered the field of education?

In responding to this question the principal of Landing View middle discussed how the student population has drastically changed to a lower socio economic class of people in the schools and many communities. Principal of Benjamin Middle discussed that fact that he had not worked in a school where diversity was obvious.

In analysis of responses from this interview question the researcher notes that participating middle school principals have seen a drastic change in the number of minority school students. The researcher also notes that the principal of Langston Middle believes that as the number of minority students has increased in schools that the number of Caucasian teachers in those same schools has decreased.

2. Why are there a disproportionate number of minority teachers than there are white teachers in the state of Georgia?

According to the principal of Landing View Middle School, salaries in the urban areas seem to be higher than that of the rural areas. He further discussed the idea that minorities seem to be lured to the urban areas for better pay, chances of promotion, compensation, and job satisfaction. Principal of Langston Middle School responded to this question by discussing the idea that minorities coming into the field of education must see the profession as something that is rewarding to them. She also responded this question by discussing the fact that in Georgia there are a high number of students who complete teacher preparation programs, but who have a difficult time passing the teacher certification exam. So we have some people who graduated with bachelors, but can't pass the test.

In analysis of responses from this interview question, the researcher notes that participating middle school principals cite a couple of different reasons for the shortage of minority teachers in Georgia. These reasons include: better pay in the urban areas, lack of mentoring programs for certification completion, the lack of mobility which allows exposure to take place, and motivational factors.

3. What are your thoughts and beliefs regarding the value of teacher diversity in schools?

According to the principal of Landing View Middle teacher diversity helps parents begin to trust because they come into contact with more individuals who share similar backgrounds, customs, and mannerisms. In responding to this question the principal of Benjamin Middle discussed the idea that through diversity we can all communicate more effectively and be more accepting of different cultures. Principal of Langston Middle

responded to this question by discussing the fact that it is important that values are in place in relationship to what is important for students.

In analysis of responses from this interview question the researcher notes that participating middle school principals agree that teacher diversity is vital to the learning process in that it allows cultures to be shared and enhances the existence of public schools as we know them in that all students benefit.

4. How could school administrators benefit from minority teacher retention training?

Responding to this question principal of Landing View Middle discussed the idea of that if administrators have a clear understanding of the vision and the mission of the school, being able to retain teachers will help to contribute to both. Principal of Langston Middle responded to this question by discussing the fact that in general we are more alike than different, and that there are some things that stand out. He also emphasized that just the mere fact that we value diversity, talk about it, and are sending people to training means that it is beneficial.

In analysis of responses from this interview question, the researcher notes that participating middle school principals agree that school administrators along with the school system could benefit from minority retention training.

5. Why is it important that minority teachers be recruited?

The principal of Landing View Middle responded to this question by discussing the fact that the recruitment should include teachers, assistant principals, and counselors so that students may develop a positive self-image, self-esteem, and learn how to set positive goals. Principal of Benjamin Middle discussed the fact that teachers from a diverse

background serve as examples of how we can all be one community within the school and work as one in that level of working relationships. Principal of Langston Middle discussed the need and importance of recruiting more minority teachers to serve the increasingly diverse student population. Additionally, principal of Langston Middle stresses the fact that knowing what the literature says about teacher minority is not enough, but now the question has to become how do we improve and what are we doing to get there?

In analysis of responses from this interview question, the researcher notes that participating middle school principals believe that minority teachers serve as positive role models for not only minority students but all students. Through minority teacher recruitment, students are afforded the opportunity to see people from diverse ethnic backgrounds work together.

6. Explain whether or not central office personnel should recruit and hire teacher candidates?

Principal of Landing View Middle responded to this question by discussing the fact that it should be a dual effort because the central office has the tools and resources to recruit locally, nationally, and internationally. By utilizing those tools and resources, teacher candidates hired will reflect the diversity that exists among the student population. According to principal of Langston Middle, central office should work on the mechanics in making sure that teacher applicants are certified and that they are highly qualified candidates.

In analysis of responses from this interview question, the researcher notes that participating middle school principals strongly feel that the hiring of teachers school be

left to the school level administrators. Participants feel that central office should be instrumental in making sure that teacher applicants are certified and highly qualified.

7. How might teacher diversity positively impact minority student achievement?

According to the principal of Landing View Middle, the more diversity that exist in a school there is a greater chance that the needs of all learners will be addressed with regards to differences in learning styles.

In analysis of responses from this interview question, the researcher notes that participating middle school principals are confident that through teacher diversity the impact on minority student achievement is increased. Through teacher diversity, the appropriate measures are put into place to ensure that the students who need special services receive them first.

8. As a school principal how do you help your teachers to transform beliefs, practices, policies and procedures that nurture, challenge intellect, and promote the interests of all students?

Principal of Langston Middle responded to this question by discussing the fact that she provides opportunities for her teachers to learn about other cultures and minority groups as often as she possibly can. Through these efforts she feels that all students may benefit from their school experiences and be able to compete in a global economy some day.

Principal of Landing View Middle discussed the fact that he is always trying to find ways to better serve not just minority students, but all of our students alike.

In analysis of responses from this interview question the researcher notes that participating middle school principals do attempt to transform the beliefs and practices

of their teachers with regard to diversity so that not only minority students benefit, but so that all stakeholders involved benefit.

High School Principals

1. How has student ethnic demographics changed since you entered the field of education?

Principal of Alcorn High School responded to this question by discussing the fact that the majority Caucasian population has now become the minority population in public education. Interestingly, the principal of Rayburn High School discussed the fact that in the area in which he worked, the percentage of minority students has remained fairly consistent at about 85% minority.

In analysis of responses from this interview question, the researcher notes that two of the participating high school principals have seen a drastic change in the number of minority students and Caucasian students in their schools. However, principal of Rayburn High School which is located in an urban area has not seen much change in student demographics over the years.

2. Why are there a disproportionate number of minority teachers than there are white teachers in the state of Georgia?

Principal of Alcorn High School discussed the fact that there are less minorities going to college due to social issues including: poverty, high dropout rates, lack of financial resources, and support. In responding to this question principal of Rayburn High School discussed the idea that minority students do not see education as being a prosperous field to enter. He continued to discuss the idea that many minority students upon completing high schools enter into fields of study that provide more monetary compensation

In analysis of responses from this interview question the researcher notes that participating high school principals agree that the overriding cause of the shortage of minority teachers is the fact that minority students do not see the field of education as one that is lucrative.

3. What are your thoughts and beliefs regarding the value of teacher diversity in schools?

Principal of Alcorn High School in responding to this question expressed her belief that enough is not being done to attract or retain minority teachers. According to the principal of Calhoun High School diversity amongst the faculty is of benefit to both the students and to the staff members themselves. He continued on to discuss the idea that students learn from the variety of backgrounds and experiences that their teachers present in their classrooms.

In analysis of responses from this interview question, the researcher notes that participating high school principals agree that teacher diversity is something that is very important. The researcher also notes that enough is not being done regarding the recruitment of minorities to the field of education.

4. How could school administrators benefit from minority teacher retention training?

According to the principal of Alcorn High School administrators could learn how to retain minority teachers from minority teacher retention training. Principal of Rayburn High School discussed the idea that principals could benefit from minority teacher retention training by possibly decreasing the turnover rate of minority teachers which could in turn improve the success of minority students.

In analysis of responses from this interview question, the researcher notes that participating middle school principals believe that school administrators could benefit from minority retention training by learning how to value minority teachers and what they have to offer.

5. Why is it important that minority teachers be recruited?

The principal of Alcorn High School responded to this question by discussing the fact that students need to see teachers that look like them, share their culture, and possibly share some of their values. According to principal of Calhoun High School, when minority students are taught by all white teachers, they get the unspoken message that white people are superior and the only ones capable of being in the positions of teachers and administrators. He expressed the fact that when minority students see teachers of their own race in positions of honor and authority, they raise their opinions of themselves and their own potential and realize that all races have the same abilities, rights, and privileges.

In analysis of responses from this interview question, the researcher notes that participating high school principals feel that the minority students have a need to see individuals who look like them and share similar cultural experiences. The researcher also notes in regards to this interview question that the principal of Rayburn High thinks that hiring highly qualified teachers is the key to the success of all students.

6. Explain whether or not central office personnel should recruit and hire teacher candidates?

According to the principal of Calhoun High School it is very helpful to have central office personnel help recruit teacher candidates and work with the principals to refer promising potential candidates to them for their consideration; however, the decisions to hire or not to

hire should be left up to the principal. He discussed the fact that the school principal knows the climate of his/her own school and can best judge which individuals would fit in and contribute most to his/her school.

In analysis of responses from this interview question, the researcher notes that participating high school principals agree that the central office could help in recruitment efforts by referring teacher candidates who have potential. However, the participating high school principals believe that the decision to ultimately hire a teacher should rest with the presiding principal because they are the ones who know what their schools' needs are.

7. How might teacher diversity positively impact minority student achievement?

The principal of Alcorn High School discussed the idea that students might want to do better because they see someone that looks like them in a positive aspect. Consequently, they strive to do better and know that it can be achieved. Principal of Calhoun High School responded to this question by explaining that students learn not by hearing the same opinions, values, and experiences over and over, but by hearing things they have never heard before.

In analysis of responses from this interview question, the researcher notes that participating high school principals feel that teacher diversity ultimately will challenge minority students to embrace new ideas, set higher expectations for themselves, and accept and embrace the differences that exist between themselves and their peers which could lead to more productive learning outcomes.

8. As a school principal how do you help your teachers to transform beliefs, practices, policies and procedures that nurture, challenge intellect, and promote the interests of all students?

The principal of Alcorn High School with regards to this question that she attempts to transform beliefs through required county diversity training, professional development, and discussing racial issues as they arise. Principal of Calhoun High School in his response discussed the fact that principals can do a great deal toward helping teachers transform their beliefs, practices, policies, and procedures by offering professional learning opportunities that nurture and challenge intellect and promote the best interests of all students and staff members. In addition to offering professional learning opportunities in the form of workshops, guest speakers, and faculty meeting presentations, the principal's own attitudes, practices, and procedures speak more loudly than any words that he or she might say.

In analysis of responses from this interview question, the researcher notes that participating high school principals feel that beliefs can be transformed through appropriate measures such as staff development on diversity, discussions with regards to the differences that are evident amongst a diverse student population, discussing racial issues as they arise.

Research Question Responses

The overarching question and two research questions were answered with an analysis of the findings by the researcher for each specific question.

Overarching question:

What are the experiences of Georgia school principals' with racial minority teacher recruitment?

According to the responses from the participants, principals' experiences with racial minority teacher recruitment and retention have not been positive. The principals discussed the fact that the shortage of highly qualified minority teachers makes it difficult to attract minority teachers and retain them. Some of the principals discussed how they had inherited schools where there were only one or two African American teachers on staff while the majority of the student population was African American. From their responses, principals felt that enough has not been done in the area of teacher diversity and minority recruitment by local districts.

How does the decreasing supply of minority teachers impact teacher recruitment for Georgia School Principals?

Principals feel that it is very difficult to recruit and retain minority teachers because the supply lags far behind the demand.

What are the perceptions about recruitment processes and retention rates of African American teachers?

When you recruit and hire minority teachers, they must be supported according to principal responses in order for them to feel valued. By doing so, the retention rate of minority teachers, would increase. Principals also feel that in order to retain minority teachers they must begin to see the field of education as one that is financially rewarding.

Summary

The Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Georgia Southern University gave clearance for the research at which time the researcher begin scheduling three focus

group interviews with Georgia principals to gather data regarding their experiences with racial minority teacher recruitment. All of the participants were located within non-rural Northeastern Georgia. The demographic profile for study participants represented a wide range of diversity, experience, and educational background. The sample which consisted of 9 principals was appropriate for the study because it represented a manageable number of participants from the total population of Georgia school principals. The interviews were scheduled with the participants at centralized locations at a time that was suitable for all participants. During focus group interviews, the participants were asked eight interview questions related to their experiences with racial minority teacher recruitment. Each interview took approximately thirty-five minutes to complete. The research design for the study was qualitative in nature.

The researcher's role in the described study included: determining which Georgia school principals were selected for the study, gathering their consent to participate in the study, interviewing these principals as it related to their experiences with racial minority teacher recruitment and retention, conducting an analysis of the responses to the interview questions and relating them to the initial literature, and finally, presenting the data in this chapter of the dissertation.

CHAPTER 5
SUMMARY, FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND
CONCLUSIONS

This chapter is a summary of the study, analysis of the research findings, discussion of research findings and recurring themes, conclusions based on the findings, implications and recommendations based on the analysis of the data gathered in the study. Currently, research suggests a relationship between the underrepresentation of African American teachers and the achievement of African American students, the following research questions guided this study:

1. How does the decreasing supply of minority teachers impact teacher recruitment for Georgia School Principals?
2. What are the perceptions about recruitment processes and retention rates of African American teachers?

There are several findings that emerged from this study relating to Georgia school principals' experiences with racial minority teacher recruitment and retention; however, the major finding was that the principal of Alcorn High School felt that enough is not being done to attract and retain minority teachers. Other findings include: (1) Principals report that they had seen a drastic change in the ethnic demographics in the student population. (2) Principals state that it is important that minority teachers be hired so that all students see minorities in positions of responsibility and to share their culture with students and teachers from the non-minority population. Additionally, principals feel that minority teachers serve as role models for minority students. (3) According to principals, teacher diversity can positively impact minority student achievement in many different

ways because students can relate more easily to teachers who they share similar cultural experiences with.

The study was consisted of three focus group interviews that were conducted with nine principals in Northeastern Georgia. Each focus group interview consisted of eight questions and the completion rate for the tape recorded interviews was 100%. The researcher scheduled the interviews with the principals at centralized locations. The interviews were recorded on cassette, kept in a secure location and transcribed by the researcher. In order to maintain the anonymity of school principals, their schools and respective schools districts, pseudonyms were use throughout the study. The data obtained in the focus group interviews was analyzed by the researcher before the findings were reported.

The three focus group interviews enabled the researcher to become an active participant in that it enabled the researcher to view the body language, facial expressions, and other gestures made by the principals. During the interviews principals were able to have an open dialogue when responding to interview which allowed the researcher to capture richer qualitative data as opposed to capturing random information of everyone's thoughts, beliefs; etc. Because it is the researcher that enters the setting, collects observational and other qualitative data qualitative researchers rely on themselves as the main collectors of data (Gay & Airasian, 2000).

The researcher is hopeful that this research is important to politicians, educational leaders, parents, teachers and community stakeholders. The researcher will communicate the findings to these individuals through publications, books, articles, public presentations, staff development programs and other professional venues.

Findings

In speaking with the principal of Alcorn High School, I felt that she was uneasy with the current efforts to attract and retain minority teachers. She stated, “I don’t think enough is being done to attract and retain minority teachers. **(Major Finding)** This is consistent with the literature as presented by the National Collaborative on Diversity in the Teaching Force (2004). One of the elements of NCLB addresses teacher quality, but little attention has been given to the issues of teacher diversity and cultural competence (National Collaborative on Diversity in the Teaching Force, 2004).

Principals report that they have seen a drastic change in the ethnic demographics in the student population. Minority students are in many public schools are now the majority. **(Finding 1)** This is consistent with the literature as reported by the Georgia Professional Standards Commission (2006). In 2005-2006 in the state of Georgia there were approximately 1,598,461 million students enrolled in public schools with Caucasian students accounting for only 48% of those students. Shure (2001) found that minority students accounted for approximately 40% of the student population in the United States. The principal of Calhoun High School states, “In the past 15 years our county has changed from a population of approximately 60% African American and 40% Caucasian students to its present numbers that include a majority of African American students and a diverse minority that includes Asian, Hispanic, and other ethnic groups including a very small percentage of Caucasians” (Chapter IV, 66).

Principals state that it is important that minority teachers be hired so that all students see minorities in positions of responsibility and to share their culture with students and teachers from the non-minority population. Additionally, principals feel that

minority teachers serve as role models for minority students. **(Finding 2)** This finding is consistent with the literature as presented by Evans (1997). Evans suggested that even white teachers can benefit from the presence of black teachers in that these teachers of color help white teachers obtain an understanding of effective ways to communicate and deal with black students. Black teachers can not only serve as role models for students of color, but they must also aid the level of racial, ethnic and cultural awareness amongst their colleagues. The principal of Morgan Elementary stated, “It is important for students to see a representative of teachers from all races within a school. It builds a perception of “no matter what race, creed, or color” we can work together for a common cause. The work force is global and students need the experience with working with everyone when they enter the workforce” (Chapter IV, p. 51).

Principals feel that teacher diversity positively impacts minority student achievement in many different ways. **(Finding 3)** Students relate more easily to teachers who they share similar cultural experiences with than those who don't. This is consistent with literature findings as presented by Bounce (1996). Many educational specialist believe the implications produced by growing evidence which reveals that effective instruction is accomplished more often when the teacher and student have similar racial and ethnic backgrounds (Bounce). The principal of Alcorn High School stated, “Students might want to do better because they see someone that looks like them in a positive aspect. Consequently, they strive to do better and know that it can be achieved. Also, the world is not one color. Students need to be exposed to various ethnicities to diversify their thoughts and views” (Chapter IV, p. 72).

Recommendations

In the age of increased educational accountability providing highly qualified teachers to ensure that every student learns is a fundamental responsibility of state and local policymakers. This is true because there is mounting evidence that suggests that the single most important school factor affecting student achievement is teacher quality.

This study adds to the limited amount of research that exists on the experiences of Georgia school principals with racial minority teacher recruitment and retention. The findings suggest that the following recommendations be shared with superintendents, school leaders, university and college of education deans and provost, and policymakers. Educational leadership programs in the state of Georgia should offer courses through their programs that address the issue of diversity in the classroom. These courses should be broad in nature so that all the aspects of diversity in the classroom are addressed with regards to both teachers and students. Information covered in these courses will give principals a strong knowledge base about the importance of teacher diversity.

While further research is necessary, the results of this study suggest that a serious effort be made by local school systems to recruit more minority professionals. African American and other minority educators should hold critical and key roles in the school's classrooms as well as in management positions. The minority student population, especially African American, is growing tremendously each year in Georgia. However, their overall academic successes continue to be significantly lower than their Caucasian counterparts. In order to eliminate this trend, school systems must make a conscious and diligent effort to accommodate the educational needs of all of its students. One answer to this problem is that the school districts must develop programs to recruit and retain

qualified minority professionals, especially African Americans, to better serve the students of this state.

Findings from this study also suggest that school administrators require all teachers, counselors and staff personnel to attend seminars and trainings that address the cultural differences of minority populations, especially the African American culture. This training should be mandatory for all employees and the state should require that this training should be documented and reported to the state department of education for compliance.

Implications

The implications for this study include three aspects which are future educational research, educational practice and educational policy. The implication of educational research is that it will allow more quantitative studies to be conducted on the minority teacher shortage and other variables that may contribute to it. It is extremely important that school districts understand the relationship between minority achievement and a diversified teacher workforce. If school systems, teacher preparation programs, and certification agencies have more knowledge as to why the number of minority teachers is steadily decreasing the trend may be reversed. There are implications for educational policy through the No Child Left Behind act that mandates that all students must be on grade level by 2014. Other implications could include the allocation of funding at the local and state level for training that addresses the minority teacher shortage. It is through this training that superintendents and local school leaders may develop a wider knowledge base so that they can to take the necessary steps to ensure that their teacher

workforce is representative of the student population. Through these steps it is the researcher's hope that the educational needs of all students are met and maintained.

Conclusion

In conclusion, it is very important that the researcher reiterates the idea that if education is truly valued by educational leaders, politicians and community leaders that attention must be given to the issue of racial minority teacher recruitment and retention. The research clearly suggests that principals believe that the teacher workforce does not reflect that of the student population and that more attention needs to be given to this issue. This is consistent with the findings of Casteel (2000), who found that there is a rapid increase in African American students attending public schools, and a decline in teachers of the same race. The researcher's findings suggest that principals feel that there is a positive relationship between minority teachers and the academic success of not only minority students but for all students. The findings also suggest that principals feel that additional training for school administrators with regards to racial minority teacher recruitment and retention would be beneficial in addressing the needs of all students.

It is the researchers' view that because public schools are a microcosm of this diverse country, it is necessary that schools attempt diversify their teaching staffs. Standards for teacher quality have been raised as a result of the No Child Left Behind mandates, but teacher diversity has not received much attention. This is consistent with a report issued by the National Collaborative on Diversity in the Teaching Force (2004), which reported that although one of the elements of NCLB addresses teacher quality, little attention has been given to the issues of teacher diversity and cultural competence.

While the student body in the nation's public schools has become increasingly diverse, its teaching force has not. Faculties at many schools are still overwhelmingly Caucasian and most districts still fail to recruit and hire minority teachers in contrast to the increasing numbers of minority students in their schools. Through a diversified teacher workforce the educational needs of all students can be addressed. As a nation our public schools must represent the true pillars of equality which prepares all students for success in a global market.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A
FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

How has student ethnic demographics changed since you entered the field education? Are there more minority teachers? Less?

1. Why are there a disproportionate number of minority teachers than there are white teachers in the state of Georgia? Are minority teachers underrepresented in today's classrooms?
2. What are your thoughts and beliefs regarding the value of teacher diversity in schools?
3. How could school administrators benefit from minority teacher retention training?
4. Why is it important that minority teachers be recruited? Does the ethnicity of the teacher make a difference in the classroom?
5. Explain whether or not central office personnel should recruit and hire teacher candidates?
6. How might teacher diversity positively impact minority student achievement?
7. As a school principal how do you help your teachers to transform beliefs, practices, policies and procedures that nurture, challenge intellect, and promote the interests of all students?

Thanks again for participating in this study!

APPENDIX B

LETTER SENT TO PRINCIPALS

March, 2007

Dear Principal,

My name is Sheadric D. Barbra, and I am a doctoral candidate enrolled at Georgia Southern University. Currently, I also serve as the Assistant Principal at Memorial Middle School in the Rockdale County Public School System. In completing my dissertation, I am conducting focus groups interviews to study Georgia school principals' experiences with racial minority teacher recruitment and retention. My desire is that through the collection of this information I may be able to gather valuable insight into the experiences of principals in regards to racial minority teacher recruitment and retention.

This letter is requesting your assistance in gathering data through the form of three focus group interviews that I would like for you to participate in. The interview questions are related to your experiences with racial minority teacher recruitment and retention. If you agree to participate in the study, the researcher will tape record and transcribe the information after the interview. This data will later be compared and contrasted with other principals like you in summary form. I assure you that your responses will remain strictly confidential. You do have the right to refuse to answer any question during the interview, may terminate the interview at any time or choose to have any or all of your responses deleted from those analyzed. Once all participants have completed the focus group interview the data gathered from the study will be included in my dissertation which will be on public file.

If you have any questions or concerns about this proposed research project please contact me at (770) 760-8292 or (678) 357-7202. You may also contact me via e-mail at sbarbra@rockdale.k12.ga.us. You may also contact my academic advisor Dr. Walter Polka via e-mail at wpolka@georgiasouthern.edu. Please feel free to contact the IRB coordinator at the Office of Research Services and Sponsored Programs at (912) 681-5465 for any other questions.

Let me thank you advance for your prompt response to this request. I do realize that your time is very important, therefore I will ensure that the interview is brief and to the point. I am sure that the results of this study will be valuable to educational leaders of Georgia.

Sincerely,

Sheadric D. Barbra, Ed. S
Assistant Principal, Memorial Middle School

APPENDIX C

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL LETTER

| | | |
|---|------------------------------|----------------------|
| Georgia Southern University Office of Research Services & Sponsored Programs | | |
| Institutional Review Board (IRB) | | |
| Phone: 912-681-5465 | | Administrative Annex |
| | | P.O. Box 8005 |
| Fax: 912-681-0719 | Ovrsight@GeorgiaSouthern.edu | Statesboro, GA 30460 |

To: Sheadric E. Barbra
4490 Bridle Point Pkwy
Snellville, GA-30039

CC: Dr. Walter Polka
P.O. Box-8131

From: Office of Research Services and Sponsored Programs
Administrative Support Office for Research Oversight Committees
(IACUC/IBC/IRB)

Date: March 20, 2007

Subject: Status of Application for Approval to Utilize Human Subjects in Research

After a review of your proposed research project numbered: **H07183**, and titled "**Georgia School Principals' Experiences With Racial Minority Teacher Recruitment and Retention**", it appears that (1) the research subjects are at minimal risk, (2) appropriate safeguards are planned, and (3) the research activities involve only procedures which are allowable.

Therefore, as authorized in the Federal Policy for the Protection of Human Subjects, I am pleased to notify you that the Institutional Review Board has approved your proposed research.

This IRB approval is in effect for one year from the date of this letter. If at the end of that time, there have been no changes to the research protocol; you may request an extension of the approval period for an additional year. In the interim, please provide the IRB with any information concerning any significant adverse event, **whether or not it is believed to be related to the study**, within five working days of the event. In addition, if a change or modification of the approved methodology becomes necessary, you must notify the IRB Coordinator **prior** to initiating any such changes or modifications. At that time, an amended application for IRB approval may be submitted. Upon completion of your data collection, you are required to complete a *Research Study Termination* form to notify the IRB Coordinator, so your file may be closed.

Sincerely,



N. Scott Pierce
Director of Research Services and Sponsored Programs

APPENDIX D
SCHEDULE OF FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEWS

Middle School Principal Interviews March 20, 2006 at 1:00 PM

Elementary School Principal Interviews March 20, 2006 at 3:00 PM

High School Principal Interviews March 20, 2006 at 5:00 PM