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An Alternative Way to Conceptualize African American Job Satisfaction.

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Background

This study sought to discover job satisfaction factors of African American faculty at a historically black university and a predominantly white institution. Through the use of qualitative methods, African American faculty job satisfaction was examined using Linda Evan's reconceptualization of Herzberg's motivational hygiene theory. This theoretical framework provided a schema to explore the factors faculty were satisfied by, satisfied with, and dissatisfied with.

Research Questions

RQ 1: What are African American faculty at a historically black university satisfied by?

RQ 2: What are African American faculty at a historically black university satisfied with?

RQ 3: What are African American faculty at a historically black university dissatisfied with?

RQ 4: What are African American faculty at a predominantly white institution satisfied by?

RQ 5: What are African American faculty at a predominantly white institution satisfied with?

RQ 6: What are African American faculty at a predominantly white institution dissatisfied with?

Methods

Data were gathered through the use of semi-structured interviews of six faculty members from a historically black university and five faculty from a predominantly white institution.

Frame

A theoretical framework, based upon a study by Linda Evans, is introduced as a research approach that can be used to conceptualize African American job satisfaction research in a manner that will provide for clearer connections to retention. This framework examines three distinct categories of job satisfaction factors by dividing them into those the faculty are satisfied by, satisfied with and dissatisfied with.

Research findings

Several themes emerged from the study. The most salient was that African

American faculty at the historically black university were satisfied by their work

with students, satisfied with the flexibility of their schedules, and dissatisfied with their pay, workload, and the lack of recognition that they receive from their institution.

African American faculty at the predominantly white institution were satisfied by the impact the programs and courses they developed had upon students, satisfied with their job's freedom and flexibility, and dissatisfied with the ideas of being micromanaged or working with people who are not open and honest. Several additional themes from each university emerged. Reward structures at the two institutions differ. The reasons faculty gave for working at the historically black institution diverged from those given for working at the predominantly white institution. In addition, the findings of this study showed that service is an important factor to job satisfaction of African American faculty and that there is a distinction between factors faculty are dissatisfied with but willing to endure and those that would cause them to leave an institution.