

“A MENTAL HEALTH DAY ISN’T GOING TO FIX THIS”: A
PHENOMENOLOGICAL EXAMINATION OF THE LIVED EXPERIENCES OF
BLACK WOMEN WITH SCHOOL COUNSELOR BURNOUT

by

ASHLEY DENISE COSBY

(Under the Direction of Deryl F. Bailey)

ABSTRACT

Feminist Phenomenology was utilized to examine the lived experiences of Black women with school counselor burnout. The study employed Black Feminist Thought and Superwoman Schema as the theoretical frameworks to give context to the experiences of Black women with school counselor burnout. Seven participants participated in semi-structured interviews. The data analysis revealed six themes that shed light on how Black women understand and make sense of their school counselor burnout experiences. The findings from this study illuminate implications for mitigating school counselor burnout in Black women given the complicated intersection in which their identities are situated. The findings can broaden the literature on Black women and burnout to work towards improving health outcomes for Black women. Implications for practice, theory, schools, school districts, and counselor training and preparation programs are provided.

INDEX WORDS: School Counselors, ASCA, School Counselor Burnout, Black Women, Occupational Stress, Feminist Phenomenology

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DEDICATION

To my maternal grandparents, Paul and Ermean Manigo, I dedicate my dissertation to you. The two of you have been so supportive of my pursuit of higher education, encouraging me along the way. Though neither of you attended college, I am grateful for your unwavering support of my educational journey. Grandmommy, although you're not here to witness this milestone in my life, I know you are smiling from heaven and telling just about everyone you know that your grandbaby is about to be a doctor. I hope that my journey and the work that I will do after earning this degree make you proud. I love you.

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*“To dream the impossible dream, To fight the unbeatable foe,
To bear with unbearable sorrow, To run where the brave dare not go
To right the unrightable wrong, To love pure and chaste from afar
To try when your arms are too weary, To reach the unreachable star”*

-Joe Darion

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Existing literature on school counselor burnout is extensive (Fye et al., 2020; Mullen, 2018). Burnout is evidenced by exhaustion, ineffectiveness, and cynicism (Maslach & Leiter, 2017) and examines the relationship between an individual and their work environment. Research explores the harmful effects of burnout on overall health, and if changes do not occur, it can persist for extended periods (Maslach & Leiter, 2017). Given the disparate impact of burnout, it is a concern for individuals within helping professions (Adams et al., 2016). Burnout in counselors has been a concern for several years, given its potential impact on clients (Silva et al., 2024). School counselor burnout is attributed to demands associated with the role that include large caseload sizes, job stress, assignment of non-counseling duties, clerical tasks, role conflict, and role ambiguity (Kim & Lambie, 2018; Um & Bardhoshi, 2024; Watcher et al., 2008). In a study, Bain et al. (2011) found that 41% of school counselors reported experiencing burnout, while 48% reported experiencing burnout at least sometimes. A study by Watcher (2006) found that in a statewide survey of school counselors, 20% responded as exhibiting burnout. As a result of the prevalence of burnout, school counselors are impacted by experiences of hopelessness, exhaustion, deterioration of personal life, negative work environment, decreased productivity, turnover, incompetence, and diminished job satisfaction (Fye et al., 2020b; Kim & Lambie, 2018). Although counselors have challenges in navigating burnout, school counselors have differing

challenges that place them at significant risk of burnout. Given the broad scope of school counselors' work that focuses on immediate mental health concerns within schools and the implementation of a comprehensive school counseling program, school counselors are at risk of burnout (Dooley, 2023). Burnout is widely associated with school counseling, with a plethora of literature examining contributing factors and predictors of burnout (Fye et al., 2021; Mullen et al., 2020). Many studies explore school counselor burnout quantitatively, examining predictors or factors contributing to burnout (Bardhoshi & Um, 2020; Holman et al., 2019; Limburg et al., 2016). However, few studies detail the experience of school counselor burnout through a qualitative lens (Falls & Nitcher, 2007; Holman & Grubbs, 2018). However, surprisingly, detailed descriptions from school counselors that depict burnout experiences are scarce in the literature (Falls & Nitcher, 2007; Holman & Grubbs, 2018). School counselors play a vital role in student success (ASCA, 2023); therefore, the well-being of school counselors at the forefront of improving student outcomes is paramount.

The School Counselor Role

Though the role of the school counselor has evolved over the last century to a role focused on improving student outcomes (ASCA, 2021), the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) outlines specific roles and responsibilities for school counselors (ASCA, 2023). Although school counselor preparation programs prepare school counselors in training on the ASCA National Model, despite the evolution of the role of the school counselor, dissonance still exists within schools and school communities in aligning their role with the one explicated by ASCA at the turn of the century (Dooley, 2023). The role of the school counselor has evolved over the last

century from a role focused on vocational guidance to one that positions school counselors to be data-driven leaders who improve student outcomes in academics, careers, and social/emotional concerns (ASCA, 2023). The ASCA National Model was published in 2003 and, since then, has been a framework that details the development of a comprehensive school counseling program. Commonly, school counselors are supervised by administrators who are often unaware of the school counselor's role and have minimal training on utilizing school counselors to improve student outcomes and promote the school's mission (Holman et al., 2019). Additionally, stakeholders ascribe school counselors' duties that do not align with ASCA's outline of their roles and responsibilities (Windham & Tuttle, 2022). In addition to the assignment of non-counseling duties, school counselors have large caseload sizes well beyond ASCA's recommendation of 250:1 (ASCA, 2021).

Though school counselors are situated within school communities to address student success, often, stakeholders perceive school counselors' role to be vastly different from the role aligned by the ASCA National Model (Windham & Tuttle, 2022), which may present challenges for school counselors. The ASCA National Model is taught in CACREP-accredited school counseling preparation programs, and, on the contrary, many schools and school districts do not align school counselors' skill sets with their school counselor preparation training (Windham & Tuttle, 2022). The changes in school counselors' roles have contributed to occupational stressors for school counselors, which could lead to burnout (Cervoni & DeLucia-Waack, 2011).

Black Women School Counselors

Moreover, women overwhelmingly occupy the school counseling profession, and Black women school counselors comprise less than a quarter of the nation's school counselors (ASCA 2023). Black women are situated at a unique intersection due to the social, historical, racial, gendered, and socioeconomic oppression that occurs within society (Alinia, 2015). Considering their experiences with occupational stressors, which are influenced by their racial and gender identity, Black women are at greater risk of burnout compared to their non-Black counterparts due to their experiences of sexism, discrimination, and exploitation (Thorpe et al., 2024). A study by Wells and Archibald (2023) examined the self-care practices of Black women school counselors, yet little literature has examined their burnout experiences. Black women are linked to experiences of racism, sexism, and classism and, as a result, may necessitate different self-care practices than their White counterparts (Wells & Archibald, 2023). Furthermore, because the burnout experiences of Black women school counselors are not known, there is a need to bridge the gap in burnout literature that explores their burnout experiences.

Though the literature highlights the disproportionate health outcomes that plague black women (Geronimus et al., 2006; Woods-Giscombe, 2019) and the intersections in which their identities are situated, this study was needed to broaden the burnout literature to include Black women who play a pivotal role in their communities and the greater society (Hamilton-Mason et al., 2009). Therefore, this research will add the experiences and perspectives of Black women to the robust literature on school counselor burnout.

Statement of the Problem

Considering the scope of burnout, race, and gender often play a role in one's susceptibility to the phenomenon. Black women are susceptible to burnout due to the perpetual experience of negative stereotypes, microaggressions, and the daily stressors of family, work, and social environments (Cooke & Hastings, 2023). Disproportionately, Black women experience poorer health outcomes because of their experiences with stress, racism, sexism, and classism (Cooke & Hastings, 2023). A study by Lijam and O'Conner (2023) posits that women and non-White physicians were more likely to experience burnout compared to their male counterparts, citing that women often have difficulties balancing additional household responsibilities. Similarly, a study by Brown et al. (2024) found that burnout scores of Black mental health professionals (BMHPs) were higher than other helping professionals, therefore concluding that BMHPs were at greater risk of burnout and poorer mental and physical health than their counterparts. Thus, due to the complexity of stress, researchers are unclear on how to define the term in reference to Black women because the literature on Black women, stress, and coping is limited (Cooke & Hastings, 2023). Because the impact of burnout can be especially harmful in helping professions, school counselor burnout must be addressed. Since Black women have been overrepresented in stress-related deaths and poorer health outcomes, it was essential to explore their experiences of burnout to work towards mitigating burnout (Robinson-Wood et al., 2015). Their stories must be depicted in a way that accurately reflects their perspectives as school counselors and as Black women. By highlighting their experiences, this study illuminates Black women's experiences with school counselor burnout and works towards improving the health outcomes of Black women

within these roles. Therefore, as a result of the literature on Black women and School counselor burnout, this study enhances the literature on the lived experiences of Black women school counselors and their burnout experiences.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the lived experiences that Black women school counselors have with burnout. Given the physical and mental impact that burnout has, this study was needed to work towards improving the disproportionate health outcomes for Black women. The literature consistently indicates that school counselor burnout exists (Fye et al., 2020; Mullen et al., 2018); however, little research explores the thick, rich detail behind the experience of school counselor burnout. This study used a qualitative approach to explore the lived experiences of Black women with school counselor burnout. The research utilized semi-structured interviews to investigate their role and responsibilities within their schools and critically examine if and how race and gender impact their experiences. Although Superwoman Schema addresses Black women's coping behaviors to negate stereotypes (Woods-Giscombe, 2010), the lived experiences of Black women school counselors are not known. To focus the study, a thorough review of the current literature was conducted. The review explored the literature on the role of school counselors, occupational stressors, school counselor burnout, and Black women school counselors. Based on the gap in the literature, this study adds to the existing school counselor burnout literature from the perspective of Black women school counselors.

Research Question

Using Black Feminist Thought and Superwoman Schema as the theoretical lens to determine the essence of Black women's experience with school counselor burnout, this study was guided by the following research question.

RQ: What are the lived experiences of Black women with school counselor with burnout?

Response to this question will provide a unique perspective of Black women school counselors' experiences at the intersection of race and gender in their roles as school counselors.

Significance of the Study

This study is significant because it illuminates Black women, a population rarely studied in the school counselor burnout literature. While the literature informs that there are predictors of burnout (Mullen et al., 2020; Niles et al., 2024), the impact of burnout experiences is scarce (Falls & Nitcher, 2007; Holman & Grubbs, 2018). Although much of the literature presents school counselor burnout as a persistent issue within the field (Mullen et al., 2018; 2021), little research depicts the unique experiences and perspectives housed within the burnout literature. Consequently, this study contributes to the existing literature on school counselor burnout that provides implications for supervision within schools, acquisition and retention of Black women in school counseling, and addressing the dissonance in school counseling and professional practice. Lastly, this literature adds to the larger conversation about Black women's health. Since burnout is a psychological condition that primarily impacts a person's bodily functioning, and Black women already face health disparities compared to their non-Black counterparts, the effects of burnout could have harmful effects on Black women. A more

in-depth analysis of Black women and their burnout experiences could offer insight into the larger scope of addressing Black women and their experiences as individuals living within a complex intersection of identities.

Theoretical Framework

This study used Black Feminist Thought and Superwoman Schema as the lens that guided the study. Black Feminist Thought, coined by Patricia Hill Collins (2009), is a framework attuned to Black women's experiences, considering the social, political, and socioeconomic powers that impact their daily experiences. Black Feminist Thought reinforces the notion that Black women have autonomy over their own stories and critically examines the individual and the social structures in which they are situated. Black women live in the intersections as a group and are unable to unpack their experiences in isolation (Collins, 2022). Superwoman Schema (Woods-Giscombe, 2010) are behaviors that epitomize strength and resilience, which are used as coping strategies in response to stereotypes about Black women. As such, these frameworks provide the context through which the study was examined by providing a lens through which Black women's school counselor burnout experiences can be understood. By connecting their experiences to existing literature, this study will contribute to the literature on school counselor burnout for Black women.

Brief Overview of the Study

This qualitative study used Feminist Phenomenology to investigate the burnout experiences of Black women school counselors. Participants identified as Black women who were 21 or older and had worked as school counselors in the United States within the last five years. The recruitment process for participants began after gaining approval

from The University of Georgia's Institutional Review Board (IRB). Once approved, I shared a recruitment flyer with information specific to the study. Participants scanned or clicked the QR code on the flyer to complete a demographic screening questionnaire related to the study. Participants who met the requirements for the study were contacted via email to discuss informed consent. Once participants were confirmed, semi-structured interviews were conducted to investigate Black women's lived experiences with school counselor burnout.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted and recorded on Zoom and lasted approximately 60-90 minutes. The data was transcribed using a transcription service, and a research team of doctoral students utilized the steps in phenomenological data analysis to determine the themes found within the data. Following their interviews, participants received a \$10 electronic gift card. Once themes were solidified, participants engaged in member checking to ensure the study's trustworthiness (Johnson & Parry, 2015).

Definition of Key Terms

American School Counselor Association (ASCA), is a national organization that provides membership, professional development, and resources to school counselors to enhance their academic, career, and social-emotional support to improve student outcomes (ASCA, 2023).

Black, Individuals born of African ancestry.

Black Feminist Thought, coined by Patricia Hill Collins, is a theoretical framework attuned to the oppressive powers that impact the daily experiences of Black women.

Burnout, is defined as a psychological experience that is influenced by work related stressors. Burnout is marked by three dimensions: exhaustion, cynicism, and ineffectiveness (Maslach & Leiter, 2016).

Feminist Phenomenology, examines participant stories as deeply as possible to examine the phenomena in detail (Smith & Nizza, 2022).

Occupational stress, is an occupational hazard that results in decreased productivity and turnover (Norman & Tang, 2016).

Qualitative research, is a research method that uses a small population and storytelling to conduct an in-depth investigation of participants' stories and experiences (Bhattacharya, 2017).

School counselor(s), one who has completed master's level coursework and an educator who is certified or licensed to address the academic, career, and social-emotional development of all students.

Superwoman Schema, is a survival mechanism for Black women to help them navigate social oppression and negative stereotypes (Woods-Giscombe, 2010).

Black Woman/Women, identifies as a woman born of African ancestry.

Chapter Summary

The literature on burnout and school counselor burnout is vast. However, the literature on Black women and burnout is yet to be explored. Investigating the burnout experiences of Black women school counselors allowed their stories and voices to be heard. Literature reflects that school counselors experience burnout (Bardhoshi & Um, 2020; Fye et al., 2020; Mullen, 2018), yet very little literature explores this phenomenon in thick, rich detail. The experiences of Black women differ from their White counterparts

(Wells & Archibald, 2022), and they are more likely to experience poor health outcomes (Geronimus, 2006). The following chapters will provide the context in which Black women school counselors are situated, providing an in-depth view into the evolution of school counseling, current challenges related to the role, and their unique experiences. Feminist phenomenology, as a qualitative approach, will be used to gather and analyze the stories of Black women school counselors who offered their insight into this study.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

A considerable amount of literature exists on school counselor burnout. Though the scope of literature on school counselor burnout is vast (Fye et al., 2020); Mullen, 2018), empirical research on burnout among Black women school counselors is absent. The purpose of this chapter is to review the current literature on school counselor burnout, which details specific factors that contribute to school counselor burnout. Existing literature, however, is scarce on the experiences of Black women school counselors. Although there is literature that examines self-care practices for Black women school counselors (Wells & Archibald, 2023), no literature yet exists that explores their burnout experiences. Considering Black women's experience of poorer health outcomes (Woods-Giscombe, 2010) linked to systemic issues of racism, sexism, and classism, this study is needed to improve health conditions for Black women school counselors. A study by Erving et al. (2023) explored the extent to which Superwoman Schema was associated with their self-rated health. In exploring five dimensions of Superwoman Schema, the researchers found that the obligation to help others was associated with poorer health. Thus, an exploration into the experiences of Black women school counselors is necessary to begin to unpack the historical, social, and political systems of oppression that impact their work.

The chapter begins with an overview of the origins of school counseling, followed by the occupational stressors for school counselors. Next, it discusses burnout, counselor

burnout, school counselor burnout, and burnout in Black women school counselors. The chapter concludes with an overview of Black Feminist Thought and Superwoman Schema, which provides a theoretical framework that shapes the context that situates Black women racially, culturally, socially, and educationally.

The Origins of School Counseling

Counseling emerged from the vocational guidance movement started by Frank Parsons in the early 1900s to help young adults with career-related decisions (Gladding, 2013). Parsons developed avenues through which individuals could learn more about themselves and their career options. Later, Jesse B. Davis established the first guidance program within schools to teach lessons on character and promote education that prevented issues within schools, thus establishing school guidance. This movement was designed to establish preventative measures that instructed students on how to cope with life events. In 1953, the American School Counselor Association was chartered and joined the American Personnel and Guidance Association to improve the organization's visibility and philosophy. Due to the National Defense Education Act of 1958, which was a direct result of the Soviet Union's launch of the first satellite in space, *Sputnik*, funding was provided to develop academically gifted students and further their academic prowess. The act provided funding to train school counselors, resulting in quadrupling the number of counselors. In the 1980s, the emphasis on streamlining counselor training and preparation became an emphasis for the profession, and the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) was established (Gladding, 2013). Moreover, the School-to-Work Opportunities Act (1994) focused on career exploration and career counseling beginning in middle school, and the No Child Left

Behind Act of 2001 deemphasized vocational guidance and emphasized academic achievement (Rock & Curry, 2021). With the implementation of former First Lady Michelle Obama's Reach Higher Initiative (2014), school counselors were instrumental in inspiring students to pursue and complete post-secondary education (Rock & Curry, 2021).

Equally important, The American School Counselor Association (ASCA) developed the ASCA National Model in 2003, which, in its fourth iteration since 2019, is the framework that explicates the design and implementation of a comprehensive school counseling program. The ASCA National Model outlines the school counselor's role, detailing appropriate and inappropriate responsibilities (ASCA, 2023). Over the last 100+ years, the role of school counselors has evolved from vocational guidance to a comprehensive one that addresses the role of the school counselor through three domains—academic, social/emotional, and career (ASCA, 2021). Since the profession's establishment, school counselors have held many titles, resulting in role confusion among guidance counselors, vocational counselors, and school counselors (Rock & Curry, 2021). In 1990, the ASCA disseminated a role statement that explained the change in professional title, officially naming the profession school counseling (Rock & Curry, 2021). Before the adaptation of a national framework from which counselors could operate, previous responsibilities assigned to guidance counselors held space for them to assume additional duties outside of their role (Chandler et al., 2018). Thus, due to the evolution of the school counselor's role, many are still unaware of how the role of school counselors has transformed to incorporate data-driven measures to improve student outcomes (Rock & Curry, 2021).

The Role of School Counselors within the ASCA National Model Framework

School counselors are professionals who are trained and educated to ensure student success throughout school and in their pursuit of post-secondary careers through the implementation of a comprehensive school counseling program (ASCA, 2023). School counselors work at primary and secondary schooling levels in addition to district-level positions (ASCA, 2023). ASCA delineates the appropriate roles for school counselors, including student academic advisement and goal setting, classroom lessons, short-term counseling, referrals to outside agencies for long-term counseling for students, school-based consultation and collaboration with faculty, staff and stakeholders, student advocacy, data analysis to determine student needs, and using their role of influence to impact change to improve outcomes for all students (ASCA, 2023). ASCA's Role Statement states, "School Counselors design and deliver school counseling programs that improve outcomes. They lead, advocate, and collaborate to promote equity and access for all students by connecting their school counseling program to the school's vision and improvement plan. They uphold the ethical and professional standards of ASCA and promote the development of the school counseling program based on the following areas of the ASCA National Model: define, deliver, manage, and assess" (ASCA, 2023). Since school counselors deliver their school counseling program through direct and indirect service to students, which should account for 80% of their time, they may find their role in conflict with school leaders' and stakeholders' perceptions (Fye et al., 2020). The school counselor's role is designed with student success at the forefront. However, role changes over time have contributed to occupational stressors for school counselors (Cervoni & DeLucia-Waack, 2011).

Occupational Stress

Occupational stress is an occupational hazard that results in dissatisfaction, diminished productivity, truancy, and turnover (Norman & Tang, 2016), which can contribute to employee experiences of burnout. Occupational stress for school counselors can be conceptualized into role ambiguity and role conflict, which are sources of burnout for school counselors (Coll & Freeman, 1997; Fye et al., 2020b). Role ambiguity refers to a lack of clarity around one's role, whereas role conflict describes the tension of competing role demands between an employee and employer (Fye et al., 2020b). With both role ambiguity and role conflict impacting the work of school counselors due to the assignment of non-counseling duties and large caseload sizes, school counselors who experience these occupational stressors are likely to report experiences of burnout and lower job satisfaction (Mullen et al., 2021). A study by Culbreth et al. (2005) explored role stress among practicing school counselors and found that the dissonance between training and professional practice significantly predicted role stress. Additionally, the study found that peer supervision and consultation assisted in mitigating role stress.

Role Ambiguity

Role ambiguity, which coincides with the exhaustion dimension of burnout, is the tension between a lack of clear direction with work or the difference in the perceived versus actual role (Fye et al., 2020b; Maslach & Leiter, 2016). School counselors experience role ambiguity when expectations are vague and role expectations and responsibilities vary (Blake, 2020). Though the role of the school counselor is unique, what makes school counselors susceptible to burnout is not only the misunderstanding of their role by the administration but also the ambiguity within job descriptions that do not

align with the ASCA National Model (Dooley, 2023). Literature suggests that when school counselors experience a discrepancy between their assigned duties and their training in their school counselor preparation programs, their professional identity is adversely impacted, which could also lead to stress and burnout (Windham & Tuttle, 2022). Role ambiguity leaves limited time to perform tasks aligned with the role, increased stress and burnout, decreased job performance, and exodus from the profession. Equally important, novice school counselors are increasingly susceptible to stress and burnout because of caseload sizes, the assignment of non-counseling duties, role ambiguity, and excessive administrative paperwork (Fye et al., 2021).

Similarly, school counselors experience dissonance between their counselor training and preparation programs and professional practice. Although the ASCA National Model, which is taught in CACREP School Counselor preparation programs, clearly delineates the roles and responsibilities of school counselors, often schools and school districts incorporate additional roles and responsibilities that are not aligned with the scope of school counselors' skillset (Windham & Tuttle, 2022), which, as a result, could lead to school counselor burnout. School counselors are called to design and deliver comprehensive school counseling programs that impact student outcomes that are developmentally appropriate and address academic, personal, social, and career domains (Holman et al., 2019). Yet, contrary to what stakeholders believe, school counselors' beliefs about their roles are derived from graduate training and preparation programs (Holman et al., 2019). As school counselors enter the profession, a tension exists between what is learned in their graduate training and how the role is perceived, which varies.

School counselors' experiences in schools are significantly impacted by their supervising administrators (Chandler et al., 2018). Often, educational administrators who supervise school counselors have little to no training in their graduate preparation courses about adequately using them to achieve the school's mission. Yet, administrators who oversee school counseling programs have the most critical responsibility in the role of school counselors since they often assign their duties (Windham & Tuttle, 2022). Administrators reported insufficient training in collaborating with school counselors, thus leaning into personal experience in their supervision (Windham & Tuttle, 2022). Ultimately, administrators who understand the school counselor's role can advocate for appropriate responsibilities for school counselors that support their training and expertise. In essence, how school counselors' roles are defined, how they are managed, and their assigned duties impact how school counselors are viewed, how their work is situated, and how well they can serve students (Blake, 2020). Thus, it is imperative that administrators who oversee school counselors have knowledge of their role and how to adequately use them to promote student success (Chandler et al., 2018; Windham & Tuttle, 2022). An additional occupational stressor for school counselors is role conflict, which also impairs school counselors' experience at work.

Role Conflict

Role conflict is the difference in role expectations between two more individuals or when expectations do not align with what can be realistically accomplished (Blake, 2020). Role conflict occurs when individuals lack control over decisions impacting their work, autonomy, and resources to effectively do their jobs (Maslach & Leiter, 2017) and emerge when stakeholders in positions of influence impose competing demands. As

school counselors are situated within the context of school communities, often, stakeholders who invest in the overall success of the school have varying perceptions of the role of the school counselor (Windham & Tuttle, 2022). Similarly, school administrators believe that although school counselors' role as outlined by ASCA is vital, so are non-counseling duties (Windham & Tuttle, 2022). Furthermore, a study by Lane et al. (2020) reported that 89% of administrators surveyed reported not being familiar with the ASCA National Model, which implies that the leaders who are closest to the work of school counselors are unaware of the foundational knowledge paramount to the role and work of school counselors. Moreover, Chandler et al. (2018) posit that principals' expectations of school counselors conflict with their professional training and often place additional demands that can contribute to role-related stress. Appropriate responsibilities for school counselors promote student success and align with the ASCA National Model's vision for school counseling programs (Holman et al., 2019). The following section explores Black women's experiences with occupational stressors that may increase their susceptibility to burnout.

Black Women's Experiences of Occupational Stressors

Because of historic racial, social, and gender discrimination within the United States, it is important to examine occupational stress through the lens of race and gender to give context to the experiences of Black women. Their gender and racial identity shape black women's experience with occupational stressors. A study by the American Psychological Association found that 48% of Black Americans reported discrimination in the workplace as a source of stress (APA, 2020). Additionally, Lajam and O'Connor (2023) found that women physicians more often experienced difficulty balancing work

and life responsibilities, and women with families reported spending more time on average parenting and handling household responsibilities than men. In a study of secondary traumatic stress and burnout among Black higher education professionals, Jackson-Preston et al. (2023) found that Black higher education professionals were more likely to remain in roles for three years or less, leading to greater instances of turnover. Participants cited many organizational risk factors that must be rectified, such as workload and fairness, to mitigate stressors contributing to stress and burnout. With Black women being at the intersection of many marginalized identities, Black women are likely at greater risk of burnout compared to their counterparts. It is important to explore their experiences with burnout, given the context of their intersectional identities. Though burnout is considered an occupational issue, the factors that contribute to burnout are occupation-specific. The following section details burnout and its potential impact on health.

Burnout

Burnout is a psychological experience that develops because of repeated job-related stressors, marked explicitly by three dimensions—exhaustion, cynicism, and ineffectiveness which explores the interaction between an individual and their environment (Maslach & Leiter, 2016; Maslach & Leiter, 2017). In essence, the relationship with work is impaired, and as a result, personal and social performance is jeopardized (Maslach & Leiter, 2017). In addition, burnout is an individual experience impacting one's perception of oneself and others. Although some individuals may leave a job or profession due to burnout, others remain and have decreased productivity (Maslach & Leiter, 2016). Additionally, burnout has been reported to have consequential effects on

one's overall well-being and is associated with unpleasant reactions to the job, such as job dissatisfaction, chronic truancy, and turnover (Maslach & Leiter, 2016). Burnout has also been a predictor of depression and other emotional conditions like anxiety and irritability (Khammissa et al., 2022; Maslach & Leiter, 2017). It is vitally important that helping professionals address burnout because of its potentially harmful effects on personal and professional outcomes (Stosic et al., 2021). Since three dimensions contribute to burnout, the following sections detail the features associated with each dimension.

The exhaustion dimension of burnout includes feelings such as fatigue, lethargy, and low energy (Maslach & Leiter, 2016; Maslach & Leiter, 2017). Inappropriate attitudes at work and irritability marked the cynicism dimension, and the ineffectiveness dimension was categorized by low productivity and morale (Maslach & Leiter, 2017). Across the literature on burnout, exhaustion is an essential feature of burnout and is considered the most widely researched and reported aspect of burnout. Although some literature only considers exhaustion as the sole marker of burnout (Kristensen et al., 2005; Shirom & Melamed, 2006), they argue that the other dimensions—inefficacy and cynicism, are not essential to identifying burnout in an individual.

Maslach and Leiter (2017) suggest that exhaustion is not the only dimension of burnout because it does not fully encompass the totality of burnout alone, hence its multidimensional features. Cynicism, however, captures one's relationship with work in that it characterizes the distance an individual imposes with their work and colleagues (Maslach & Leiter, 2016). Incorporating cynicism and inefficacy with exhaustion allows for a multidimensional view of burnout. Individuals with burnout experiences are not solely exhausted but lose a connection with their work, which denotes a work-related

crisis (Maslach & Leiter, 2017). For these reasons, without environmental work changes, burnout can persist for long periods because of consistent job stressors (Maslach & Leiter, 2017). A commonly cited source of burnout is overload, where individuals are expected to exceed their capacity with work without the necessary resources and unrealistic time constraints. An essential feature of role overload is when individuals cannot recover from work demands. Research on burnout indicates that individuals are more likely to experience burnout earlier in their careers than later (Maslach & Leiter, 2017). However, individuals who experience burnout may exit the profession, leaving individuals who have lower levels of burnout in the field (Maslach & Leiter, 2008).

Maslach and Leiter (2017) identify six organizational risk factors of burnout—workload, control, reward, community, fairness, and values. Research shows that organizational factors attributing to burnout are more predictive than individual factors, which indicates that burnout is a phenomenon situated within a social context rather than an individual. Workload, or overload, is when one has responsibilities that exceed what one can reasonably manage with the time and resources allotted. Workload coincides with the exhaustion dimension of burnout because it impairs one's ability to do one's job because one's work exceeds what one can complete. A workload that leads to burnout is a recurring condition that one cannot recover from through rest, and individuals become exhausted not simply because of the number of demands but also the quality of demands. Control is when one feels they have the power to influence decisions that impact their work, along with the ability to access the tools to complete their job (Maslach and Leiter, 2017). Research shows that individuals who have increased control over their work experience increased satisfaction with their role and have more commitment to it.

Increasing the amount of control one has in the workplace is the focus of interventions designed to mitigate burnout (Maslach & Leiter, 2017).

Thus, research on rewards in the workplace, be it monetary, social, or intrinsic, must align with expectations set forth by the job (Maslach & Leiter, 2017). Lack of adequate reward increases one's susceptibility to burnout because individuals experience feelings of inefficacy when no recognition exists. Contrarily, consistent opportunities for reward indicate the opportunity for intrinsic and extrinsic motivation and is known as a cost-effective way to mitigate burnout and increase job engagement. Community is defined by social interactions within an organization, such as the ability to alleviate conflict, support one another, and work collaboratively (Maslach and Leiter, 2017). Research indicates that establishing a sense of community can serve as an intermediary for inequity in the workplace. Burnout is more likely to occur when work relationships are destructive or negative. Next, fairness is the idea that work decisions are deemed equitable (Maslach & Leiter, 2017). Individuals want to feel that they are treated respectfully within the workplace and are more concerned with decision-making that incorporates fair processes instead of a favorable outcome. Additionally, one of the social indicators for burnout was a perceived disregard for reciprocity in work relationships. Fairness equates to individuals determining if their inputs (time, work, knowledge) and outputs (reward) are equitable and, if not, could lead to burnout. Fairness also indicates an organization's desire for staff to remain employed long-term. Lastly, values are the factors that influence one to connect with a company that is more significant than a working exchange for one's time, skillset, and money. When there is a conflict in values, individuals find themselves debating between their values and the organization's values.

Value incongruence is significant to one's experiences with burnout. Sometimes, one may experience dissonance when there is a conflict between organizational values and personal career aspirations. When one feels they mistakenly entered a profession, it contributes to their experience with burnout. Due to the harmful effects of burnout on both health and mental health, it is important to discuss the health outcomes related to burnout.

Health Outcomes Related to Burnout

Burnout has a unique relationship with health outcomes in that poor mental and physical health contributes to burnout, and burnout contributes to poor health outcomes (Maslach & Leiter, 2017). Of the three burnout dimensions, exhaustion correlates with physical stress symptoms such as "headaches, chronic fatigue, gastrointestinal disorders, muscle tension, hypertension, cold/flu episodes, and sleep disturbances" (Maslach & Leiter, 2017, p. 50). Decreased energy could cause vulnerability to accidents and injuries at work and, when coupled with the other two burnout dimensions, can result in a diminished desire to live a healthy lifestyle (citation). Mental health may also be impacted by burnout, and the literature indicates that burnout has been predictive of depression and anxiety (Hao, 2023). As a result, research uncovered that health disorders that impair quality of life the most in developed nations are heart disease, back pain, and depressive disorders (Cooper & Quick, 2017). Therefore, with burnout being predictive of many poor health outcomes and burnout being situated within the context of organizations, organizations must establish workplace cultures that promote the well-being of their employees to help mitigate the effect of burnout (Henderson et al., 2017).

Considering the instances in which burnout can negatively influence one's quality of life inside and outside of the workplace, burnout is a concern amongst helping professionals, specifically for clergy, social workers, counselors, teachers, and medical and emergency personnel, due to emotional and relational intensity, unpredictability, and job-related stress (Adams et al., 2016; Stosic et al., 2021). The impact of burnout is potentially harmful not only for professionals but also those who are in their care (Adams et al., 2016). As a result, burnout is a public health concern that can impact healthcare workers' health, reducing the quality of patient care and resulting in rising healthcare costs (Adams et al., 2016). Helping professionals often utilize empathy in helping others navigate their emotions (Stosic et al., 2021). As such, within the medical field, professionals regularly assist patients with navigating positive and negative emotions, be it grief, fear, or pride (Stosic et al., 2021). Similarly, the work of clergy members can be emotionally driven when having to officiate funerals or provide families with grief counseling after the loss of a loved one (Adams et al., 2016). Within education, teachers reported high instances of burnout, and students of burned-out teachers felt less supported and performed worse on exams (Stosic et al., 2021). Since helping professions are demanding, stressful, and have relational intensity, burnout can harm the aspects of a helping relationship (Adams et al., 2016). For example, in a study of nurses, Chang et al. (2023) found that burnout can cause increased workplace accidents and compromise work efficiency. Due to the impact of burnout and its applicability across helping professions, mental health counselors and school counselors are susceptible to its harmful effects.

Counselor Burnout

Burnout in counselors has been a concern for several years, especially given the impact of burnout on one's clients (Silva et al., 2024). Since burnout is attributed to an individual's experience with an organization and work environment, how counselors perceive their environment influences their performance and satisfaction (Coaston, 2017). Counselors' experience of burnout impairs their ability to help care for the mental well-being of their clients and their experience of low support, role conflict, and demanding work conditions contribute to feelings of stress (Acker, 2011). As a result of these stressors, counselors could experience burnout (Silva et al., 2024).

Due to the recent shifts in mental healthcare delivery, counselors who provide care for clients with severe mental health disorders find themselves wedged between efficient short-term care solutions and solutions that could improve client well-being long term (Acker, 2011). Thus, navigating costs and access to services for clients, along with decreased professional development and support, are added stressors for counselors (Acker, 2011). Given the challenges counselors have in their experience with burnout, school counselors face differing challenges when navigating the mental health needs of students, coupled with academic and career advisement and planning. School counselors experience burnout within the context of schools due to several factors related to their role. The following sections detail school counselor burnout and the resulting challenges that impact school counselors.

School Counselor Burnout

The work of school counselors is an essential component of student success (Wells & Archibald, 2023). By implementing a comprehensive school counseling

program, school counselors are expected to ensure students' academic, social, emotional, and career wellness (ASCA, 2019). School counselors are also tasked with ensuring that their time is spent in direct (e.g., individual counseling) and indirect service (e.g., program management) to students (Mullen et al., 2018).

School counselors can encounter competing demands, which could lead to stress, fatigue, and eventual exodus from the profession (Mullen et al., 2018). Although burnout occurs across counseling and other helping professions, school counselors are susceptible to burnout due to the vast scope of their work, ranging from academic advisement to helping students deal with traumatic experiences (Dooley, 2023). School counselor burnout occurs due to demands associated with the role that include large caseload sizes, stress, and assignment of non-counseling duties (Kim & Lambie, 2018; Um & Bardhoshi, 2024; Watcher et al., 2008). In a study, Bain et al. (2011) found that 41% of school counselors reported experiencing burnout, while 48% reported experiencing burnout at least sometimes. A study by Watcher (2006) found that in a survey of school counselors, 20% responded as exhibiting burnout. As a result of the pervasiveness of burnout, school counselors are impacted by experiences of exhaustion, diminished personal life, toxic work environment, decreased productivity, and turnover (Fye et al., 2020b; Kim & Lambie, 2018). Burnout can be attributed to external factors (e.g., workplace) and internal factors (e.g., individual attributes) (Limberg et al., 2016). ASCA's ethical guidelines mandate that school counselors remain aware of the opportunity for stress within the profession, practice self-care, and seek help from others when needed (ASCA, 2022). Although CACREP (Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs) accredited programs prepare school counselors in training to be

effective school counselors, burnout impairs one's ability to withstand challenges (Dooley, 2023).

A study by Mullen et al. (2018) found that novice school counselors across all school levels were more likely to report more perceived stress and burnout than their more experienced, older counterparts. However, one should be cautious because of survival bias; those who experience burnout early in their careers are likely to leave the profession and leave survivors who experience decreased levels of burnout (Maslach & Leiter, 2017). Prior literature suggests that burnout results from prolonged stress, and consequently, school counselors who reported greater stress also reported greater burnout (Mullen et al., 2018). School counselors impacted by burnout may have high expectations of themselves, be detail-oriented, and be at risk of other physical and mental impairments (Limberg et al., 2016). The empirical literature on school counselor burnout can be divided into two major categories, quantitative and qualitative literature. The following section summarizes the current quantitative literature on school counselor burnout.

Current Quantitative Research on School Counselor Burnout

Empirical research on school counselor burnout has been overwhelmingly quantitative. Considering that quantitative research lends to more generalizability, research has examined predictors of and relationships between factors that possibly contribute to school counselor burnout. The dearth of quantitative literature can be classified into three major categories—counselor role and responsibilities, workload, and wellness. The quantitative literature on school counselor burnout contributes to the following general understanding regarding school counselor burnout. School counselors who can work within the confines of the role as aligned by ASCA, with minimal external

demands and non-counseling duties, experience lower levels of burnout (Fye et al., 2020a; Fye et al., 2020b; Holman et al., 2019). Next, caseload sizes and support for school counselors impact school counselors' experiences with burnout (Bardhoshi & Um, 2021; Fye et al., 2021; Mullen et al., 2021). Large school counselor caseload sizes may contribute to one's experience with burnout because school counselors are inundated with, on average, over 460+ students (ASCA, 2019). Decreasing caseload sizes according to ASCA's recommendation of 250:1 could help mitigate burnout for school counselors, in addition to incorporating supervision (Kim & Lambie, 2018; Mullen et al., 2021). Moreover, school counselors have decreased experiences of burnout when they engage in supervision (Kim & Lambie, 2018). Incorporating school counseling supervision allows school counselors to engage with a supervisor who is knowledgeable of their role as a school counselor and can help them navigate the workplace. Lastly, school counselors should prioritize wellness and self-care (Fye et al., 2021; Limberg, 2016; Mullen et al., 2020). Given the wide range of cases school counselors experience within the role, prioritizing wellness is paramount (Fye et al., 2021; Limberg, 2016; Mullen et al., 2020). Research shows that school counselors who engage in wellness or self-care are less likely to experience burnout (Wells & Archibald, 2023). In sum, the quantitative literature on school counselor burnout provides a general understanding of school counselor burnout. The following section explores the qualitative research on school counselor burnout.

Qualitative Research on School Counselor Burnout

Qualitative research allows researchers to illicit more rich descriptions of school counselor burnout. Although qualitative research differs from quantitative literature, its strength is the descriptions of the unique stories and perspectives it presents in

understanding school counselor burnout. Using phenomenological analysis, Holman and Grubbs (2018) explored the burnout experiences of high school counselors in urban settings. Karasek's Job Demand Control Support Model of Job Stress (1979) (JDCS) posits that job stress occurs when autonomy does not align with the demands of the job. The study found that school counselors are inundated by the overwhelming demands from stakeholders who have unrealistic and often contradictory expectations of their role. Additionally, the researchers found that school counselors' time was often imposed upon them, leaving little time to accomplish goals. The study necessitated further advocacy regarding appropriate school roles for school counselors.

Falls and Nichter (2007) conducted a phenomenological study exploring school counselors' experiences of job stress. The researchers indicated that due to the lack of literature related to job stress, their goal was to accurately depict the experiences of school counselors in large suburban high schools. The study revealed several themes, including minimal support for counselors, assignment of non-counseling duties that can be assigned to clerical staff or school administration, and a lack of school districts providing guidance or a framework for appropriate responsibilities for school counselors. The study also highlighted the dissonance between counselor preparation programs and professional practice, illuminating discrepancies between graduate training and the realities of the actual role (Falls & Nitcher, 2007).

Both studies utilized a phenomenological approach to exploring job stress or school counselor burnout to thoughtfully capture their experiences. Considering the gap in recent qualitative literature on school counselor burnout, this study is needed to expand

the literature on school counselor burnout and to explore the burnout experiences of Black women school counselors.

Burnout in Black Women

Black women's experiences of burnout are, in part, contributed to expectations that they are resilient (Cooke & Hastings, 2023). Since burnout can manifest psychologically, including low self-confidence, exhaustion, and limited focus, Black women are susceptible to burnout because of their chronic experiences of daily stressors. Black women repeatedly experience negative images of their culture, which, coupled with microaggressions and discrimination, perpetuate adverse health outcomes (Cooke & Hastings, 2023). Additionally, Black women are susceptible to weathering, which posits that Blacks experience declination in health earlier than their White counterparts due to social, political, and economic marginalization (Geronimus et al., 2006). Similarly, McEwen and Stellar (1993) coined the term allostatic load to refer to the physiological impact of repeated stressors on the health of Blacks. The effect of stress on the body can interfere with the functioning of bodily systems—cardiovascular, metabolic, and immune, resulting in chronic illness and untimely mortality (Woods-Giscombe, 2010). A study by Woods-Giscombe (2010) found that Black women exhibited stress-related health behaviors like emotional eating, smoking, inconsistent sleep patterns, and delay of self-care. Participants in the study aligned their embodiment of the superwoman role with health problems, including migraines, hair loss, weight gain, and depression.

Equally important, a study by Cooke and Hastings (2023) of Black women social workers reported the workplace as a leading source of stress. Participants indicated that Black women were given larger caseloads because they were found to be more resilient

and could adequately manage more significant numbers. Other factors for work-related stress and burnout included work overload, limited support, and racism. Participants reported the expectation to remain flexible in environments where flexibility is not reciprocated and disclosed that an unsupportive environment, limited resources, unrealistic time constraints, and no supervision perpetuated their stress experiences. On the contrary, participants overextended themselves due to their desires to excel and negate stereotypes about Black women in the workplace (Cooke & Hastings, 2023).

Literature on Black working women indicates that stress is evident in every avenue of their lives because of familial, work, and social involvement (Cooke & Hastings, 2023). Black women constantly experiencing discrimination on the basis of ethnicity, gender, and socioeconomic status negatively impacts their well-being (Cooke & Hastings, 2023). Disproportionately, Black women experience more negative health outcomes at higher rates than other groups of women, which have been linked to their experiences of “stress, trauma, racism, sexism, daily microaggressions, and classism” (Cooke & Hastings, 2023, p. 4). Thus, due to the complex nature of stress, researchers are uncertain as to how to accurately define the term stress in Black working women because there is limited research on Black women’s stress experiences and coping (Cooke & Hastings, 2023). Literature suggests that to grasp a better understanding of stress regarding Black women, the complicated intersections of oppression must be explored (Cooke & Hastings, 2023). Black women hold cultural and spiritual beliefs that deem it necessary to rectify their problems in isolation. Consequently, Black women are disproportionately overrepresented among individuals with stress-related death and health outcomes linked to race, such as diabetes, high blood pressure, and high cholesterol

(Robinson-Wood et al., 2015). As a result, Black women tend to work beyond their capacity, appearing unphased by the physical or mental effects of stress, otherwise known as Superwoman Schema (Cooke & Hastings, 2023). Compared to their White counterparts, Black women have higher rates of hypertension, obesity, maternal mortality, and lower rates of life expectancy (Perez et al., 2022). Due to their existence at the intersection of two marginalized identities, Black women have been groomed to balance softer traits such as caregiving alongside traits of independence, hard work, and strength (Perez et al., 2022). Considering the impact that chronic stressors have on overall health, it is vital to work towards improving health outcomes for Black women. Considering the challenges that Black women face along with the demands of the school counseling role, Black school counselors also face additional stressors of racism and discrimination within schools.

Black School Counselors

According to ASCA (2023), eleven percent of school counselors identify as Black or African American. Considering the small population of Black school counselors that exists within an overwhelmingly White profession, Black school counselors face challenges due to their marginalized identity. A study by Jones (2019) found that Black school counselors felt a greater need to work harder as the only Black school counselor in a school. The study found that school counselors felt tokenized, undervalued, and alone because of their identity. Black school counselors reported intervening with Black students who were not on their caseloads and feeling the need to code-switch, particularly if they were employed at predominantly White schools. The experiences of Black school counselors are complicated. They indicate the necessity to be knowledgeable and work

harder than their counterparts, but they still report experiences of disregard from colleagues and parents (Wells & Archibald, 2023).

A study by Wines et al. (2013) explored the experiences of Black school counselors in predominantly White schools. The study found that Black school counselors experience oppression, discrimination, and racism from their White counterparts in the workplace. The study revealed the following themes: privileged mindset, consistent evaluation, cultural encapsulation, workplace resistance, self-help preservation, and acceptance. School counselors identified a myriad of concerns, including parental mistrust, forced assimilation to the dominant culture, consistent evaluation by administrators and colleagues, and feeling like the spokespersons for Black culture. Black school counselors identified a reluctance on behalf of teachers and administrators to interact with or share information with school counselors. As a result of these experiences, Black school counselors who work in predominantly White schools necessitate the need for multicultural competence and acceptance and support of differences (Wines et al., 2013). Since Black women school counselors endure challenges that Black school counselors face coupled with the myriad of societal challenges Black women face, the literature is scarce that explores their experiences in detail.

Black Women School Counselors

With the vast majority of the school counseling profession identifying as women at 87% and only 10% of school counselors identifying as African American or Black, there is a complicated intersection through which Black women school counselors are situated (Wells & Archibald, 2023). A study by Ricard (2021) examined the perception of role confusion and burnout among Black female school counselors. The study found

that the participants felt forced to overextend their role as school counselors to advocates, guardians, or mentors to Black students due to fear that society would mishandle them if they were rendered unsuccessful. Given the historical challenges African Americans have endured in America, allow Black women school counselors to rationalize their additional responsibilities with Black students. Participants also felt that as Black woman school counselors, they were not viewed as intelligibly as their non-Black counterparts (Ricard, 2021). As a result of the myriad of challenges that Black women school counselors face navigating the potential effects of burnout within the profession, Black women school counselors also face additional challenges being Black and female. Therefore, it is fitting that this study is conceptualized through the lens of Black Feminist Thought.

Theoretical Framework

Black Feminist Thought

Black women navigate multiple intersecting identities within systems of power and oppression. To critically examine Black women's unique experiences with school counselor burnout within educational institutions, it is necessary to utilize a theoretical framework attuned to the social, political, and socioeconomic powers that impact the daily experiences of Black women. Black Feminist Thought (BFT), coined by Patricia Hill Collins (2009), provides a framework that examines the resistance, activism, and politics of empowerment. BFT is rooted in Black Feminist epistemology, which emphasizes the interactions between power and knowledge, specifically for Black women to possess the autonomy to define their stories on their terms.

Collins (2009) posits that the oppression of Black women has three dimensions. First, Black women's labor is essential to capitalism in the US. Secondly, due to

oppression, Black women are not afforded privileges given to White men. Lastly, the controlling images (e.g., the mammy, the welfare mother, and the Jezebel) associated with Black women continue to perpetuate negative stereotypes, therefore continuing the system of oppression. These dimensions work collectively to continue to control Black women and maintain a status of inferiority within society. Moreover, BFT examines dichotomies critically while examining the essence of the individual and societal structures while highlighting that multiple truths can exist at once; one can be oppressed in one setting while perpetuating oppression in another.

Within educational settings, BFT provides a critical lens through which the experiences of Black women school counselors can be understood. Through the tenets of the theory, BFT speaks directly to the challenges that Black women with school counselor burnout navigate within the context of their worlds and their schools. Black women school counselors exist within an educational system embedded within a society with historical, social, political, and socioeconomic implications for women's roles within the system. According to ASCA (2023), women overwhelmingly occupy the school counseling profession at 87%, and Black women school counselors must consider the intersection of their race and gender as they attend to the needs of their students. Using BFT allows Black women with school counselor burnout to define their experiences and stories on their terms. Examining Black women's experiences with school counselor burnout through BFT explores the challenges of intersectional oppression as Black women in a profession overwhelmingly occupied by White women. According to ASCA (2023), 74% of members identify as White/non-Hispanic, compared to 11% of ASCA members who identify as Black. Though the literature is abundant in revealing that

school counselor burnout exists, the experiences of Black women have not yet been explored. Patricia Hill Collins (SBG Book Club, 2021) indicated that Black women live in the intersection as a group and that their experiences must be viewed through the intersecting systems of power.

An example is West (2022), who explored her experience transitioning from a student affairs professional at a predominantly white institution to a tenure-track faculty member. Despite her education and credentials, she still struggled to advance in her career. West (2021) found that through the tenets of Black Feminist Thought, she must honor her own experiences while also being attuned to the larger context in which she is situated--living along the margins of an intersectional experience. As a result, she established a community with other Black women, which bolstered her confidence as a Black woman at the intersection of many marginalized identities. A study by Porter et al. (2020) highlighted the experiences of four Black women faculty members in higher education and student affairs graduate preparation programs. Utilizing Black Feminist Thought, the researchers identified through BFT that Black women must embody consciousness while simultaneously understanding that they are also perceived as "other", regardless of positionality. The study illuminated issues of power, oppression, and subordination (Porter et al., 2020).

Also utilizing BFT, a study by social work faculty members explored stress and coping among African American women (Hamilton-Mason et al., 2009). The study investigated the interconnectedness of race, gender, class, and psychological well-being of women aged 18 to 55. Since Black Feminist Thought highlights the intersections at which Black women are situated in society, Hamilton-Mason et al. (2009) found that the

diversity in the experiences of Black women presents varied reactions to the themes presented within the study.

A study by Shavers and Moore (2019) utilized BFT to explore the experiences of Black female doctoral students at predominantly White institutions. Using BFT's "perpetual outsider" theme, the participants identified unwelcoming spaces, tokenism, and feeling like outsiders at home. Black Feminist Thought is the theoretical framework that guided the lens through which this study is viewed. The intersection of identities and systematic pressures that Black women encounter to assimilate often manifests in specific behavioral and cognitive approaches that researchers have termed Superwoman Schema.

Superwoman Schema

Superwoman Schema, rooted in Black Feminist Epistemology, emerged as a way for Black women to withstand the "sociohistorical and sociopolitical context of gendered racism" (Perez et al., 2022, p. 2). This schema developed specifically as a survival mechanism for Black women to navigate adversity and counteract negative stereotypes (e.g., the Mammy, the Sapphire, the Welfare Queen, the Jezebel) (Woods-Giscombe, 2010). Five characteristics define Superwoman schema: (a) presenting the façade of strength, (b) feeling that it is necessary to subdue emotions, (c) being resistant to be vulnerable or dependent on others, (d) a strong will to succeed, and (e) an obligation to help others. These characteristics represent adaptive strategies and sources of stress for Black women navigating personal and professional spaces.

The Superwoman Schema has been considered both negative and positive for Black women. While it can serve as a survival mechanism through which they can battle racial and gender-related stressors, research indicates that it simultaneously increases the

risk for stress-related illness (Perez et al., 2022). Woods-Giscombe et al. (2019) examined the association between mental health and health behaviors in African American women. The study found that Superwoman Schema is associated with health behaviors that may increase the possibility of illness (Woods-Giscombe et al., 2019), such as increased risk for obesity, lupus, depression, and cardiovascular disease (Allen et al., 2019; Woods-Giscombe (2010). Repeated experiences of microaggressions can lead to feelings of hopelessness, anger, and inadequacy, therefore putting Black women at a higher risk of depression and racism-initiated anxiety (Cooke & Hastings, 2023).

Within helping professions, the manifestation of the Superwoman Schema can present unique challenges. Other important components include "an obligation to help others, which includes difficulty saying no, resistance to being vulnerable or dependent, obligation to suppress emotions, and postponement of self-care" (Woods-Giscombe, 2010, p. 679). Geronimus et al. (2006) posit that given the social, historical, racial, and gendered oppression, Black women have an increased risk of stress and illness. A study by McEwen and Stellar (1993) indicated that recurring exposure to psychological stress may lead to cardiovascular, metabolic, and immune dysregulation. As Black Women School Counselors negotiate their roles within schools, they likely utilize characteristics of Superwoman Schema to navigate stressors and burnout experiences. Using Black Feminist Thought and Superwoman Schema as the framework through which Black women school counselors' burnout experiences were explored explicates the complicated social, political, and historical challenges that they face in their roles as school counselors.

Chapter Summary

Though the role of the school counselor has evolved over time, often school counselors still face challenges with stakeholders to ensure their role is protected. Occupational stress is a result of role dissonance, role ambiguity, and role conflict, which contributes to school counselors' experiences with burnout. In addition to the challenges school counselors face, Black women school counselors' identities are situated at the intersection of gender and racial discrimination. In navigating the experiences within schools while advocating for a role that aligns with their unique skillset, Black women school counselors may feel inclined to debunk stereotypes about them held by stakeholders, which could result in burnout. This chapter highlighted a gap in the literature to highlight the burnout experiences of Black women school counselors. Through the lens of Black Feminist Thought coupled with Superwoman Schema, this study was needed to illuminate their voices and to enrich the literature on their lived experiences.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to examine the burnout experiences of Black women school counselors. Utilizing Black Feminist Thought (BFT) and Superwoman Schema as the framework for examining burnout experiences, this study sought to understand how Black women's burnout experiences shaped their lived experiences as school counselors. Considering the complexity of examining this phenomenon, a qualitative approach was best suited for this study. I used Feminist Phenomenology to investigate this study. This chapter describes the recruitment process, participants, research design, procedure, and data analysis process used in this study. To begin, the problem and the purpose of this study are outlined, followed by the research question that guided this study. Next, the rationale for utilizing a qualitative method is detailed, followed by the research design and the theoretical framework used to guide this research. Lastly, a detailed look into the procedure, data analysis, and ethical considerations are provided.

Problem Statement

Although a plethora of quantitative literature exists explicating the prevalence of school counselor burnout, little qualitative research has been conducted that details the unique experiences of Black women and school counselor burnout. Examining Black women school counselors' experiences through the context of BFT can provide an in-depth view of burnout and the factors that influence their experiences within schools.

Considering the transformation of the school counselor's role to focus on leadership, advocacy, collaboration, and improving student outcomes through data-driven comprehensive school counseling programs, the perception of the school counselor's role has not evolved with the times. School counselors are wedged between antiquated ideals of their role and the transformational one espoused by the American School Counselor Association at the turn of the century. Considering the tension between the paradigm of the role and how stakeholders perceive the role, school counselors are susceptible to burnout, given the conflict. Similarly, stereotypes about Black women (e.g., the Mammy, the Matriarch, the Welfare Mother, and the Jezebel) perpetuate and justify the oppression of Black women (Collins, 2009). Given the historical oppression that Black women have faced at the intersection of their race, gender, sexuality, and social class, coupled with navigating the matrix of domination in our country, Black women school counselors have unique individual and shared perspectives in their burnout experiences.

Collins (2009) suggests that BFT, providing historically marginalized groups with new knowledge about their experiences, can, in turn, empower them. Therefore, this study was needed to give voice to the many Black women school counselors who can define their reality through a new way of knowing. Studies about school counselor burnout often reveal factors that contribute to burnout (Bardhoshi & Um, 2020; Mullen et al., 2021); however, the burnout experiences of Black women are not known. This study is meant to be informational, educational, and an advocacy tool for Black women school counselors.

Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study is to examine the lived experiences of Black women with school counselor burnout. Overwhelmingly, quantitative literature highlights that school counselor burnout exists; however, limited qualitative data explores these experiences in detail, and no studies have examined the burnout experiences specifically of Black women. Since Black women are more likely to experience poorer health outcomes (Woods-Giscombe, 2010), their perspectives are needed to understand their school counselor burnout experiences and to improve health conditions for Black women school counselors. There are two goals for this study. The first goal is to fill a void in the literature and to highlight the experiences of Black women school counselors who could offer a unique perspective in school counseling, given their experiences at the intersection of being Black and female. The second goal is to inform professional practice for Black women school counselors and work towards mitigating burnout.

The following section describes the study, participants, research design, and methodology. To begin, a discussion of the rationale for a qualitative study and a phenomenological research design is provided. BFT shaped the research design; therefore, an explanation of BFT and how it contributes to the understanding of the experiences of Black women school counselors is provided. Next, I detailed the recruitment process for participants, data collection, data analysis, trustworthiness, and presentation of the findings. Lastly, the chapter concludes with a subjectivity statement.

Research Question

To continue to develop our understanding of school counselor burnout among Black women, this study was guided by the following research question:

RQ: What are the lived experiences of Black women with school counselor burnout?

With this question, I will investigate how Black women school counselors interpret and make sense of their burnout experiences within schools.

Rationale for Qualitative Research

The study used a qualitative approach to understand the depth of the burnout experiences of Black women school counselors. Derived from anthropology and sociology, qualitative research combines the social and cultural context of participants' worldviews (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). Qualitative researchers are interested in understanding how individuals make sense of their experiences, how they develop and understand their particular world, and how they make meaning as a result of their experiences (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). Qualitative research uses small samples of a population to look into participants' stories and experiences in detail (Bhattacharya, 2017). Qualitative research has three possible foci—to understand, interrogate, or deconstruct (Lathers, 1991; Smith & Nizza, 2022). Therefore, qualitative research aims to understand how individuals make meaning of and interpret their lives and experiences (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). The purpose of this study was to understand the burnout experiences of Black women school counselors. Therefore, inquiry into the study gathered as much information about their experiences and reported them. Much of the school counselor burnout literature quantifies the strength of the relationships between variables contributing to school counselor burnout (Holman et al., 2019; Limberg et al., 2016; Mullen et al., 2018). In opposition, qualitative research, which provides detailed descriptions through quotes, interviews, and documents, was selected because Black women school counselors' burnout experiences have yet to be explored. Utilizing

qualitative research provides an opportunity to focus on meaning derived from participants within the confines of a particular context (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). The data collection in qualitative research requires a human subject to interpret the data to be sensitive to its contents and explicate meaning through themes, hypotheses, or theory (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). In sum, qualitative research best captures the essence of Black women school counselor burnout experiences through a phenomenological qualitative inquiry.

Research Design

Phenomenology

This study used a phenomenological approach to qualitative inquiry to explicate the experiences of Black women school counselors. Phenomenology is the “reflective study of a lived experience... and attempts to describe and interpret these meanings in the ways that they emerge and are shaped by consciousness, language, our cognitive and noncognitive sensibilities, and by our preunderstandings and presuppositions” (Given, 2008, p. 614). Phenomenology aims to investigate the meaning behind shared experiences so that the experience can be better understood and the essence of the phenomena can be captured (Bhattacharya, 2017). Phenomenology describes how we make meaning of a phenomenon after it has been shaped by consciousness, worldview, perspective, and language (Given, 2008). Thus, multiple realities can exist.

As an experiential method, phenomenology posits that words, ideals, and worldviews give context to and shape our perspectives as we live them (Smith & Nizza, 2022). Edmund Husserl, the first phenomenological philosopher, wanted to investigate the experience of a phenomenon and how its essential features can be captured. As a

result, phenomenological researchers should strive to suspend their presumed assumptions, which can impede the investigation of the phenomenon (Smith & Nizza, 2022). Often, phenomenology explores experiences that are intense. Merriam and Tisdell (2015) posit that "a phenomenological approach is well suited to studying affective, emotional, and often intense human experience" (p. 28). Since exhaustion, cynicism, and ineffectiveness are dimensions of burnout that examine one's affective relationship with work, phenomenology was best suited to explore this phenomenon in-depth. Therefore, I used phenomenology to capture participants as they give voice to their burnout experiences. More specifically, Feminist Phenomenology was used because it examines the phenomena of school counselor burnout through a gendered analysis accounting for the perspective that gender and sex have in one's experience of a phenomena (Fisher & Embree, 2000). Using Black Feminist Thought (BFT) and Superwoman Schema to inform the exploration of Black women school counselor burnout, these frameworks posit that through the intersection of Black women's gender and racial identity, Black women have unique experiences while also being able to create their own meaning and sense of knowing (Collins, 2009). For example, Cooke and Hastings (2024) in a study focused specifically on Black women social workers experiencing workplace stress, utilized phenomenology to uncover how they experienced their workplace during these experiences. Phenomenology was the chosen methodology to adequately elicit their unfiltered workplace experiences. Similarly, in exploring school counselor burnout experiences among Black women, phenomenology is utilized in the current study to explore the meaning-making and essence of their burnout experiences and uncover the

intense feelings and emotions that could exist at the intersection of being Black and female.

Feminist Phenomenology

Feminist Phenomenology is a more detailed form of phenomenology that explores the political and social aspects of feminism, oppression, and inequality (Fisher & Embree, 2000). Feminist research is conducted by women, regarding women, and on behalf of women, aiming to transform the hierarchical position of women, thus changing society (Fisher & Embree, 2000). Employing a methodology consistent with illuminating the voices of Black women, Feminist Phenomenology is concerned with attuning to the experiences of women with particular attention to the meaning derived from their experiences. To ensure participants have the freedom to reflect on their experiences on their terms, it is critical that researchers utilizing feminist phenomenology empower and build connections with participants to avoid isolating the researcher from participants (Fisher & Embree, 2000). Since women's perspectives are often muted in literature, I paid close attention to the meaning and understanding created by participants (Fisher & Embree, 2000). To establish a connection with participants, an essential aspect of feminist phenomenology, I intentionally shared my reasoning behind conducting the research, which is to understand how Black women make meaning around factors and influences that contribute to burnout that impact their identity and sense of self. Furthermore, I shared that by illuminating their experiences, this study can inform professional practice for school counselors and work towards mitigating their burnout experiences. In sharing the phenomena with the participants, I established connections with the women in order to foster an environment that is conducive to them sharing their

experiences freely. A significant component of Black Feminist Thought is the empowerment of Black women. Through sharing the motivation for this research, I hope that by illuminating their experiences, the research can inform professional practice and work towards mitigating burnout experiences while leaving the participants feeling empowered, heard, and valued.

Through the use of Feminist Phenomenology, I intended to illuminate the burnout experiences of Black women school counselors by examining their experiences in great detail to understand and examine if and how the intersections of their race and gender have influenced their burnout experiences. Feminist Phenomenology asserts that researchers should create rapport with participants to extend the relationship beyond the interviewer and participant (Fisher & Embree, 2000). Through the opening statement detailing the purpose and goals for the research, I intended to create a mutually supportive environment where participants can shed light on their experiences and I can learn more about the phenomena (Fisher & Embree, 2000). In doing so, I established an environment where participants felt comfortable granting me access to their thoughts and memories (Fisher & Embree, 2000). By first establishing rapport, I “built connections within women’s descriptions while still affording them the more significant role in formulating their responses” (Fisher & Embree, p. 114). To elicit responses that maximize the descriptions that participants provide, Feminist Phenomenology utilizes semi-structured interviews to gather data. Utilizing feminist phenomenology allowed me to explore the lived experiences of Black women school counselors while offering a contextually sensitive perspective to examine the unique social, political, and cultural aspects of navigating school counselor burnout. Feminist Phenomenology guided the data

collection and analysis process and was the most fitting methodological approach to explore Black women's experiences with school counselor burnout.

Theoretical Framework

Black Feminist Thought and Superwoman Schema

In this study, Black Feminist Thought (BFT) and Superwoman Schema are the lenses through which the burnout experiences of Black women were viewed.

Superwoman Schema is rooted in Black Feminist Epistemology, and both frameworks speak to the unique experiences of Black women. Black women are complex beings, consumed with controlling images in society and media that forcibly compartmentalize their existence into stereotypes. Utilizing methods congruent with Black women's experiences positioned their voices and experiences at the forefront of the research.

Examining the burnout experiences of Black women school counselors utilizing BFT and Feminist Phenomenology captured the essence of Black women and their experiences while also being attuned to the social and relational impact of their experiences on their worldview. Although Black women have shared experiences, they do not interpret them the same way, nor do they respond similarly (Collins, 2009). Collins (2009) posits that “since Black Feminist Thought both arises within and aims to articulate a Black women's group standpoint regarding experiences associated with intersecting oppressions, stressing this group standpoint's heterogeneous composition is significant” (p. 32).

Considering the controlling images of Black women in society, such as mammies, jezebels, and welfare mothers, Superwoman Schema emerged as an avenue to withstand gender-specific racism and distress. However, Superwomen Schema developed as a method of survival for Black women, leading to abandoning self-care, resilience, self-

reliance, and strength (Woods-Giscombe, 2018). Superwoman Schema is a response to gendered oppression that socializes Black women to be strong and to attain success when faced with limited resources (Erving et al., 2023). Viewing Black women's psychological health through an intersectional lens provided me with the space to explore the impact and implications of sexism and racism while centering their burnout experiences in the analysis. By utilizing a theoretical framework that centers the experiences of Black women, they can develop new ways of knowing through explicating their burnout experiences.

Positionality Statement

My own experience with burnout has influenced my perspectives on school counseling. As a school counselor who has worked primarily with high school students, this research was derived from personal and professional experiences. My goal for this research is twofold. First, I hope to illuminate the experiences that Black women school counselors face because their voices and perspectives are absent from the literature. Secondly, I want my research to be a form of advocacy for Black women school counselors.

As a Black woman school counselor, my experience with school counselor burnout occurred amid a departmental transition. When I arrived at the school the year prior, students, families, and faculty members mentioned the turnover the students on my caseload had throughout their time there. I wanted to reassure families that they would be in good hands. The following school year began with several transitions happening simultaneously. One school counselor who had been there for several years and was the former department chair had retired, we had two new team members, a school counselor

on maternity leave, and our current department chair was promoted to the district office. In the middle of the transition, my department chair wanted me to lead the department. My principal appointed me as the interim head counselor. To keep the department afloat, I compensated for the steep learning curve of my two new team members, the retired substitute school counselors unfamiliar with the new student information system we had transitioned to that school year. Given all the transitions within our department, we were swamped. My principal eventually brought in someone from outside to lead the department. However, I was still brought into rooms to contribute my input based on my historical knowledge of the team, the school, and the department. I worked tirelessly into the night and weekends. When families could not contact their school counselor, they contacted me. When teachers needed something, they contacted me. When students needed something, they contacted me. I was physically and mentally exhausted. Later that school year, I was voted Professional of the Year by my colleagues, and I received an award for leadership that was passed from one staff member to another at our monthly faculty meetings. I eventually began to see the physical effects of burnout on my body, starting with carpal tunnel and on to more serious health issues. Through my personal experience, I understand that other Black women school counselors have these experiences daily while navigating additional barriers to impacting student outcomes.

Although I have had a personal experience with school counselor burnout, I realize that everyone's experience is not mine. My experience with burnout is unique; thus, selecting Feminist Phenomenology allowed me to use Epoche in my investigation of school counselor burnout, suspending my knowledge of the phenomena while being open to new knowledge about school counselor burnout. My experience lent participants

an empathetic, non-judgmental ear in hopes they would share their experiences freely. My experiences with the phenomenon could have influenced my analysis of the data. However, through member checking, bracketing, triangulation, trustworthiness, and reflexivity, I remained committed to giving voice to participant experiences.

Procedure

Participant Sampling and Recruitment

I used purposive and snowball sampling to identify participants for the study. Purposive sampling is when the researcher selects participants who can give insight into a particular phenomenon and those with whom the experience has been meaningful (Smith & Nizza, 2022). Snowball sampling recruits participants through other participants or the researcher's contacts (Smith & Nizza, 2022). Considering the rich descriptions and data in a participant interview, phenomenology does not offer clear guidance on sample sizes. However, the goal is to collect data to illuminate the phenomenon in great detail (Creswell, 2013).

Participants had to be at least 21 years old, identify as a Black or African American woman, and have worked as a school counselor in the last five years in a school within the United States. I utilized many methods to recruit participants, including word of mouth, social media networks, and professional affiliations. I recruited school counselors through the snowball method through a flyer approved by the University of Georgia Institutional Review Board (IRB). The survey flyer included participant eligibility requirements, a QR code that participants could click or scan to complete a demographic screening questionnaire to ensure they were appropriate for the study, and my contact information. Once I reviewed the participant's demographic screening

information, I emailed each participant to discuss informed consent, which included risks to participation, limits of confidentiality, Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval, and my contact information. If individuals elected to participate, I also confirmed the details of the study and their role and responsibility with member checking. All participants were informed that their participation was voluntary and that they could withdraw their consent at any time. Following the confirmation of participation, participants were sent a link to my Calendly page where they could schedule a time to meet for 90 minutes via Zoom, an electronic video conference platform.

Institutional Review Board (IRB) Process

The Institutional Review Board is a research oversight committee that ensures that research regarding human subjects is conducted according to federal, state, and local policy (Office for Human Research Protections, 2018). Before conducting any study with human subjects, I had to obtain approval through the university's IRB. The role of the IRB is to assess the risk and harm associated with human subjects in research studies. After a successful dissertation prospectus defense, an application was submitted to IRB for approval. Once the study was approved, I began the data collection process.

Data Collection

Qualitative data is conveyed through words and comprises experiences and knowledge shared through interviews and observation (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). Since the researcher is the primary instrument in qualitative data analysis and collection, the researcher must ensure that methodological guidelines are followed when designing a qualitative study (Bhattacharya, 2017). By employing a phenomenological method, I focused the research question on the essence and meaning of one's lived experience. To

share the burnout experiences of Black women school counselors, I utilized individual semi-structured interviews as the primary data collection method.

Data Storage and Confidentiality

All information was stored using encrypted software; I was only able to access it through password-protected files and devices. Participants were asked to find a secure location that would be quiet and free from distractions for the interview.

Demographic Questionnaire

I collected demographic information from participants through an electronic Microsoft Form, including their ethnicity, age, gender identity, school level, and other relevant data to the study. Access to participant demographic information was only available to me, and it was stored in a password-protected account that is only accessible through a password-protected device. This information was collected to ensure that participants met the study's criteria and ascertain differences and similarities of the participants.

Prescreening

Before conducting interviews, I emailed each participant to establish rapport and inform potential participants that the interview would be conducted and recorded on Zoom and that a transcription service would be used to transcribe their interview. I shared the general interview duration, would be approximately 60 to 90 minutes. Next, I shared potential risks with the participants and provided the participants the opportunity to ask questions. Participants were informed that they could withdraw their participation at any time. If the individuals met eligibility requirements and consented to participate in the study, I moved forward with conducting a semi-structured interview.

Semi-Structured Interviews

Semi-structured interviews are a form of data collection where the researcher prepares questions to guide and probe the participant (Bhattacharya, 2017). As the primary means of data collection, interviews were utilized because they are "necessary when we cannot observe behavior, feelings, or how people interpret the world around them" (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015, p. 108). For consistency among interviews, I maintained a prepared interview guide consisting of open-ended questions while adjusting for the unexpected in interviews. After confirming participant eligibility and availability, participants scheduled an interview using a link to my Calendly page based on their availability.

Before the interview, participants were allowed to choose their pseudonyms to allow the participant to remain anonymous and provide confidentiality of the information disclosed within the interviews. I intentionally conducted the interview as a conversation to facilitate an environment that allows the participant to share their experience. I guided the conversation through questions in the interview guide, beginning with more broad questions and utilizing a funnel approach to more specific questions later in the interview. Feminist Phenomenology encourages researchers to connect with participants to create an environment that allows participants to share in-depth perspectives of their experiences. An essential aspect of Black Feminist Thought is the empowerment of Black women. Collins (2009) explicates that "When an individual Black woman's consciousness concerning how she understands her everyday life undergoes change, she can become empowered" (p. xi). Thus, in keeping in alignment with both Feminist Phenomenology and BFT, I approached the interviews in a way that empowered Black women to share

their stories while providing an atmosphere that was warm and inviting. As the primary data collection method for the study, I utilized fourteen open-ended questions to elicit detailed descriptions of their burnout experiences to answer the research questions sufficiently. Interviews lasted approximately 60-90 minutes (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2012). Following their interview, participants received a \$10 electronic gift card. Following this process allowed me to uncover the burnout experiences of Black women school counselors.

Data Collection

The primary source of data collection was the semi-structured interviews. Data was also collected through the demographic questionnaire, email correspondence, my reflexive journal, and notes taken throughout the interview process.

Data Analysis

By exploring the data, I considered the varied contexts through which participants may experience the phenomena. Phenomenology invites researchers to deeply understand a phenomenon to uncover information (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). Data analysis is an essential function of qualitative research. Once data is collected, analysis is employed to make sense of the data, including interpreting information shared by participants (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). Given (2008) purports that “the purpose of analysis is to identify new facets and nuances with regard to meaning and structure in the various ways of experiencing the phenomenon” (p. 613). The data analysis process involves alternating between inductive and deductive reasoning and between the description of a phenomenon and the interpretation of meaning. Merriam and Tisdell (2015) assert that the data analysis process starts by identifying data that answers or responds to research questions.

Epoche

The phenomenological data analysis process began with me engaging in Epoche, which brackets previous information, understanding, or biases that could influence the interview (Moustakas, 1994). I also found engaging in the Epoche throughout interviews necessary to ensure I could examine the phenomena with a fresh perspective, not fraught with prior knowledge. Thus, engaging in Epoche challenged me to develop new ideas and understandings by suspending perceptions and judgments. Once I bracketed knowledge acquired about the phenomena before conducting the study, I moved on to the next step in the data analysis process, which is horizontalization.

Horizontalization

Moustakas (1994) indicates that the data analysis process began after I examined interview transcriptions. All interviews were recorded, thus providing a transcript of the conversation. The recording was placed in transcription software, resulting in a detailed transcript of the data. I reviewed the transcripts for accuracy while listening to the interview. I assigned line numbers to each transcription to quickly identify each line. After transcribing interviews, I horizontalized the transcripts, which gave each data piece an equal opportunity to become a meaningful piece of data. By eliminating the redundant data, I could focus on the uniqueness of the experiences present within the data that provide significant statements about participant experiences.

Once interviews were completed, the research team which consisted of three doctoral students in Counselor Education and Supervision familiar with qualitative research engaged with the first two transcripts independently, utilizing horizontalization and the research question as a guide. Once each member individually coded each

transcript, the team met to discuss the codes found, identifying a definition for each code and a direct quote, the line number, and the participant's pseudonym. The team established an initial list of codes through consensus coding, which enhances trustworthiness in qualitative data (Starks, 2007). Once the initial list of codes was present, I reviewed the remaining transcriptions, engaged in horizontalization with the remaining transcripts, and adjusted the master codebook. The research team met again and categorized codes into themes used to describe the structural and textural descriptions that speak to the essence of the participants' school counselor burnout experiences. Additionally, to ensure rigor in the qualitative analysis, the following phenomenological analysis methods were employed—trustworthiness, reflexivity, bracketing, triangulation, and member checking.

Trustworthiness

To establish rigor within qualitative research, I used several strategies to promote reliability and validity within the study. I utilized a research team, and through consensus coding, the research team determined codes that stood out from the first two interview transcripts. Merriam and Tisdell (2015) indicate that peer examination/review is a method of trustworthiness, as it involves discussing tentative findings with peers. Additionally, maintaining an audit trail is another method of trustworthiness that details the procedures and decision-making that occur throughout the study. (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). I maintained a detailed audit trail noting the steps and decision-making throughout the study. Next, I detailed reflexivity used within the study.

Reflexivity

Reflexivity documents the researchers' experience and allows them to reflect upon their thinking, reactions, and experiences in connection to the research study (Johnson & Parry, 2015). Reflexivity also allows researchers to consider the decisions made and begin to develop the foundation for data analysis and interpretation. Reflexivity allows researchers to manage their thoughts and experiences with the phenomenon. I used a reflexive journal to challenge and interrogate thoughts and feelings that arose and noted how research questions are shifted based on ongoing documentation and evaluation of biases (Johnson & Parry, 2015).

Bracketing

Bracketing, a sign of rigor in phenomenological research, was utilized in this study. Johnson and Parry (2015) suggest that in phenomenology, researchers use bracketing to manage their biases, assumptions, and relationship with a phenomenon before beginning the research study and manage consistently throughout, not to inhibit the experiences shared by the participants. Researchers are encouraged to manage their experience of bracketing through a reflexive journal (Johnson and Parry, 2015). I engaged in two forms of bracketing—a reflexive journal and memos. I wrote in my reflexive journal before beginning interviews and after several participant interviews to reflect upon my reasons for engaging in this research. Additionally, throughout the interviews, I engaged in writing memos, which are observational comments that allowed me to examine thoughts about the research and salient comments that resonated with me after the interviews (Tufford & Newman, 2010).

Triangulation

In phenomenological research, since the research team is the instrument for analysis and makes all judgments about data analysis, the research team must assure trustworthiness to prevent researcher bias (Starks & Trinidad, 2007). To increase the trustworthiness of the data collection, the research team employed triangulation methods to determine that the correct codes were gathered and interpreted from the data. The research team used consensus coding to agree on common themes throughout the interviews.

Member Checking

Member checking was another opportunity for researchers to exhibit trustworthiness (Johnson & Parry, 2015). Member checking allows participants to review participant data to confirm, deny, or revise the accuracy of the data. Member checking occurred in two phases. The first was during the interview process. I summarized and clarified statements that were unclear to ensure I captured their perspective correctly. After the data analysis process, I provided each participant with a preliminary interpretation of the data to ensure accuracy. Three of the seven participants responded to confirm the findings. Participants also had the opportunity to clarify any data that was misrepresented to ensure accuracy.

Ethical Considerations

Prior to conducting the study, I adhered to the guidelines enacted by the University of Georgia's Institutional Review Board (IRB). To ensure confidentiality, I utilized pseudonyms to protect the identity of participants and altered any people, places,

or things that were specific to a participant. Additionally, I kept information on a password-protected drive in a password-protected account.

Chapter Summary

This chapter detailed how I explored the unique burnout experiences of Black women school counselors. The study utilized a qualitative method, Feminist Phenomenology, which provides a gendered analysis of one's lived experience. Utilizing Feminist Phenomenology in conjunction with Black Feminist Thought and Superwoman Schema placed the experiences of Black women school counselors at the forefront of this research study. Using these theories as the lens that guides this study, I collected and analyzed the essence of participant's individual and collective experiences to attend to the research question presented in this chapter. This chapter details the problem and purpose that was investigated in this study. Given the plethora of quantitative literature on school counselor burnout, I provided a rationale for employing a qualitative method and its suitability.

Furthermore, I shed light on the theoretical framework that guides the study. This study is significant because it gives voice to the experiences that Black women school counselors have with burnout. The information uncovered within this study will be used to advocate for Black women and the school counseling profession. The next chapter will uncover the burnout experiences of Black women school counselors and give insight into their nuanced perspectives.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

“They say Black women, it’s more of an expectation for you to do your job...for you to get through it, for you to take it. They say our pain tolerance is much higher than others, so it’s like we’re expected to go through this. We’re strong enough to handle it”. -

Katrina, Participant, and Black Woman School Counselor

This study included seven Black Women School Counselors who currently work or previously worked as a school counselor in the last five years in the United States. Four out of seven participants currently still work as school counselors. Utilizing Black Feminist Thought as a theoretical framework, participant stories are viewed through a critical lens of oppression and activism. Through self-definition, participants shared their stories, experiences, and truths about their school counselor burnout. The purpose of this study was to examine the lived experiences of Black women with school counselor burnout, specifically investigating if and how race and gender impact their burnout experiences. The following research question guided this inquiry: What are the lived experiences of Black women with school counselor burnout?

Participants

This chapter presents the findings from seven semi-structured interviews. Participants reported that their burnout experiences took place in the southeast and western regions of the United States. To maintain confidentiality, participants selected or were given pseudonyms to protect their privacy. Participants ranged in age from 28 to 42

years old and were employed in elementary, middle, and high schools. Table 1 details the demographic data of the participants.

Table 1

Participants' General Information

Pseudonym	Age	Number of years as a school counselor	School level	Currently employed as a school counselor
Jennifer	28	2	Middle School	No
Kelly	34	7	High School	No
Giselle	36	8	Middle School	Yes
Maya	40	5	Elementary School	Yes
Brittany	34	6	High School	No
Katrina	39	10	High School	Yes
Amanda	42	13	High School	Yes

The following sections present the six themes that were found from the data. This chapter provides a detailed explanation of the following themes: (a) devaluation of role and identity, (b) isolation, (c) experiences of racism and discrimination, (d) struggle with internal conflict, (e) feelings of distress and detachment, (f) focus on well-being, boundaries, and balance. A summary of the chapter is presented following a discussion of the themes. To gather preliminary data, participants completed a demographic questionnaire using Microsoft Forms prior to the interview.

Discussion of Themes

The in-depth, semi-structured interviews of the seven Black women with school counselor burnout illuminated their unique and shared experiences within their work in schools, highlighting whether race and gender influenced their experiences. Jennifer

described burnout as “being tired, being overworked, and having a lot of tasks that are not under the umbrella of school counselors.” She also shared, “I remember just feeling super overwhelmed.” School counselor burnout took a mental and physical toll on participants and, therefore, impacted their performance at work. In Giselle’s experience of exhaustion, she shared:

I was just tired and mentally drained. And I can say that after winning professional of the year, I feel like this last semester at work, I didn't do anything; I'll be honest; I just didn't really do my work. I did my work but didn't do it to the best of my ability.

Maya’s description of burnout coincided with Giselle’s school counselor burnout experience; Maya describes it as “physical exhaustion and feeling a lack of energy or motivation to do anything besides what's absolutely necessary. I think about people finding ways to avoid doing work.” Maya depicted school counselor burnout as:

You are in shutdown mode, and you try to limit what you do. You don't have those creative ideas anymore. You're not trying to solve problems. You're going along to get along. It's like if I can help somebody today, cool, but I don't feel the motivation to be innovative or make an extra effort because my baseline of what I'm expected to do is already beyond my capacity.

Amanda recounted that her school counselor burnout also impacted her life at home with her family, “I was just tired all the time, and then I didn’t have the energy to do the things at home that I needed to be doing.” Kelly spoke about the emotional toll her burnout experience took on her. She described her experience of school counselor burnout as “I was drained emotionally.” In contrast, Katrina’s definition of burnout coincided with

Maslach and Leiter's (2017) definition of burnout, which is marked by exhaustion, ineffectiveness, and cynicism. She shared:

What comes to mind is mental drainage, a lack of energy, because I'm just thinking about my own experience. It was more mental than anything, and it felt like my passion was being...depleted. You have this purpose that you're pursuing, and you're passionate about it, but you come to a point of feeling like you're not being as effective because you don't have the energy to do it.

On the other hand, Brittany describes the blurring of lines between work and home with her school counselor burnout experience. She explained it as:

Heaviness... like a burden, just the heaviness on your shoulders. I think of taking work home with you, not being able to separate or delineate. They start to merge, and you don't have any sort of break from what you're dealing with.

Despite the differences, school counselor burnout manifested differently among participants, yet commonalities were present throughout their stories. Six common themes were found through the seven participants' varied experiences with school counselor burnout. Through their recollection, the following sections capture an in-depth view of their experiences.

Devaluation of Role and Identity

"I think that it is not just my experiences of how I'm marginalized as a school counselor. I'm attentive to that for everyone... I'm trying to show up for everybody, but people don't value that work; they intentionally devalue it". -Maya, Participant and Black Woman

with School Counselor Burnout

The first theme found within the data highlighted the devaluation of not just the role of school counselors but also their identities as Black women. Participants shared that many administrators who supervise school counselors are unaware of the responsibilities aligned with their role. Furthermore, participants explained their feelings of devaluation in their identity as Black women feeling unappreciated and unprotected in the workplace. Additionally, participants expressed the inequitable work distributed between themselves and their non-Black or non-female colleagues. In Maya's quote above, she shared a responsibility to advocate for students, which aligns with the school counselor's role as defined by ASCA (ASCA, 2023). Instead of being supported in her advocacy for students, Maya was met with opposition and, in turn, felt devalued in her role as a school counselor. Katrina noted that "a lot of administrators don't know what counselors do," and, Jennifer echoed the sentiment that "administrators should know what school counselors do to better align duties." Similarly, Brittany shared, "Principals and vice principals could use refreshers on what school counselors are there to do. You know, not what you've used them for, but what they're there to actually do." Black women with school counselor burnout felt that additional tasks and responsibilities outside the school counselor role were assigned due to their administrators not knowing or understanding their role.

Additionally, Black women with school counselor burnout felt that their identities were devalued because of the inconsistent expectations between them and their non-Black and non-female counterparts. Amanda mentioned that the devaluation of her role was shaped by unsupportive administrators and staff members. "Definitely, non-

supportive admin and a lot of other staff. Since it comes from the top down, they do not really recognize your worth in terms of how valuable you can be to the school.”

Giselle shared her experience of feeling devalued as a Black woman, noting the inconsistent expectations for Black women compared to their counterparts that lead to feelings of devaluation.

I think it's different because they don't expect much from our white counterparts.

They've allowed them to do the bare minimum be the bare minimum, and it's okay. If we give the bare minimum, it's a problem. They expect 110% from us, but maybe 50 from them. And I've seen it. I've seen it in action. I've heard about it in action.

Moreover, Maya reflected on her role and identity being devalued.

I just do even more work than I saw peers around me doing, and again, part of it is the work of advocating for the role of a school counselor. But a lot of it had to do with the fact that I was a Black woman, and even though I wasn't young, I was perceived as young and inexperienced, and like, doing double or triple work. Not only am I doing a job that's very demanding, but I'm also doing other people's jobs.

As a method to perpetuate the oppression of Black women, perceiving them as young or inexperienced is a way to convey that Black women are less capable than others (Collins, 2009). Therefore, participants overcompensated to prove their abilities and value as Black women school counselors, thus contributing to their experiences of school counselor burnout and illuminating the devaluation of their role and identity. Brittany

highlighted the differences in how men and women are perceived as school counselors.

She mentioned:

People love to see a male counselor, whether they're black or white. They would say...I think that this person is trying to help me. They assume that goodwill with a male counselor, and they're definitely held in high esteem, like, oh my gosh. You must be a great guy to be doing this.

She added that even in their conversations with families, men are afforded more privileges, "Men are able to speak with authority, without being considered harsh or aggressive or mean." Contrarily, because Brittany felt devalued in her identity as a Black woman school counselor in a leadership role at a predominantly White school, she wanted to ensure she was perceived professionally by parents and stakeholders.

Therefore, she overprepared to help shape her perception. She shared:

It also looks like reading an email 50 different times or having somebody else read it to be like, how is this coming off? You know? Because I don't want to come off with the wrong tone...I want to be gentle, but I want to be firm. So, taking those extra steps to try to ensure that I'm perceived in a way that is professional.

Brittany's description is an example of the BFT's notion that Black women are viewed as inexperienced or less capable than others (Collins, 2009). As the department chair and leader of her school counseling team, Brittany felt the need to consult her colleagues to ensure she was perceived the way she intended. Although she had hoped to speak with the authority that men were afforded, she felt the need to soften her approach to be palatable to stakeholders. The women in this study felt devaluation of their role and

identity as Black women school counselors. Many felt that how they presented themselves as Black women was devalued. The notion of devaluation aligns with the BFT tenet that the web of social, political, and economic ideology is designed as a means to continue to oppress Black women (Collins, 2009). Therefore, the devaluation of Black women with school counselor burnout continues to infiltrate the social structure within our country and is used to perpetuate oppression (Collins, 2009).

Feelings of Isolation and Rejection of Others

"I've had it to where my co-counselor isn't helping. I just do it myself, and I'd rather do it myself, so if it fails, then it's on me, then nobody else can be blamed. So, I'd rather take the L by myself than have a team, which I know sounds crazy, but I'd rather just do it myself so that I'm not disappointed and it gets done correctly. And having to give stuff off to other people really bothers me, because how do I know you're going to do it with fidelity?" -Giselle, Participant and Black Woman with School Counselor Burnout

The second theme gathered from participant data was feelings of isolation and rejection of others, which showed up as "loneliness" and "unsupported." Participants reported rejecting others due to a refusal to accept their help or because they no longer wanted to engage because of their burnout experience. Moreover, participants shared being inundated with tasks they had to navigate alone due to unwilling colleagues or team members created feelings of isolation. In combination with feelings of loneliness and rejection of others, their experiences led to feelings of isolation in their role as Black women with school counselor burnout. Superwoman Schema highlights an important characteristic throughout the theme of loneliness experienced by participants—the resistance to being vulnerable or dependent. In many stories shared, participants who did

not know how to accept help were resistant or reluctant because of mistrust or even a fear of being deemed incompetent (Woods-Giscombe, 2010). Jennifer, Giselle, Katrina, and Maya felt isolated because they were inundated with more than their share of tasks.

Jennifer's experience with isolation was the result of an unwillingness on behalf of her co-counselor to collaborate on their school counseling program. Jennifer stated, "It was myself and another school counselor, but I was doing all the work," citing that students and staff members only sought her to help resolve their issues. She also shared, "I was responsible for so many different things, or when things happen, people are like, I'm not even going to reach out to the other school counselor. I'm just coming to you". Moments like these continued to exacerbate Jennifer's school counselor burnout experience.

Giselle, contrarily, had an experience where she isolated herself and was unwilling to accept help because of tensions between herself and her co-counselor. She shared that although she had a co-counselor, she "was able to get things done without his help."

Giselle's experience of isolation began to intensify, noting that:

I never want to be with a co-counselor who is going to make my life miserable because I know what that feels like. That contributes to your burnout when you're the only one doing everything. You're the only one trying to do stuff because your co-counselor doesn't want to work with you.

On the other hand, Katrina wanted help, though she did not appear to need or want to accept assistance. She noted, "I felt like nobody really checked on me. But then again, I'm the one who puts on the mask, like everything was good. So, I probably have something to do with it." Consistently assuming additional roles, Katrina shared:

We'll take on a lot and may vent about it, but it doesn't stop us from continuing. And so, I think for me, taking on the workload and trying to help or be a support system for somebody else, I think black women, sometimes we lose ourselves trying to pour into others, and nobody is pouring into us. And so, it's like now we're functioning out of an empty cup.

Similarly, Kelly shared that she experienced isolation from her rejection of others. She mentioned, "Yes, even my students, my colleagues, everybody. I just wanted to be alone, and that was not like me because I loved staying with my students. I loved interacting with my family, so all of a sudden, I just don't feel like connecting with them". She further shared:

I would isolate myself. Sometimes, I would have mood swings, and I never wanted to see anyone close to me, and that made me feel I was not helping these young people. I'm not helping my students, so let me just go away for a while, and then I'll come back. I felt like I was not okay.

Maya, who, at the time, was the only school counselor at her school, shared her thoughts on isolation.

I hate that I'm in a situation where I feel set up to fail, or I hate that I'm in a situation where I feel like the twig that's going against the overwhelming current. Or I feel like I'm the only one who sees something that seems to make common sense.

Contrarily, Brittany shared that her isolation came in a different form as a leader of a school counseling team as a Black woman at a predominantly White school. She shared:

Well, I think there was some internal pressure that I placed on myself to know my stuff, to know what I was talking about, so that I could speak with confidence and be error free. I think that I wanted to live up to my role.

Woods-Giscombe (2010) posits that one facet of Superwoman Schema is the resistance to vulnerability or dependence, thus underscoring participant experiences with loneliness and rejection of others. BFT acknowledges Black women's isolation as contradictory, stating that "This group treatment potentially renders each individual African-American woman invisible as fully human. But paradoxically, being treated as an outsider-within position..." (Collins, 2009, p. 110). Therefore, participants' experiences with isolation reinforce the perception of them in society as "outsiders within." Many participants felt they were used as workhorses, or as Collins (2009) references, "mules," yet were left isolated in work, unsupported. As a result, participants expressed the harrowing effects of the isolation in its perpetuation of their school counselor burnout experiences.

Experiences of Racism and Discrimination

I feel like I have to tone down who I am because some of my choice of words or my tone could be misleading. So it's like I'm living in two different worlds...you have to cover up certain areas because if you're you, you could be used against you.-Katrina, Participant and Black Woman with School Counselor Burnout

The third theme found throughout interviews was experiences of racism and discrimination. Participants felt as though their covert and overt experiences of and witnessing racism and discrimination that showed up as "microaggressions" or "microinvalidations" contributed to their school counselor burnout experiences. As Black women, not feeling comfortable showing up as their authentic selves is attributed to their

experiences with racism and discrimination. Katrina's quote demonstrated how racism and discrimination prevented her from being her authentic self at work for fear of being misunderstood. On the other hand, Maya shared that her competence was questioned consistently; she noted she was, "constantly second-guessed and questioned because of my intersectional identities and having to prove my competence." Brittany shared a similar experience with parents:

I didn't have a problem making decisions, making calls, saying no to folks, which you have to get very comfortable doing, drawing the line, whatever it is. I felt comfortable doing that, but my perception is that my decisions were very often carried to my principal, as she's saying this. Is this true? You know, I felt questioned a lot. I felt undermined a lot... I will say I was extremely fortunate to have the 100% backing of a great principal who upheld everything I said, but I got to the point of, why does it have to be like this? Things are getting escalated even maybe beyond the principal, and it's coming right back down to me. It started to feel disrespectful, to be quite honest. And that stuck to me. My predecessor didn't go through this. How are they verbalizing to you that you'll accept it? But when I'm saying it, it's like, oh, we'll just go to the next person and see what they have to say. I started to feel this real divide between my experience, who I am, my intersectionality, the many things that make me, me, my beliefs, and the stark difference between that and the community I was serving.

Jennifer shares her experience with discrimination from other staff members. She recalls, "A lot of them felt like I was the intern and not the actual school counselor, even though I had my own office, my name is on the door, and my degree is on the wall." Moreover,

Maya shares her experience with the administration, ignoring instances of blatant racism at her school. She shared it was "very explicit, conspicuous racism, and it was worse because it was like a situation." She explains further:

And then the Black faculty, staff, even students, are coming to you, like, yeah, this shit is fucked up. This is what's going on. But then there's this culture of fear where nobody's willing to actually say that to an administrator.

Maya goes on to share that the racism and discrimination led her to question herself. She explained:

The cognitive fatigue of always trying to have to figure out things and figure out how to ask things or say things in a tactful manner because you can't ask direct questions, right? Because you have to play this game. And so just being mentally fatigued from that, and then emotional fatigue, of people constantly second-guessing you, how are you not going to second-guess yourself, right?

BFT posits that the social structure of power within the U.S. functions to maintain the status quo, elevating White male ideology and maintaining Black women in subordinate places (Collins, 2009). Black Feminist Thought collectively challenges systemic practices that impact Black women in totality.

Kelly shared strong feelings and emotions about being a Black woman school counselor. She shared:

But being Black is an additional stress, an additional problem. You will receive a lot of issues associated with you being Black, not issues that you created, issues that are created from the environment around you. There are myths and misconceptions about Black people, so even in your career, you will experience

that, and it will drain you emotionally. Parents don't want their children to be given counseling from a black person... Those small bits of racism and being Black, the discrimination, contributed a lot to my burnout.

Many participants felt the microaggressions from stakeholders created doubt in their abilities in an attempt to diminish their confidence in themselves. In contrast, others felt overt acts were intentional to disrespect them as Black women. Participants' experiences with racism and discrimination as Black women with school counselor burnout point to its pervasiveness and the social and political systems that continue to oppress Black women. As such, their experiences illuminate the toll that racism and discrimination take, adding to participants' experiences of burnout.

Struggle with Internal Conflict

I'm letting down so many students who maybe never felt seen or heard, which was hard because I'm doing this for the students. So, you never want to feel like the same students you're doing this for, you're letting down. -Jennifer, Participant and Black Woman with School Counselor Burnout

The next theme identified throughout participant interviews was that as they negotiated their experience with burnout, they began to reflect and struggle with internal conflict about whether to stay within the role. Many participants were self-reflective, while others felt guilty about their feelings. Nonetheless, as participants realized they were in the throes of school counselor burnout, they began questioning themselves, their current workplaces, whether they should continue within the profession, or who they had become due to their burnout experiences.

Katrina, who took other roles in education until she found a school counseling position, shared:

Is this my passion? I was more so questioning...Am I on the right path? Should I do something different? Is this short-lived? Because I'm not feeling it anymore. Because I'm not being as effective as I think I once was, or I could have been...I felt bad...I was upset. I didn't want to come across as ungrateful because I've been wanting this position. I finally got it, and now I have it. I felt frustrated. I don't want to feel this way. I should be thankful that I'm in this position, but it got to the point where I'm not interested in doing this anymore. The long trial it took me to get here kept me from throwing in the towel and looking to go somewhere else.

Similarly, Jennifer also questioned her effectiveness with her students, given the shift in her production. Her line of internal conflict began with, "Am I doing more harm by being here or by going? Do they feel like they're not getting as much? She further explained her decision to stay despite feeling the shift within herself.

No, I can't leave because of all the students who were looking to me to be that person for them. And If I leave, I'm letting all of them down. And so they are the reason why I feel like I stayed longer than I wanted to.

While Jennifer questioned her effectiveness, Brittany questioned shifts in her innate nature to be empathetic as a school counselor. After completing an assessment with the leadership team at her school, she noted:

I should be empathetic all day, especially as a counselor, but I scored high on the logical piece, and that was a light bulb moment for me because I'm like, oh, wait, I'm only this way because I feel like I have to be, right? If I had it my way, I

should be way back on the empathetic side. And so that was a stark illustration for me that I'm really uptight. It didn't feel good as a counselor to say, I think with my head and not my heart, that didn't feel natural to me. So, I think that was another thing. I was like, yeah, this isn't working.

Maya struggled with her school environment and experienced internal conflict about whether she would have the same experience in another work environment. She recalls:

I ended up leaving that job because something had to help me realize, like, I can't save this, right? This is more than burnout. This is a toxic work situation. I have different gifts, talents, and skills; I'm going to be able to apply them somewhere else. It's impossible that everywhere else I could work is going to treat me the same way. That's just not possible.

Giselle, on the other hand, who struggled with tensions between her co-counselor experienced internal conflict regarding her ability to receive help. She reflected, “Do I have to be the only one doing everything? Can I really delegate? Can I really ask someone else?”

Superwoman Schema posits that there is an obligation to help others while simultaneously neglecting one's own needs (Woods-Giscombe, 2010). Thus, the internal conflict present throughout participant experiences depicts one's negotiation with self to continue to help students despite the challenges faced.

Shift to Distress and Detachment

"I love this job because I don't know what any day is going to look like, and saying it from a place of excitement and energy to going to the other end of the spectrum being like, what is going to happen today? I feel like I've seen it all, but I know somebody's

going to prove me wrong today.”-Brittany, Participant and Black Woman with School Counselor Burnout

The fifth theme found throughout participant interviews was a shift to distress and detachment. This theme is marked by the emotional distress participants experienced during their school counselor burnout experiences and the subsequent shift in perspective or detachment from work. Superwoman Schema denotes the manifestation of stress-related symptoms and embodying stress as a liability of the behaviors associated with Superwoman Schema (Woods-Giscombe, 2010). Participants exhibited associated symptoms such as anxiety, depressive symptoms, and delay in self-care. Giselle describes the physical and emotional distress she experienced:

I ended up having anxiety attacks when I would go to work, on my way to work, even if I drive that same road, not even going to that school, going to a place by that school, my body will still do the same thing it used to do when I was driving to work. So I was having anxiety attacks and those panic attacks, and I was just worried all the time. I did not want to be a school counselor at that point. I said I don't want this job. I don't need it.

Jennifer, Katrina, Amanda, and Kelly were reluctant to go to work as they grew increasingly distressed and detached from work. Jennifer recalls, “I was like, oh, man, I have to go to work. And I remember it because there was a time when I would come home and I would just cry”. Katrina explained, “I think I was feeling like, I don't want to do this. I wasn't as excited as I was once, going to work.” Amanda recounted:

Every day I wanted to come to work, but it's never felt like I didn't want to be there. But once things started happening, I just started feeling like I was just tired. I don't even feel like getting out of the car.

Kelly shared a similar reluctance to go to work because of the distress and detachment she experienced. She shared:

I lacked the motivation to go to work every day. I would wake up and remember what I was going to deal with, and I would just go back to sleep, and intentionally, I arrived late to school. So, I lacked motivation a lot, and I started missing work. Sometimes, I would miss two days or three days with no valid reason, just missing intentionally. And obviously, that was not good for my work.

For others, their school counselor burnout experience created a shift in their perspective, thus resulting in detachment. Jennifer recounted:

I think it made me have an if it gets done, it gets done attitude. And that's not typically how I approach things. I'm the type of person where, if this is a job that I'm going to do, I give 110%. And so when it got to a point where I'm like if it gets done, it does. If it does not, it is what it is.

Brittany's shift in perspective and detachment derived from being inundated with the necessity of certain tasks for high school counselors.

I struggled to be optimistic, which was new for me. It's like, when you first get in education, you've got the veterans who are like, just give it time. But it's just like you don't see the hope in situations. And so I would say that's how it impacted my work is the ability to stay optimistic. I think it impacted my ability to want to start new things and to want to innovate. Because there's a ticking clock where I have

things to do. So, I don't have the energy to devote to starting a small group. I don't have the energy to devote to doing a needs assessment to see where the students are. You know, like I have a list of pressing things that are happening, that have to happen.

As a result of their school counselor burnout experiences, Black women experienced distress and detachment from their work. Collins (2009) shared that “the theme of how hard Black women work is often overlooked” (pg. 52), therefore accounting for the unknowns that Black women experience as they navigate the social and political impact of being Black and female. As participants endured their school counselor burnout, their shift to distress and detachment were reactions to their feelings of devaluation, racism and discrimination, isolation, and internal conflict. Superwoman Schema details that the manifestation of stress-related symptoms is a liability of engaging in characteristics associated with Superwoman Schema. Thus, participant experiences demonstrate the impact that burnout can have on their overall well-being.

Focus on Well-Being, Boundaries, and Balance

No matter where you are or how inferior you are treated, don't stop loving yourself. Love and accept your culture. Accept being black. You can't change that. Just accept it and love being you.- Kelly, Participant and Black Woman with School Counselor Burnout

The last theme identified from the data was a focus on implementing boundaries within their work, being well, and maintaining a balance between life and work. This theme showed up for participants in the form of "self-care" and "social capital" in the form of loved ones and colleagues. Through their experiences with school counselor burnout, the women in this study learned valuable lessons about caring for themselves as

they worked to support students. Many participants reiterated the importance of family and self-preservation. Kelly's quote above demonstrates participants' realization about themselves as Black women after their experience with school counselor burnout. Well-being, boundaries, and balance reinforce the desire to maintain values that participants cherish in hopes of no further experiences with school counselor burnout. Brittany felt supported in multiple avenues at school and at home. She reflected: I had a wonderful principal, and some of the assistant principals viewed me as the authority on all things school counseling. So, you know, I could feel confident that if they were coming to my office, they were just trying to get some verbiage and understanding of how they can repeat what I've already said. I'll say that my staff was great. They would consult with me, and I had no problem backing them up or stepping in if necessary because I had a good staff that would ask questions. We presented a united front. And then the network of fellow head counselors, who are just a sounding board to vent, or when it comes to that fine line, small print stuff, then definitely at home. I think it helps to have someone when you get home to remind you you're not at work anymore and close the laptop. Let's do something. Let's not talk about it because it'll be there waiting for you in the morning, right? Um, all of those things combined to help me last as long as I did. Jennifer shared a similar emphasis on family and one's irreplaceability outside of work:

Take care of yourself because your family only gets one of you. They'll find other school counselors, and they'll find other people who can do the job, but you have to take care of yourself because your family only gets one of you.

Giselle had similar thoughts since she was consistently asked to work on weekends because she was single and had no children. She added her perspective on implementing boundaries by saying no. She remarked:

Say no. Take time for yourself. That job is going to be there at the end of the day; whatever you have at your house will not. So just say no, it's okay. The most they can do is be upset with you, and that's fine. Saying no is okay, and you have to be okay with saying no and standing on the no.

Giselle's school counselor burnout experience also impacted her new relationship. "So it was affecting my professional life, but then it's also affecting my personal life, so now I have to find a balance." Katrina, who consistently assumed additional roles within her school, similarly wanted to incorporate balance and once had an epiphany about her school counselor burnout experience.

I think it forced me to scale back in the sense of having a life-work balance instead of a work-life balance. Work-life balance consisted of work coming first, but work also continued at home. I remember spending countless hours at home, working from home. Then, after that burnout experience, I started treating my home as a place of peace.

Amanda also realized the importance of cherishing family after her experience with school counselor burnout. She conveyed:

This year, family is important to me. I wasn't going to, like some of my kids' awards ceremonies or different things that they had going on. But I'm making a point like this year, going forward, I have to take care of other kids that I'm dealing with so that, therefore, I got to take care of my own.

Participants expressed through their experiences with school counselor burnout how pivotal well-being, boundaries, and balance are in recovering from their burnout experiences. Through their many lessons and experiences, Black women with school counselor burnout understand the value of well-being, boundaries, and balance for their overall wellness, thus resulting in a renewed perspective of what is important for their individual lives.

Chapter Summary

This chapter presented the detailed data uncovered while investigating the lived experiences of seven Black women with school counselor burnout. Six themes were identified from individual, semi-structured interviews. The first theme was devaluation in role and identity, which describes a lack of knowledge around the role of school counselors as well as the inconsistent expectations of Black women and their non-Black or non-female counterparts. The next theme is isolation, which is defined as maladaptive perfectionism, rejection of others, or loneliness. The next theme identified was racism and discrimination, which participants described as covert and overt acts, microaggressions, and microinvalidations. As participants navigated their experience with school counselor burnout, they also identified internal conflict, which depicted feelings of guilt, self-reflection, self-blame, and avoidance. The next theme identified was feelings of distress and detachment, which were the emotional and physical reactions and the shifts in perspective that participants identified in response to work. Lastly, participants identified well-being, boundaries, and balance, which was defined as caring for self, creating life-work balance, and the social capital that school counselors have in the form of loved ones and colleagues. The in-depth data shared by participants

underscores the necessity for additional research and support for Black women with school counselor burnout. The six themes illuminated the challenges Black women with school counselor burnout face and the social, historical, and political issues at the intersection of race and gender that continue to impact their experiences. The following chapter will summarize the lived experiences of Black women with school counselor burnout within this study, discussing implications for schools, school districts, and counselor training and preparation programs.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

The findings in this study provide increased knowledge and understanding of the experiences of Black women with school counselor burnout. Through the lens of Black Feminist Thought (BFT) (Collins, 2009) and Superwoman Schema (Woods-Giscombe, 2010), the study sought to answer the following research question: What are the lived experiences of Black women with school counselor burnout? To answer the research question, I conducted semi-structured interviews with the seven participants who identified as Black women who experienced school counselor burnout. To derive meaning from the data, I conducted Moustakas's phenomenological data analysis, and the findings were represented through participant quotations to detail the phenomena from their unique perspectives. I identified six themes associated with participants' experiences of school counselor burnout. The following chapter offers a discussion of the findings in relation to existing literature and proposes implications for schools, school districts, and counselor training and preparation programs about the retention and support of Black women with school counselor burnout. This chapter concludes with recommendations for future research.

Discussion of Findings

Devaluation of Role and Identity

The first theme that Black women school counselors uncovered was the devaluation of role and identity. Consistent with the literature on school counselor

burnout presented in Chapter Two, participants revealed that administrators, who often supervise the work of school counselors, are unaware of the role and function of school counselors and do not align their skill set with their duties and responsibilities (Chandler et al., 2018; Windham & Tuttle, 2022). Participants reinforced experiences of role ambiguity, role conflict, and role overload as school counselors with devaluation of role and identity. Since school counselors reported role ambiguity and role conflict due to misinformed expectations of administrators and stakeholders, several studies support this study's findings. One example is a study by Chandler et al. (2018), which found that principals' expectations often conflict with school counselors' graduate training and create additional role-related stress, which can contribute to burnout. In Ricard's (2021) study, participants reported that their experiences were contingent upon their supervising administrator's knowledge and perception of their role. Therefore, school administrators' knowledge of school counselors' roles and responsibilities influences their experiences within schools. Thus, participant experiences reiterate the literature regarding the devaluation of their role.

In addition to not being valued in the role of school counselor, participants also expressed feeling a sense of devaluation in their identity as Black women. Participants shared the difference in expectations between them and their non-Black or non-female counterparts and spoke to the disproportionate workload as Black women compared to their counterparts. Similarly, Wells and Archibald (2023) found that participants were hypersensitive to how they were perceived and were cautious in their interactions for fear of being perceived as angry, bossy, or crazy. In contrast, participants felt their White colleagues could behave freely without repercussion and were, in turn, protected (Wells

& Archibald, 2023). As such, Black women felt their expression of the same behaviors was negatively perceived (Wells & Archibald, 2023). In an attempt to control the narrative about their professionalism, Black women with school counselor burnout filter aspects of themselves at work. Thus, this study underscores the lack of safety Black school counselors feel and the necessity to censor themselves to be accepted.

Furthermore, in examining their experiences of devaluation in role identity, Maya's quotation summarizes participants' sentiments: "Not only am I doing a job that's very demanding, but I'm also doing other people's jobs." In addition to getting work "dumped" on them by administrators, according to Amanda, participants remarked about their White counterparts not assisting with the implementation of their school counseling program and not facing repercussions as a result. The findings from Ricard's (2021) study support the findings of this study. Ricard (2021) found that participants called school counseling a "dump job" by receiving tasks no one else desired or felt like they were "high-paid clerks" with the amount of non-counseling duties assigned (p. 93, 94). Participants felt as though they had to shoulder the responsibility of the workload as school counselors. An important characteristic of Superwoman Schema is that despite limited resources, Black women are determined to succeed (Woods-Giscombe, 2010). Since participants reported disproportionate expectations with their work, Black women who experienced school counselor burnout have workloads that exceed reasonable expectations because they were determined to support students and persist despite challenges. The literature has not explicated the devaluation of the identity of Black women with school counselor burnout. However, a study by Wines et al. (2015) found that participants desired acceptance of African Americans. Participants felt guarded in

their interactions with their colleagues and overenunciated to conceal their accents or dialects (Wines et al., 2015). Similarly, the study reveals that their feelings of devaluation are consistent with Black Feminist Thought's reference from *Their Eyes Were Watching God* as being "de mules uh de world" (Collins, 2009, p. 51; Hurston, 1937). The phrase compares Black women's existence with that of a mule—known for its strength and endurance and used solely for work. Participants' experiences of devaluation support the perception that Black women are viewed as mules in the workplace yet persist to the point of burnout because they are determined to succeed.

Feelings of Isolation and Rejection of Others

The second theme identified within the study was feelings of isolation and rejection of others. Participants reported rejecting others due to a refusal to accept their help or because they no longer wanted to engage because of their burnout experience. Superwoman Schema reinforces the rejection of others experienced by participants due to an unwillingness to be dependent or vulnerable (Woods-Giscombe, 2010) due to fear or mistrust, contributing to their experiences of school counselor burnout. Furthermore, participants reported being inundated with tasks they had to endure alone because of an unwillingness from colleagues to assist. The findings from Cooke and Hastings's study (2023) highlight how participants felt powerless and like imposters within their roles, reflecting whether they were unsupported because of their identities as Black women. The findings from Cooke and Hastings's study (2023) found that participants felt powerless and like imposters within their roles, wondering if support was lacking because of their identities as Black women. Wines et al. (2015) found that participants experienced loneliness in their isolation from the dominant culture due to cultural

encapsulation and lack of knowledge from their White counterparts. Similarly, Woods-Giscombe (2010) uncovered that Black women's feelings of isolation and rejection of others are a defense mechanism to shield them from perceptions of weakness or incompetence. Consistent with Woods-Giscombe's findings, some participants resisted help because of the reciprocity associated with receiving support, while some mistrusted that others could complete tasks correctly. Superwoman Schema reinforces this study's findings of rejection of others for fear of being vulnerable or dependent on others (Woods-Giscombe, 2010). Kelly shared that she no longer wanted to connect with her friends, family, and students until she was in a better mental space due to her school counselor burnout experience. Kelly's experience supports Superwoman Schema's dimension that Black women present an image of strength because she rejected others as she endured her burnout experience, further highlighting an obligation to present the façade of strength even when one does not feel strong (Woods-Giscombe, 2010).

Black Feminist Thought explicates the perpetual outsider within status held by Black women, illuminating that Black women are collectively treated as invisible as outsiders within, rendering them highly visible while simultaneously being invisible due to racism. Collins (2009) writes, "African American women, by not belonging, emphasize the significance of belonging" (pg. 77). The theme, isolation, and rejection of others highlight the marginalization Black women feel in society—along the margins, outside of what is considered normal, or acceptable. As outsiders, Black women have learned resilience in the face of loneliness, rejection, and discrimination and, as such, have learned to cope amid isolation. This study illuminated the experiences that Black women school counselors have and necessitated the need for more school counseling

literature to reflect the experiences that Black women have with isolation as perpetual outsiders within.

Experiences of Racism and Discrimination

The third theme found within the study is experience with racism and discrimination. Consistent with the literature, participants reported experiences of racism, oppression, and discrimination in their workplace (Cooke & Hastings, 2023; Jones, 2019; Ricard, 2021; Wells & Archibald, 2023; Wines et al., 2015). The study's findings support that many participant experiences were shaped by experiences of racism and discrimination. Furthermore, Black Feminist Thought (Collins, 2009) references the inherently negative controlling images (e.g., the mammy, the welfare mother, the Jezebel) that are used to perpetuate negative stereotypes about Black women as a means to oppress them further. Moreover, the negative stereotypes about Black women are "designed to make racism, sexism, poverty, and other forms of social injustice appear to be natural, normal, and inevitable parts of everyday life" (Collins, 2009, p. 77). Additionally, Cooke and Hastings (2023) found that Black women had experienced negative images of their culture combined with the experience of microaggressions and discrimination in the workplace, which contributed to their burnout experience. Katrina's experience with racism and discrimination underscores the necessity that Black women feel to hide aspects of themselves to be palatable in the workplace. She remarks, "It's like I'm living in two different worlds if that makes sense...you have to cover up certain areas because if you're you, you could be used against you". These feelings provide insight into the struggle that Black women endure, living double lives and negotiating how they show up in the workplace could mean to others (Collins, 2009). A study by Wines et al.

(2015) found that Black school counselors experience pervasive evaluation by members of the dominant culture. Wines et al. (2015) reiterated participants' need to be thoughtful in their conversations for fear of further scrutiny or retaliation. In addition, Black women school counselors have overt and covert experiences with racism and discrimination from parents, colleagues, and students (Jones, 2019), which was supported by the study's findings. This study found that participants' professional knowledge was questioned, and they felt "second-guessed," which was consistent with Jones's (2019) findings that there was a distrust of Black women's professional capabilities.

Consistent with the dimensions of Superwoman Schema (Woods-Giscombe, 2010), one of the contextual factors of the framework are stereotypes and racial and gendered oppression that is pervasive in Black women's everyday experiences. This study's participants wanted to be perceived positively in professional environments and, in doing so, worked themselves to the point of burnout. Cooke and Hastings (2023) posited that repeated experiences of microaggressions leave Black women and lead to feelings of inadequacy and anger. Additionally, this study illuminates the need for Black women to possess the power of self-definition by sharing their own stories and experiences. Black Feminist Thought posits that although the system of oppression within the US elevates White male ideology, the power of self-definition is vital to establishing their own identities and depicting their own stories. Thus, the experiences of Black women with school counselor burnout have illuminated the inherent racism and discrimination still prevalent within society.

Struggle with Internal Conflict

The next theme found in the study depicts the struggle with internal conflict endured by participants. As participants endured their experiences with school counselor burnout, they reflected on whether they should stay in the role, whether they were fully present for their students, or if they should leave the profession. Katrina's quotation exemplifies the line of questioning in which participants reflected, "Is this my passion? Am I on the right path? Should I do something different? Is this short-lived?" The literature has yet to depict the reflective yet contemplative internal conflict experienced by school counselors.

In contrast, Mullen et al. (2020) examined school counselors' work-related rumination as a predictor of burnout, turnover intentions, job satisfaction, and work engagement. Affective rumination is feelings associated with contemplating one's workday and the inability to turn off associated thoughts (Mullen et al., 2020). Other characteristics of work-related rumination are planning or thinking about work outside of work hours or detachment, which is not thinking about work outside of work (Mullen et al., 2020). Though Mullen et al. (2020) explored work-related rumination, the literature does not capture the reflective internal conflict that school counselors experience whilst navigating their school counselor burnout. Conversely, the literature does offer insight into the struggles with external conflict that Black women with school counselor burnout have, whether it is the systemic oppression that impacts their daily existence and experiences (Collins, 2009) or the conflict with advocating for the roles aligned to their skillset (Limberg et al., 2016; Mullen et al., 2018), their external struggles are depicted throughout the literature. This study illuminated the introspective yet conflicting struggle

that school counselors endure after an experience with burnout when deciding whether to continue within their roles as school counselors.

Shift to Distress and Detachment

The next theme found within the study was a shift to distress and detachment. Participants reported experiences of emotional distress and, consequently, detachment from work. The emotional distress participants experienced was characteristic of physical and emotional reactions to work, including feelings of stress and anxiousness that manifested physically. Similarly, work-related rumination includes detachment, which removes thoughts about work outside the workplace (Mullen et al., 2020). Burnout literature highlights the health-related outcomes of burnout that manifest as physical stress symptoms, including "headaches, cold and flu symptoms, gastrointestinal issues, and sleep disturbances" (Maslach & Leiter, 2017, p. 50). Moreover, Adams et al. (2016) suggest that the effects of burnout experienced by individuals within helping professions are a concern since the consequences of burnout can negatively impact one's quality of life. Giselle reflected, "I ended up having anxiety attacks when I would go to work...even if I drive that same road, not even going to that school... my body will still do the same thing it used to do when I was driving to work". Her quotation exemplifies the distress participants experienced while navigating their experiences with burnout. As a result, the burnout literature reinforced participant experiences of distress and detachment (Maslach & Leiter, 2017; Mullen et al., 2020).

Consistent with the study's findings, Holman and Grubbs (2018) found that school counselors disengaged to escape chronic stressors at work to develop a barrier between themselves and work. Though Maslach and Leiter (2017) identified detachment

to encompass cynicism as a lack of concern, unprofessional attitudes, irritability, and withdrawal, this study views detachment as a protective mechanism to shield oneself from the further impact of burnout. Participants did not indicate inappropriate attitudes or a lack of care for students, as the literature explicates as a consequence of detachment. The school counseling literature, however, does not provide detailed experiences with emotional distress; therefore, this study provides thorough and descriptive context to the experiences of distress and detachment experienced by school counselors. Cooke and Hastings (2023) posit that Superwoman Schema may inhibit help-seeking with emotional distress for Black women with school counselor burnout. Considering the façade of strength presented, it may be difficult for healthcare professionals to accurately assess and provide recommendations to Black women (Cooke & Hastings, 2023). The shift from distress and detachment marks a transition in participants' school counselor burnout, indicating the acknowledgment of their experiences and how it has begun to manifest mentally and physically. The study presents new perspectives on the current literature to give varied context to experiences of distress and detachment.

Focus on Well-being, Boundaries, and Balance

The last theme found within the study was participants' focus on well-being, boundaries, and balance. Participants reported the need for self-preservation and focusing on self to ensure their well-being. In doing so, school counselors implemented boundaries around work to ensure they had an equitable balance between work and their personal lives. The literature depicts self-care as a necessity for school counselors as they face increasingly complex mental health challenges within schools. Furthermore, by centering their wellness, they are less likely to experience burnout (Wells & Archibald, 2023).

School counseling literature reinforces the need for wellness and self-care for Black women school counselors (Wells & Archibald, 2023), particularly given the stressors they face within society. A study by Silva et al. (2024) also found that participants needed a work-life balance, wellness lifestyle, and balance. Consistent with the study's findings, participants desired more balance between work and home. Because participants overextended themselves at work, they focused on themselves to ensure their well-being. Woods-Giscombe (2010) found that participants worked late, disregarded their health, lacked adequate rest, and omitted breaks to reach their goals. Similarly, participants felt they had to work harder than others to achieve goals, thus contributing to a decline in their overall health.

Additionally, participants felt the need to set boundaries with work. Consistent with the study's findings, Wells and Archibald (2023) found that setting boundaries was essential to being a school counselor. Their study highlighted the "systemic expectations around work and productivity" that impede self-care, such as, "salaried employee should work past contract hours whenever necessary regardless of what their contract hours state" (p.7). Examples like this underscore the necessity to implement boundaries and ensure the overall well-being of participants. The findings highlight how, within a profession focused on helping students, stakeholders, and families, Black women with school counselor burnout must ensure that they care for themselves as they support others. Thus, the study found that in hopes of mitigating the impact of burnout, promoting well-being, boundaries, and balance is an essential part of their experiences.

Implications for Practice

The findings within this study underscore the necessity for practitioners to strengthen factors that aid in mitigating experiences of school counselor burnout for Black women. A study by Moore et al. (2024) illuminates the necessity of incorporating preventive measures for counselors during instances of high stress. The study identifies several steps to ensure that self-care is an intentional and reflective process that counselors in which counselors engage. Moore et al. (2024) indicate that individuals should identify personal strengths by “maintaining perspective, social resourcefulness, scanning, perceived control, and self-acceptance” (p. 27). The next step involves reflecting on difficult situations encountered within counseling, followed by identifying the appropriate coping strategies. Furthermore, counselors should engage in pre-identified self-care routines to balance workplace stressors (Moore et al., 2024). Engaging in this reflective yet intentional process provides counselors with a go-to framework to help prevent burnout.

Equally important, the findings demonstrate that Black women school counselors should engage in self-care and well-being to establish professional boundaries with their work to ensure self-preservation (Wells & Archibald, 2023). Participants shared the necessity of balancing life and work through implementing boundaries. Wells and Archibald (2023) found that establishing firm boundaries with work was a beneficial self-care strategy for Black women. Boundaries could look like setting a firm time to end the workday, checking email during work hours, and sharing responsibilities among team members. In addition, practitioners should share their personal experiences with counselors in training. Participants shared the stark differences between their experiences

in their counselor preparation program and professional practice, yet not to dissuade students from the profession, Black women school counselors should share their experiences within the profession with school counselors in training. By being visible to counselors-in-training, explicating their experiences, and detailing the profession's challenges, opportunities, and rewards, school counselors-in-training will have a realistic view of the profession and the potential challenges they may face. Jennifer remarked, "In my cohort, it was me and another person that was black, and some of the things we learned were great, but we never saw ourselves," which underscores the need for school counselors in training to learn from the experiences of Black women school counselors. Sharing the realistic perspective of the school counseling experiences will help prepare school counselors in training to navigate the profession.

Next, school counselors must engage in continued professional knowledge and access supervision. Literature proves that school counselors who participate in supervision are less likely to experience burnout (Kim & Lambie, 2018; Moyer, 2011). Moreover, engaging in professional development increases professional knowledge and enhances opportunities to improve student outcomes to face ever-evolving trends (ASCA, 2024). Furthermore, school counselors should obtain membership in professional organizations (Bardhoshi et al., 2014). Doing so can increase professional knowledge and reduce instances of isolation (Bardhoshi et al., 2014). School counselors must continue to advocate for themselves and the profession by implementing boundaries around work (Wells & Archibald, 2023). By establishing community partnerships, school counselors can help create wrap-around services to students that serve the whole student. In doing

so, there is a shared responsibility for student success and well-being, alleviating the responsibility solely from school counselors.

Black Feminist Thought highlights the importance of shared and communal spaces for Black women (Collins, 2009). Black women school counselors should establish affinity spaces to foster environments of connection, support, and mentorship. By doing so, Black women can connect with others with shared identities and have an environment that supports them at work. Lastly, school counselors should engage in professional development and supervision to mitigate the impact of school counselor burnout. Supervision is a proven way to alleviate school counselor burnout (Kim & Lambie, 2018). In sum, through the collection of identifying preventative measures, implementing boundaries, well-being, and self-care, sharing difficult experiences, establishing affinity spaces, and accessing supervision and professional development, Black women can work toward alleviating their experiences of school counselor burnout.

Implications for Research

Based on the study's findings, the experiences of Black women school counselors should be explored further. This study explored their experiences with school counselor burnout however, more literature could delve into their experiences, given the unique intersections of their identity. The study presented new findings regarding their struggle with internal conflict that depicts the reflective yet contemplative experience with themselves. The literature should explore the contemplative experiences of school counselors and the process of the decision to remain in or exit the profession. Exploring the reflective process could provide insight into school counselor retention.

Additionally, more literature could delve into the experiences of Black women with burnout. Though several studies explore Black women's experiences with stress (Cooke & Hastings, 2023; Woods-Giscombe, 2010; Woods-Giscombe, 2019), few studies explore their experiences with burnout. The study's findings emphasize feelings of distress and detachment from Black women with school counselor burnout. Though the literature details the physical manifestation of burnout on the body (Cooke & Hastings, 2023; Woods-Giscombe, 2010), it is beneficial to explore the constructs in greater detail to better understand these concepts concerning Black women and burnout. Lastly as the literature expands to be more reflective of the experiences of Black women school counselors, the literature could be utilized to develop training and competencies for administrators and school leadership for working with Black women school counselors.

Implications for Schools and School Districts

The most significant impact on Black women's experience with school counselor burnout lies at a systemic level to further mitigate experiences of burnout. Furthermore, Black women are situated within a complex intersection of race and gender, with additional accounts for the social and political impact that influences their experiences. School leaders have an influential role in the experiences of school counselors (Windham & Tuttle, 2022). As such, school leaders should educate themselves on the role and responsibilities of school counselors to maximize student outcomes. Since their knowledge significantly impacts school counselors' roles within schools (Ricard, 2021), they must be equipped with accurate knowledge about the roles and responsibilities of school counselors. School counselors' work differs from that of other professionals within

schools; therefore, attuning to and buying into the unique skill set of school counselors is paramount.

Similarly, the findings reflect that school leaders should foster relationships to improve experiences of devaluation in role and identity. By improving relationships, administrators can provide space and opportunity to protect time for school counselors so they can focus their attention on their work aligned with their roles. Additionally, establishing relationships provides insight into shifts in demeanor. The findings illuminate a shift to distress in detachment, meaning they no longer performed their work in the same ways. By fostering relationships with Black women school counselors, administrators would perceive noticeable changes in their behaviors and intervene.

Additionally, school administrators can reinforce an equitable distribution of school counseling tasks to ensure that Black women are not inundated or shoulder most departmental responsibilities. Participants reported inequitable division of labor among themselves and their non-Black colleagues. Thus, administrators who supervise school counselors have a vital role in the experiences of Black women school counselors and should establish measures to foster relationships among Black women school counselors, educate themselves about their role and function, and ensure equitable division of labor among school counseling teams and school personnel.

Lastly, schools and school districts could offer time for school counselors to engage in supervision to mitigate the impact of burnout. Supervision has been a proven way to alleviate school counselor burnout (Kim & Lambie, 2018); therefore, school districts should provide school counselors with the time to engage in supervision during the workday. Supervision is a relationship with a senior member of a profession who

provides interventions designed to improve the clinical skills of a less experienced member of the same profession (Bernard & Goodyear, 2014). Since clinical counseling skills are essential for any counseling professional, engagement in supervision allows school counselors to consult and receive feedback on challenges within the profession (Bernard & Luke, 2015). Not only does supervision help improve school counselors' clinical skills to ensure students' well-being, but it is also a strategy to prevent burnout (Chae, 2022).

Next, the findings demonstrate that experiences of racism and discrimination are prevalent within schools. It is vital that schools and school districts work to improve experiences of racism and discrimination for Black women school counselors by taking measures to educate all district employees. A study by Corte and Beardsley (2023) examined the attitudes of university faculty and staff members after they engaged with online training modules on implicit bias. The goal of the training was to foster "more inclusive educational spaces" (p. 134), and the study found that through the deployment of the online training and the post-training reflective activities, participants reported increased understanding, awareness, and recognition of racism, discrimination, and their deeply held beliefs about others. As such, since racism and discrimination are still pervasive within schools and school systems, districts should implement intentional mandatory training for all staff members designed to educate, inform, and improve understanding of racism, discrimination, and bias. Consequently, reflective activities improve understanding and allow participants to be thoughtful about their acquired knowledge and how they can implement the information in future interactions.

Implications for Counselor Training and Preparation Programs

The study also revealed implications for counselor training and preparation programs. Since participants reported a stark contrast in their pre-service experience and professional practice, counselor trainees should learn real-world challenges and realistic scenarios that school counselors face in the workplace, accounting for challenges they will face with colleagues and stakeholders because of their identities as Black women. Also, it is vital that counselor training and preparation programs are intentional in addressing racism, discrimination, and oppression through teaching, counseling, and supervision (Ieva et al., 2021). Doing so will aid in easing the transition for novice school counselors upon entering the field. Considering the study's findings that uncover experiences of racism and discrimination, it is vital that counselor training and preparation programs prepare students to anticipate challenges that arise based on their identities with students, colleagues, stakeholders, and parents. As such, programs can work with students on ways to navigate experiences of racism and discrimination and provide a space to process their thoughts and feelings about the potential of encountering those experiences. Equally important, it is essential that counselor training and preparation programs, which are inherently White, are not a microcosm of systemic racism that perpetuates harm (Ieva et al., 2021) to Black women. Counselor training and preparation programs must ensure that they are skilled and effective in creating spaces for Black women as they enter professional practice.

Next, school counselor supervision is lacking within professional practice (Bryant-Young et al., 2020), yet essential in preventing burnout. For example, a study by Culbreath et al. (2005) found that participation in clinical supervision was associated with

lower stress in school counselors. Researchers found that the frequency of supervision was a significant predictor for mitigating burnout in school counselors (Lambie, 2007; Moyer, 2011). Not only is supervision a predictor for mitigating burnout but it was also found to be a protective factor (Culbreath et al., 2005). Thus, counselor training and preparation programs can emphasize the importance of clinical supervision and provide program graduates with the professional networks to engage in supervision after graduation to minimize the impact of burnout as they transition into the field. Counselor training and preparation programs can bridge the gap in supervision for novice school counselors by utilizing doctoral students in counselor education to provide group supervision for their doctoral internship courses. Utilizing this strategy would provide doctoral students with internship hours and practical experience with supervision and help retain novice school counselors while reducing the potential impact of burnout.

The literature consistently indicates that administrators should be educated on the role of school counselors (Bardhoshi & Um, 2014; Cervoni & DeLucia-Waack, 2011; Windham & Tuttle, 2023). Counselor training and preparation programs can foster collaboration between counselors and school leaders in training to further understanding of school counselors' role (Tygret et al., 2020; Windham & Tuttle, 2023). Modeling collaboration across educational programs, counselor training, and preparation programs can provide students with an example of how to build a collaborative professional relationship with school leaders while educating one another on their respective roles and missions (Tygret et al., 2020). By collaborating on a group project, such as building a sample collaboration plan between school counselors and administrators (Windham & Tuttle, 2023) or developing a collaboration workshop (Tygret et al., 2020), school

counselors and administrators can enter the workforce with enhanced knowledge of each other's role and function to optimize student success. Counseling training and preparation programs can also invite guest speakers, such as recent graduates (Windham & Tuttle, 2023), school district personnel, school counselors who were promoted to administrators, or more experienced alumni to share their experiences of collaboration between school counselors and school leadership. `

To further administrators' knowledge of school counselors' role, participants suggested that counselor training and preparation programs emphasize teaching self-advocacy in schools. Counselor training programs can establish partnerships with schools and school districts (Boulden & Schimmel, 2021), and before placing counselor trainees or practicum or internship experiences, ensure that school and district leaders have a thorough understanding of the role and responsibilities of school counselors. Doing so will help improve internship and practicum experiences while educating personnel vital to school counselors' experiences within schools.

Implications for Theory

Black Feminist Thought provided me with the opportunity to account for the complex social, political, racist, and gendered oppression of Black women while also offering the opportunity to self-define their experiences, which was an essential aspect of understanding their school counselor burnout experiences. Additionally, BFT allowed me to shape my understanding of their experiences while providing the space to divulge their often-overlooked perspective of their experiences. Furthermore, BFT provided space for participants to have nuance within their experiences. Collins (2009) posits that in Black women's experiences of oppression, though they share a collective experience, there are

nuances within those unique experiences. The findings that were uncovered provide context to the shared experiences of seven Black women who have had an experience with school counselor burnout.

The study's findings inform, confirm, and reject the tenets of Black Feminist Thought and Superwoman Schema. BFT posits that Black women's labor is essential to capitalism within the US (Collins, 2009). The findings demonstrate that Black women were used as the pillar of school counseling departments and, in many cases, left to shoulder the responsibility of doing their work and the work of others. Though the findings do not explicitly confirm the first tenet of BFT, the findings provide context and inform the work of Black women in schools. Given the tenet of BFT, I am left to question if Black women were not there to assume the burden of work from others, where would it lie? Who would be there to shoulder the responsibility? Would everyone be responsible for their work, or is it left to whoever is above Black women on the totem pole of privilege? Nonetheless, the study's findings inform the work of Black women with school counselor burnout experiences.

The next tenet of BFT is that Black women are not afforded privileges given to White men (Collins, 2009). The study's findings confirm this tenet of BFT and demonstrate that, as Black women, they face racism and discrimination within schools and are devalued in their identity. The last tenet of BFT is that the controlling images (e.g., the mammy, the welfare mother, and the Jezebel) associated with Black women continue to perpetuate stereotypes to continue the system of oppression (Collins, 2009). The study's findings confirm this tenet of BFT, and as a result, Black women with school counselor burnout employ Superwoman Schema to combat racialized stereotypes.

Superwoman Schema, a Black Feminist Epistemology, is a survival mechanism for Black women to negate the stereotypes associated with Black women (e.g., the Mammy, the Jezebel, the Sapphire, and the Welfare Mother). As a result, Black women employ the following characteristics as adaptive strategies: (a) presenting the façade of strength, (b) feeling that it is necessary to subdue emotions, (c) being resistant to be vulnerable or dependent on others, (d) a strong will to succeed, and (e) an obligation to help others (Woods-Giscombe, 2010).

The study's findings confirmed that the tenets of Superwoman Schema were present. In their isolation and rejection of others, many participants presented façades of strength when they did not receive help or rejected others to process their burnout in isolation. In their assumption of strength, Black women with school counselor burnout strongly desired to succeed despite the obstacles or individuals who attempted to dissuade their work. As such, in their obligation to work on behalf of students, participants' work exceeded their capacity, which resulted in school counselor burnout. One tenet of Superwoman Schema that was not clearly identified by the study's findings was feeling it was necessary to subdue emotions. Participants expressed their feelings of distress and detachment during their school counselor burnout experience, which included their experience of anxiety, crying, and a physical manifestation of burnout symptoms. As such, I could conclude that participants may have subdued emotions in front of colleagues but experienced a range of emotions in places or people with whom they deemed safe.

Limitations

Though the findings from the study illuminate the unique lived experiences of Black women with school counselor burnout, it is essential to consider the limitations of the study. Considering the psychological impact of burnout, participation may be limited due to the possible emotional toll of their school counselor burnout experience. A limitation of the study is that participants who experience school counselor burnout may not want to add additional responsibilities, such as participation in a study when they are overwhelmed with responsibilities at work. Additionally, the study utilized snowball sampling, and therefore, the reach for participants was limited to my professional social networks. Lastly, three of the seven participants were no longer practicing as school counselors. A limitation of the study was that I am unclear regarding the salience of their school counselor burnout experience as they describe their experience while no longer in the role. While most participants had experiences of school counselor burnout in Georgia, it is limiting considering the role of race, racism, and discrimination in Georgia versus other states.

Since the ASCA National Model is the framework that details the method that school counselors can utilize to improve student outcomes (ASCA, 2024), one limitation of the study is that there were varied experiences among participants of ASCA National Model implementation. Thus, some schools and districts align school counselors' roles with the framework, while others do not. Therefore, there may be varied perceptions of the role of school counselors, the human capital necessary to manage the workload, and the allotted resources to implement a program effectively.

Given the limitations, it is essential to thoughtfully examine the implications and recommendations for future research based on the study's findings and consider the experiences of Black women with school counselor burnout and the challenges they have endured.

Recommendations for Future Research

The findings of the study underscore the importance of detailing the experiences of Black women with school counselor burnout. The study highlights the necessity of qualitative research in exploring school counselor burnout that elicits thick, rich descriptions, highlighting the nuanced perspectives of their experiences. This study adds to the growing body of school counselor burnout literature, and future research should explore the internal struggle Black women school counselors have when contemplating whether to remain in the profession. While literature specific to Black women highlights their experiences within society, since Black women face poorer health outcomes than their non-Black counterparts, literature can be expanded that explores protective factors to mitigate Black women's experiences with stress and burnout. Additionally, future research can consider examining experiences of school counselor burnout with Black women in other parts of the country to consider how their experiences vary, given their geographical location or implementation or incorporation of the ASCA National Model.

Since burnout is a construct that can be monitored over time, considering the aforementioned implications, the experience of school counselor burnout can be evaluated at determined points after the implementation of interventions (e.g., administrator education regarding the role of school counselors, training, and education of staff members on racism and discrimination, inclusion of clinical supervision). Since

novice school counselors are most susceptible to experiencing burnout (Fye et al., 2021), a consideration for future research is that counselor training and preparation programs provide group clinical supervision for masters-level graduates utilizing doctoral students for the first three years of professional practice. As they progress through the field, they can have feedback on critical clinical issues and a supportive environment. Therefore, one can better understand the impact of interventions on school counselor burnout. Understanding the experiences of school counselor burnout can be utilized to begin to facilitate systemic changes that can improve the experiences of school counselors within schools.

Chapter Summary

This chapter highlighted the study's findings, underscoring the importance of explicating the experiences of Black women with school counselor burnout. The findings illuminate implications for practice, schools, and school districts, as well as counselor training and preparation programs to address the systemic issues that impact the valuable work of school counselors. The challenges illuminated by participants necessitate the hindrance systemic barriers place to improving student outcomes. Although the study presented valuable insights, it is important to consider limitations.

The study's methodological approach, although provided with in-depth, rich, detailed descriptions of participants' experiences, limited the generalizability of the study's findings. Additionally, the study utilized snowball sampling, which could have limited the reach of potential participants. Lastly, given the exploration of burnout as a phenomenon, participants may have been limited because of the dimensions of burnout,

which could take an emotional toll on participants, and their possible desire to limit additional responsibilities and obligations.

Future research should explore protective factors for Black women regarding stress and burnout and explore in greater detail the findings of Black women school counselors' internal conflict amidst their burnout experiences. Additionally, future research could continue to explore school counselors' experiences with burnout by utilizing qualitative methods to provide detailed accounts of their experiences.

The implications from this study highlight systemic changes that can be made to mitigate the experiences of Black women with school counselor burnout. By incorporating the insights provided at the school and school district levels and counselor training and preparation programs, Black women school counselors can have improved experiences within their schools and work environments, allowing school counselors to focus on improving student outcomes.

In sum, this study explored the lived experiences of Black women with school counselor burnout and provided an in-depth view of their account. By illuminating their experiences with school counselor burnout through the lens of race and gender, it underscores pervasive challenges at the systemic level that impact their work with students. This study advocates prioritizing well-being and improving health outcomes for Black women by mitigating their experiences with school counselor burnout.

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APPENDIX A

Demographic Screening Questionnaire

Greetings! My name is Ashley Cosby and I am a Doctoral Candidate in the Counselor Education and Supervision program at The University of Georgia. Under the supervision of Dr. Deryl Bailey, I am conducting a research study entitled, Examining the Lived Experiences of Black women with School Counselor Burnout. If you are interested in participating, please complete the following demographic questionnaire. If you are selected to participate, a member of the research team will contact you to schedule an interview.

Interviews will take place on Zoom and will be recorded. Please be reminded that your participation is voluntary and you may withdraw your participation at any time. All information will be kept confidential and any identifying information will be changed. To be eligible to participate, you must be 21 years or older, identify as a woman, identify as Black, be certified or licensed as a school counselor, and have been employed as a school counselor within the last five years.

Please feel free to contact Ashley Cosby at adh05@uga.edu. You may also contact my advisor, Dr. Deryl Bailey at dfbailey@uga.edu. If you have any complaints or questions about your rights as a research volunteer, please contact IRB@uga.edu.

1. Name
2. Email Address
3. Phone Number
4. Age
5. How do you identify racially? (Check all that apply)
 - Black
 - White
 - Hispanic/Latino
 - Asian
 - Native/Pacific Islander
 - Other
6. Gender Identity
 - Female
 - Male

- Non-Binary
- Other

7. How many years have you worked as a school counselor?

8. If you are no longer working as a school counselor, when was the last year you were employed as a school counselor?

9. Level of school in which you last or presently work

- Elementary School
- Middle School
- High School

10. Have you had an experience with school counselor burnout?

- Yes
- No

APPENDIX B

Recruitment Flyer

CALL FOR PARTICIPANTS

EXAMINING THE LIVED EXPERIENCES OF BLACK WOMEN WITH SCHOOL COUNSELOR BURNOUT

About the study
This is a qualitative dissertation study examining the lived experiences of Black women with school counselor burnout. This research is to better understand their unique experiences.

Who is eligible?
To be considered for participation in this study, potential participants must:

- Certified or licensed as a school counselor in the last 5 years in the US
- At least 21 years old
- Identify as a woman
- Identify as Black or African American
- Have an experience with school counselor burnout

Description of the study
Participation in this study requires a 60–90 minute interview that will be conducted via Zoom. Participation is completely voluntary and participants may withdraw their participation at any time. Information will be kept confidential.

How to participate:
If you are interested in participating in this study, please complete the link below or scan the QR code to complete the demographic screening questionnaire. Once your eligibility has been confirmed, you will be contacted to schedule your interview. Participants will receive a \$10 electronic gift card for completing the study. The link to the demographic questionnaire can be found here.
<https://forms.office.com/r/9SGHVMQN5A>



Exploring the experiences of Black women school counselors with burnout



**Mary Frances Early
College of Education**
UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

APPENDIX C

Informed Consent

UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

INFORMED CONSENT LETTER

Examining the Lived Experiences of Black Women with School Counselor Burnout

Dear Participant,

My name is Ashley Cosby and I am a Doctoral Candidate in the Counselor Education and Supervision Department at the University of Georgia under the supervision of Dr. Deryl Bailey. I am inviting you to take part in a research study.

Purpose of the study

I am doing research on the lived experiences of Black women with school counselor burnout. Using Feminist Phenomenology, the study explores the unique experiences of Black women school counselors with school counselor burnout.

Participation in the study

I am looking for participants who are at least 21 years old, identify as Black or African American, identify as a woman, have been certified or licensed as a school counselor in the last 5 years, and have had an experience with school counselor burnout.

If you agree to take part in this study, you will be asked to complete a demographic screening survey, complete the informed consent, and participate in a 60–90-minute virtual interview on Zoom. The interview will be recorded and transcribed and information will be kept confidential.

Participation is voluntary. You can refuse to take part or stop at any time without penalty. The decision to refuse or withdraw participation will not impact the benefits of the research study.

There are questions that may make you uncomfortable or bring up unwanted feelings. You can skip these questions if you do not wish to answer them. Resources will be provided should you need to seek additional help to process unwanted feelings.

Benefits of participation

Your responses may help us understand the unique experiences of Black women school counselors with school counselor burnout. Participants will receive a \$10 electronic gift card after the completion of an interview.

Confidentiality

Research records will be labeled with study IDs that are linked to you by a separate list that includes your name. This list will be destroyed once we have finished collecting information from all participants. Information will be used after identifiers have been removed and may be used for future studies without additional consent.

Withdrawal from the research study

If you decide to withdraw from the study or the investigator terminates your participation, the information that can be identified as yours will be kept as part of the study and may continue to be analyzed, unless you make a written request to remove, return, or destroy the information.

If you are interested in participating or have questions about this research, please feel free to contact me adh05@uga.edu. If you have any complaints or questions about your rights as a research volunteer, contact the IRB at 706-542-3199 or by email at IRB@uga.edu. Please keep this letter for your records.

Sincerely,

Ashley D. Cosby

Doctoral Candidate

The University of Georgia

APPENDIX D

Interview Protocol

Hi, my name is Ashley Cosby, and I am a PhD candidate in the Counselor Education and Supervision Program at The University of Georgia. I am conducting a dissertation study entitled, Examining the Lived Experiences of Black Women with School Counselor Burnout. I want to learn more about the experiences of burnout among Black women school counselors, specifically if and how race and gender influence their burnout.

Through your participation in this study, we can begin to understand our lived experiences with school counselor burnout at the intersection of being Black and female. It is my hope that through this research, participant experiences can inform how we make meaning around factors and influences that contribute to burnout that impact our identity and sense of self. Furthermore, it is my hope that by illuminating these experiences, we can inform professional practice for school counselors and work towards mitigating burnout experiences. I really appreciate you meeting with me today to discuss your experience with school counselor burnout as a Black woman.

Before we begin, I want to remind you that your information will be kept confidential and any identifying information will be changed as noted in the consent form. The interview should take approximately 60-90 minutes. As we progress through the interview, if any question causes discomfort, please feel free to skip that question. If you have any questions throughout the interview, please feel free to ask. As a reminder, your participation in this study is voluntary and you may withdraw your participation at any time. Do you have any questions before we begin?

1. Tell me about yourself and what made you become a school counselor
2. When you hear the word burnout, what comes to mind when specifically when thinking in terms of school counselors?
3. You indicated that you have had an experience with school counselor burnout. Describe your experience.
 - a. When was it?
 - b. What was happening in your role as a school counselor at the time? What were some stressors you were experiencing? How did you know you were experiencing burnout?
 - c. What does it look or feel like for you?
4. What does typical stress look like in your role? How is this different from burnout?
5. How did your school counselor burnout experience influence your work as a school counselor?

6. What are some of the factors or influences in your work environment that seem to contribute to feelings of burnout for you?
7. How does your identity as a Black woman shape your daily experience as a school counselor, particularly when it comes to the stressors or challenges you face in your role?
8. In what ways, if any, does your identity as a Black woman affect your experience of school counselor burnout?
9. How do you notice burnout impacting not only your work but also your sense of self as a Black woman school counselor?
 - a. How do these two areas—professional and personal—intersect for you?
10. In your experience how might school counselor burnout as Black woman be different than those who identify as another race or gender? How might it be the same?
11. Describe the supports you have as a Black woman school counselor.
12. If you could offer advice to other Black women working as school counselors who might be experiencing burnout, what would you want to share with them?
13. What suggestions would you give school districts and counselor preparation programs to mitigate the school counselor burnout experiences of Black women?
14. Is there anything else that I didn't ask about your experience as a black woman with school counselor burnout that you would like to share?

Those are all the questions that I have for you this evening. Thank you again for your participation in my dissertation study. Following the study, I will email you your \$10 electronic gift card to the email address you provided.

I will reach out to you to verify that I accurately captured your perspective. If you could, please review the data once I send it to you to ensure I have accurately captured your perspective. Do you have any additional questions? Lastly, if I have any further questions, may I contact you again?

APPENDIX E

Sample Email to Participants

Greetings!

Thank you for your interest in participating in my dissertation research study. My name is Ashley Cosby and I am a Doctoral Candidate in the Counselor Education and Supervision program at The University of Georgia. Under the supervision of Dr. Deryl Bailey, I am conducting a research study entitled, Examining the Lived Experiences of Black Women with School Counselor Burnout. Based on the demographic questionnaire you submitted, I would like to invite you to participate in the study.

Attached is the informed consent to participate in the research study. Please review it prior to your interview and feel free to contact me at adh05@uga.edu with any questions you may have. You may also contact my advisor, Dr. Deryl Bailey at dfbailey@uga.edu. If you have any complaints or questions about your rights as a research volunteer, please contact IRB@uga.edu.

Below is the link to schedule a time for your interview. If there is a time that works best for your schedule that is not available, please send me an email and I will work to accommodate your availability. I look forward to meeting with you soon!

<https://calendly.com/ashley-d-holmes/blackwomenschoolcounselorburnout>

Best,

Ashley D. Cosby, M.Ed., NCC
Doctoral Candidate | Counselor Education and Supervision
Mary Frances Early College of Education
Counseling and Human Development Services
The University of Georgia
Email: adh05@uga.edu