

# Understanding the Lived Experiences of Black Nursing Faculty In Nursing Academia

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## Abstract

With recent national focus on diversity, equity, and inclusion and calls for addressing systemic racism at the individual and structural levels, we must examine how healthcare education contributes to the perpetuation of systemic racism and health disparities. Combating these disparities involves educating health care professionals of color who are equipped to provide culturally competent care and cross-cultural communication in patient education and clinical practice. One of the challenges in graduating healthcare professionals of color lies in the disparities that also exist in the educational system, including the lack of faculty of color (FOC).

Faculty of color (FOC) contribute to increasing diversity in the nursing workforce, as their presence within academia provides critical role models and mentors for diverse students. The authors propose a qualitative study using face to face interviews of Black and Hispanic/Latino nursing faculty, seeking to describe and understand their lived experience as FOC with predominantly white institutions.

## Background & Purpose

The Future of Nursing report acknowledges the critical need for the current nursing workforce to grow more diverse (NAM 2021). FOC positively contribute to academia by increasing diversity within nursing schools and providing mentoring for nursing students of color (Ro et al., 2021). However, nursing FOC experience feelings of isolation, invisibility, underappreciation, and marginalization (DeWitty & Murray, 2020), which are identified as barriers to retention (Hamilton & Haozous, 2017). To increase the presence of FOC, it is crucial to understand their lived experiences in academia and identify support mechanisms essential to retention and the advancement of diversity, equity, and inclusion (Ro et al., 2021).

## Methods

- A phenomenological study will be conducted to explore the research question: **What are the lived experiences of minority nursing faculty?**
- The population of interest is nursing faculty at Emory University with the rank of assistant or associate, who self-identified as Black or Hispanic/Latino and who has taught in an accredited nursing program for 1 or more academic years.
- Potential participants will be invited directly via e-mail
- Data will be collected during face-to-face interviews lasting approximately 45-60 minutes
- A 10-item demographic survey will also be completed. All interviews will be audiotaped
- Directed interview sessions will start by asking the grand question, "What has your experience been like as a nursing faculty?" Follow-up questions will include:
  - Tell me about the challenges you have faced as a minority faculty member.
  - Can you tell me about your perceptions of what it means to be a minority nursing faculty member?
  - Tell me about the challenges you have faced as a minority faculty member.
  - Can you describe your response to these challenges?
  - As a minority faculty member can you describe your relationships with your nursing colleagues?
  - As a minority faculty member can you describe your relationships with students?
  - What have you found to be helpful or positive in your experience as a minority faculty member?
  - Do you have advice for minority graduate students planning to become nursing faculty?

## Project Timeline

Recruit potential participants via email  
(August - September 2022)

Conduct interviews for data collection  
(October - November 2022)

Data Analysis to identify common themes  
(December 2022 - January 2023)

Present Data to SON Leadership and prepare manuscript  
(February - March 2023)

## Expected Findings

- There is limited research on this topic which further illustrates that black nursing faculty are under investigated.
- The literature discusses about 2-4 qualitative studies over the past 20 years that focus on the experience of black faculty. We expect our study to mirror the findings from the literature.
- Some of the themes that have been identified in the literature are:
  - Lack of mentorship
  - Lack of collegial support
  - Acculturation
  - Imposters Syndrome
  - Feelings of isolation
  - Being othered and tokenized

## Conclusion

Further research is needed on the lived experiences of nursing FOC in nursing academia. This research could identify the barriers, shortcomings, knowledge (or lack thereof) as junior faculty. With heightened awareness of these common themes, of FOC lived experiences, institutions could leverage ways to implement change which welcomes, builds, and includes FOC. As the world is evolving and becoming more acceptable to diversity, equity, and inclusion, it would benefit institutions to create substantial platforms of success for FOC which will create an environment of support, inclusion, effortless recruitment, and retention

## References

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