

Young Black Teachers Taking to Social Media to Shame Black Students and Parents: A Narrative Review

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ABSTRACT

Social media is a group of technologies that offers people avenues to engage with one another in a virtual and digital space through their computer or smartphone (Ober & Wildman, 2015) with young black Americans consuming social media more, proportionally, than any other demographic. As such, young Black educators are increasingly availing themselves to social media as a space to communicate and share their professional experiences with other black educators, and the world. In so doing, some young black educators opt to use their social media platform, and their institutional authority to shine a negative light on their black students and parents. In this narrative review, I explore social media consumption, shaming within the educational context, and black teachers as distinct from lower income black parents and students to argue that rather than using their positions as educators to protect their students and parents, young black teachers who have achieved middle-class status and use social media to display their professional frustrations with their black students and parents, only accomplishes the shaming of those with less power and agency - the very people black teachers traditionally protected from harm.

INTRODUCTION

Upon scrolling *Twitter* one December morning in 2023, I came across a post that grabbed my attention. I saw that on November 29, 2023, a video was posted to the account @Simply_Shamaria with the caption: *"I just want y'all to know that these are the parents we deal with. But y'all think we playing when we say kids' parents don't care"*. The video starts with "Ms. G.", a visibly young black female teacher of an elementary grade, calling an unidentified mother who answers the phone with, "I know who you are", even before Ms. G. explains what prompted the call. Ms. G. says, "I'm reaching out because I'm having a little bit of an issue coming out of your son today. He's not sitting down in his seat. He will not stop talking..." The mom cuts off Ms. G. responding relieved, *"Oh my God! I thought he was sick..."* Umm, y'all don't handle that [regarding the classroom behavior]?" Ms. G. replied, "Well usually, we use our behavior management system, which requires us to call the parent if the behavior gets...", the mother interrupts Ms. G. again commenting, "It don't seem like you're managing anything if you can't... I mean I'm trying to work." Ms. G. explains, "I understand that, and I am *also* trying to work. But I want us to work together to ensure the success of your scholar." The unidentified mom retorts, "Oh you're trying to be smart... okay". Politely, Ms. G. says, "No ma'am I'm not trying to be smart. I'm just trying to ensure the success of your scholar." The mom asks, "I mean, what's he doing?" Ms. G. explains, "You know, he won't stay seated... and he keeps talking." "Can't you make him stay seated?", asks the mom. Ms. G. replies, "No I... I can't make him do anything" as she waves

her free hand as if communicating to a person off-camera. The mother continues, "I send him up there because... because, I thought they had teachers that knew how to handle kids... I mean, I... I don't know what you want me to do." The video is ended.

For the duration of the recording, Ms. G. is staring directly into the camera while the parent, presumably, remains unaware that this conversation between a young black teacher (Ms. G.), and a black mother (the voice on the phone) is being recorded, and will subsequently be uploaded to social media, and subject to the reactions of millions of social media consumers. As of that December morning, the video of Ms. G.'s exchange with the unidentified black mother, garnered 5.9M views, 25,000 likes, 7,300 shares and 930 comments on that initial account and does not include the number of views, likes, shares, and comments on accounts that shared the video and posted it to their own account.

Curious as to whether Ms. G.'s content of young black teachers sharing negative experiences with parents was a rarity, or if there was a burgeoning genre of young black teacher videos posting similar content, I clicked on another link. The link was posted on November 22, 2023 of another video that was uploaded by another young black educator to the account, @unwinewithtashak. The caption for the video read: "*Black teacher breaks down in tears as she calls out parents of this generation on how they're raising their kids!!*" In this video, the unnamed teacher laments the parental response to problematic behaviors of her pre-kindergarten and kindergarten students. Exasperated, she laments to the camera, and all of social media consuming her post, "I'm calling out all the parents. If your child is in pre-kindergarten to high school, I'm calling you out. They [your children] don't respect any authority. You ask them to stand on their designated spot, they're telling you, 'No' and to 'shut up.' They're throwing things at each other. They're throwing things at other people, at other classmates. You say, 'Can everyone sit in their spots?' They say, 'I don't want to... I'm not doing that... You don't get to tell me what to do. You're not my mom.'" The teacher continues explaining her classroom trevails for about another minute, including the negative reactions she gets from parents when she requests their assistance in improving their child's behaviors. She then starts crying because, "Your daughters... your five-year-old daughters are asking me to play 'Pound Town', (an extremely sexually explicit rap by Sexxy Red), while I'm trying to play Princess Tiana and ballet music. They are asking me, 'can we hear Poun...'" and the video cuts off just as the teacher begins crying on camera. The video was shared by the *TikTok* account, @r1miller2, an account with 47,800 followers, and as of the date of this writing, I cannot ascertain how many other accounts shared this video and, thus, how many shares, likes, or comments this post garnered.

Clicking on to another link, I noticed a video posted to *TikTok* by the account @stephenwhitehead22 in February 2024, showing a young black male teacher, calling a parent to have a conversation about their child's behavior. The video's caption read: "*When a parent is tired of the teacher calling about their child's behavior in class, the conversation sounds like this...*". In the video, a black male teacher with a phone to his ear, while the voice of an irate (Black) mother expressed her disgust and frustration about the frequent calls she receives pertaining to her child's classroom conduct. During her profanity laden tirade, the mother says "If you keep calling up here and I lose my job... if I lose my job, I'm gonna show up there, and someone there [is] gonna lose their's! How bout that, okay?... Because this is my job you're messing with because... I HAVE MOUTHS TO FEED! I HAVE MOUTHS TO FEED!" The camera cuts off. Throughout the mother's screed, the camera shows the male teacher saying nothing, either

staring deadpan into the camera, or frowning into the camera. Again, there is no indication provided that the frustrated mother is cognizant that her words are being recorded, or that they would someday be exposed audibly, for public consumption and spectacle.

Suffice it to say, videos and social media postings by young Black teachers providing the world a glimpse of their professional reality through social media, are readily accessible. And while I suspect, not every video of young black educators operating within their profession are as dire and laden with frustration as the media postings referenced above, it is postings such as those that will be the topic of this narrative review (Green, 2006). I will begin this review by providing a brief survey of literature on social media and teachers' use of social media as a mechanism of personal connection and professional utility. From there, I will shift the paper's focus to shame and shaming within educational spaces. Lastly, I explore the structural power imbalance between educators and parents, including black teachers who, as representatives of both middle-class norms and institutional authority, positions them apart from the situatedness of the lower SES black students and parents they serve. As such, the posting of negative exchanges between young black teachers and their black students and parents to social media, is nothing but a form of shaming by those who possess economic and social agency unto those with less of both.

SOCIAL MEDIA AND TEACHERS

Social media is a group of technologies that offers people mechanisms to engage with one another in a virtual and digital space through their computer or smartphone (Ober & Wildman, 2015). Social media serves as a mechanism for communication available for anyone with the technology to support its applications (Fox & Bird, 2017). More specifically, social media comprises interactive technologies that allows for content creation by users, and to be shared through and across their own and other's social-virtual network. Social media includes, but is not limited to:

- User-generated content like texts, posts, comments, digital photos or videos
- User-created profiles for a website or app designed by social media organizations
- Social media developed online social networks maintained by connecting a user's profile with other individuals or groups
- Virtual, personally created accounts that accessible via computer or smartphone (Ober & Wildman, 2015)
- Documented memories and self-curated content through blogs podcasts, videos and gaming sites (O'Keefe, Clarke-Pearson, 2011)

Wessels and Diale (2017) share that social media is easy to use, is in a continuous state of development and has an extremely broad reach especially among a younger global population who are computer savvy, grew up with the internet, and have ready access to smartphones. Social media's growing influence is apparent across societies, cultures, religions and economies (Rasheed et al., 2020) as globally, 3.8B people consume social media with the most popular social media outlets in America being Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram (Doofinder, 2024). Social media allows individuals from all corners of the globe to connect, inform, and influence one another, potentially facilitating an environment where the exchange and consumption of information is democratized. With the greater ability to connect and engage, comes with some areas of concern, namely social media's potential to influence masses of people and direct

popular thought. Reasoned and rational collective understanding is not guaranteed, and whether a crowd is influenced by the nonsensical or utilitarian, can reflect the online information individuals avail themselves to and how they interact with it. In the social media space where the barrier to entry is low, influential and charismatic communicators can be amplified and influence the reasoning and decision-making process for social media consumers. For all the democratizing of the public square and media accessibility, the opportunity for exposure to more perspectives provided by and through social media, social media has made people more closed-minded due to consumers' propensity to craft their own ideological echo-chambers coupled with proprietary algorithms from social media sites designed to promote virtual material which the user has shown preference to consume.

Social media has been credited for its potential to promote awareness of matters taking place in the world regardless of one's proximity to events such as the ongoing global atrocities in Gaza and the massacre of tens of thousands of Muslims at the behest of the Israeli Defense Forces (2024), conditions of genocide and pseudo-slavery in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (2024); and domestically, the police killings of George Floyd (2020), Breonna Taylor (2020) and Elijah McClain (2021). Additionally, social media has also been shown to amplify exposure and provide opportunities for individuals to coalesce around anti-democratic aims like the Stop the Steal Movement in 2019 and attacks on (non-existent) Critical Race Theory in public K-12 schools (Benson, 2022) and Diversity, Equity Initiatives in universities and corporate settings. Because some consumers use social media to seek validation and to validate others' opinions, whether in thought or action, that align with their own ideology - to follow influencers - frequent social media consumers can be more prone to ignorance, and even violence. In seeking to understand how youth perceive, categorize, and react to aggressive and potentially violent social media posts, Patton et al. (2013) surmises that not only can social media consumption enhance user closed-mindedness and ignorance, but can enhance individuals' violent tendencies. For marginalized populations specifically, Patton et al. (2016), suggests social media works efficiently in delivering threats as posts that can reach hundreds or thousands of followers in a matter of seconds regardless of their location allowing confrontational contact between opposing parties to remain ongoing.

While 84% of young adults in America aged sixteen to twenty-three, use at least one social media platform, relative to other demographics, black Americans consume a greater proportion of social media platforms (Pew Research Center, 2021). Of the three most popular domestic social media applications, Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, black Americans, despite comprising only 14% of America's population, dominate social media usage with black Americans as the largest proportion of Facebook users in America (17.3M users); 34% of *Instagram* users, and 25% of America's Twitter users (Sharma, 2013; Florini, 2014). Black consumption and production on Twitter is so prominent, that "Black Twitter", a colloquial term for posts that are shared and directed at other Black Twitter users emerged as a term to mean "a user-generated source of culturally relevant content showcases how Twitter's discursive conventions and features facilitate Black cultural discourses online" (Brock, 2012, p. 530). Black women are among the largest social media consumer groups in America as it provides space to converse about Black womanhood, resisting structural gendered racism, navigating structural oppression, empowerment, connectedness (Conley, 2017), social support (Davis 2019), belonging and validation (Jones et. al, 2021). Beyond information and cultural exchange between individuals, social media is a proven technology in shaping users' personal and

sociocultural identity. Given its utility, social media can hold significant emotional meaning in the lives of consumers from underrepresented populations; provides expanded opportunity to communicate and engage with one another in addition to providing a platform from which to share experiences with targeted users to establish consensus or widespread agreement. For individuals from cultural minority backgrounds, social media provides a “place” for members of such groups to voice opinions and raise awareness relevant matters within their community highlighting their own perspective. Pertaining to black people, social media affords the freedom to shape, through a virtual space, group identity and affiliation; as well provide opportunities to learn from one another (Grimes, 2017; Matsuzuka et al., 2023) and promote positive self-recognition, racial resilience and racial dignity. Additionally, social media “allows space for black youth to reclaim dignity through reversing the white gaze, recognizing and calling out anti-blackness, and cultivating engaging communities of healing and belonging” (Gatwiri & Moran, p. 360, 2022).

Similar to the function and potential social media presents for marginalized populations to share and communicate with like individuals, or simply serving to get one’s perspective out to the world, school teachers are increasingly employing social media. Use of social media as a form of communication is increasing in all sectors of American society including education. Social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter provide teachers with powerful instructional tools that fosters collaboration and facilitates a cohesive learning community, and tech savvy educators are using social media to expand the learning space beyond the classroom and encourage student creativity (Tarantino et al., 2013). Some teachers reported their consumption of social media is primarily for educational purposes like professional development and opportunities for professional learning (Hashim & Carpenter, 2019) as social media is increasingly considered a legitimate educational instrument that is both useful and helpful in engaging students of the 21st century when used appropriately (Ayogodmus et al, 2023). Educators’ individual and social preferences, as well as the context of whole districts, schools, grade levels, classrooms and teachers’ backgrounds influence teachers’ social media usage (Hashiem & Carpenter, 2019). Other teachers who use social media professionally, reported doing so for a range of motivations including to achieve legitimacy within a community of practice, gain credibility from peers, gather reinforcement from colleagues, increase social recognition, and to demonstrate leadership (Kim & Canvas, 2013). Some reported turning to social media due to not having a “local” network with whom they can interact around professional discourses, as such, they find connectivity with like-minded, online communities unconstrained by geography (Luehmann & Tinelli, 2008). When researching how educators appropriate *Twitter* and other social media platforms, teachers who use *Twitter* tended to be more eager adopters of technologies and better positioned to convey information between members of their local communities of practice and other networks of educators (Forte et al, 2012).

Teachers, generally, attribute meaning to their social media usage as a tool for communication and receiving information. Ayagodmus et al. (2022) found teachers, much like other groups, use social media for personal purposes rather than solely professional activities for reasons such as self-expression, personal enjoyment, conducting research, passing time, communication, sharing pictures and videos, shopping, playing games and making friends (Baz, 2018; Park & Kaye, 2019; Salzman, 2019; Tejedor et al., 2019). In investigating how teachers navigate the tension of consuming social media as lone individuals as well as education

professionals, teachers reported a unity in their social media identities between their two distinct worlds; that of a professional and that of a private citizen (Dunne et al., 2010, Fox & Bird, 2017; Veletsinanos, 2013).

While some educators have a level of comfort incorporating social media usage into their practice, others have reported being more reticent to do so. Shea (2016) found that pre-service teachers reported feelings of reluctance and caution in exhibiting authentic self-reflection over social media for fear that expressing doubts over their classroom abilities, particularly within the area of classroom management, could have an adverse impact on their future placement and ultimately, their careers. Teachers' social media use has its drawbacks with media coverage across the country depicting teachers using social media in unseemly ways such as inappropriate student-teacher social networking, and teachers exhibiting inappropriate and unprofessional speech (Vasek & Hendricks, 2016). Additionally, what has also been made apparent in the expanding social media landscape where individuals, including teachers, can create and share content, is that problematic behaviors that existed prior to the emergence of social media are no longer confined to a small network, but are being made visible to broader, once disconnected audiences; this includes online shaming. In the following section, I will explore shame generally, and shaming within the education context.

SHAME AND SHAMING IN THE EDUCATION CONTEXT

Shame is an affective reaction that typically follows public exposure and disapproval of some perceived shortcoming; its experience is directly about the self and a result of self-evaluation (Klass, 1990). It is an objectionable emotion often resulting from self-reflection where one deems oneself, generally, defective and objectionable. In shame, a person's sense of self shrinks and feelings of worthlessness and powerlessness emerges. "Shamed people feel exposed and desire to escape, hide - to sink into the floor" (Tangney, et al., p. 1257, 1996) as a result of an appraised failure or moral transgression (Lewis, 1992). The deficient perspective of the individual is a crucial part of shame and along with eroded self-esteem. A sense of inferiority can arise from being treated as weak and incapable, and also from being shamed or devalued. Concerns of being seen as inferior or worthless in the eyes of others, are captured by the concept of shame-proneness (Candea & Szentagotai-Tătar, 2018) and highly associated with feelings of self-consciousness, inferiority, helplessness, anger, anger at self and fear of negative evaluation (Gilbert, 1994). Further, shame may then be a strong indicator of fear of social rejection as it involves a negative evaluation of a central aspect of the self from others leaving one with feelings of deep loneliness, inferiority, and core inadequacy (Scheff, 2003).

Shame is differentiated from embarrassment as shame can be felt when one is alone where embarrassment, on the other hand, seldom exists apart from an audience (Edelmann & Hampson, 1981); though a disapproving audience, real or imagined, is a central component in leading one to form lasting negative judgements against the self (Tangeney et al., 1996; Goodman & Cook, 2019). Shame serves as a guiding force for overcoming an identity threat and usually provokes two dominant reactions: self-protection through withdrawal (Bonner et al., 2017; Greenbaum 2020) and identity repair or maintenance (Thompson & Bunderson, 2001). Where shame and guilt result from situational mishaps or infractions of social norms, both result in differing responses. While both shame and guilt are self-conscious emotions linked to a negative self-evaluation and are factors associated with depression, some studies suggest that shame, not guilt, elicits rumination, which can then lead to depression (Tangney et al., 2007;

Pulcu et al., 2013; Green et al., 2013). Guilt tends to predict more adaptive tendencies, including a desire to apologize to a victim of one's wrongdoing and potentially motivate one to make amends (Schmader & Lickel, 2006). Additionally, guilt commonly influences one to change their actions and to repair their misdeeds *through* doing. Conversely, shame elicits a feeling as if the entire self is tainted which results in a maladaptive response including withdrawal, or hiding from others in an attempt to protect from feeling further failure (Nikolic et al., 2023). Such an avoidant reaction leads those shamed less inclined to make reparation for any harm caused.

Whereas the perceived harmfulness of an event might uniquely preempt guilt, the publicity of the wrongdoing is often associated with shame as shame feels more public than does guilt, regardless of the objective publicity of the event (Tangney & Miller, 1996). Experiencing shame indicates that one's social standing may be in jeopardy because of one's socially questionable attitude or behaviors (Greenbaum et al., 2021). Flanagan writes, "For shaming to occur, people must be observed disapprovingly by others whose values they share, and they must believe that they deserve the criticism. When shaming does occur, it can be a very powerful experience, entailing a painful negative scrutiny of the self - a feeling that I am unworthy, incompetent, or bad" (Flanagan, p.1, 2017). People attempt to avoid feeling shame by obeying social norms, which also allows them to fulfill the social goal of acceptance and group membership (Keltner & Buswell, 1997). It should be noted that other research suggests that shaming can serve as a measure of behavior modification (Batcho, 2017) or behavior remediation (Bynum et al., 2021) in response to a breach of established norms and expectations.

Similar to that of any individual or group, parents are susceptible to feeling shame and humiliation. In a schooling context, shaming and humiliation can be experienced by parents despite their role as parents placing them outside of the school setting, and can emerge for varied reasons. The act of humiliating has been described as bullying behavior as it is a fundamental attack on another's identity and sense of self (Wilson, 2017). Like shame, humiliation has a devastating effect on people in that it leads to a loss of status and subsequent outcomes such as feelings of hopelessness and helplessness, anxiety, powerless rage, and possible revenge though it tends to be under-recognized, trivialized or insufficiently confronted (Torres and Bergner, 2010; Goodman & Cook, 2019). For parents, guilt and shame can be experienced relating to their child's performance in schools, but tend to be less acknowledged emotions (Simpson, 2015). Parents reported feelings of parental shame and guilt involving homework (Katz et al., 2016) despite homework being a common education practice to improve student learning and self-regulation, it can be a source of stress for many families (Agha et al., 2020; Holland et al., 2021; Pressman et al., 2015). Pertaining to homework, feelings of capacity and convenience from parents' perspectives are inversely proportional in that lower parents' sense of competence when helping their child with their homework, the more likely it will be perceived to be burdensome (DiStefano, 2020). From there, frustration emerges from the need to be seen as competent, thus stress increases around homework when they perceive a lack of individual competence and possessing insufficient skills to be supportive for their child (Katz et al., 2016).

Additionally, parents are subject to feeling shame and humiliation relating to their child's behavior in school. Parental identity threat prompts parents to consider socially-constructed ideas of proper parenting and question whether they are failing to satisfy such standards. Further, parental identity threat suggests parents fear failing in their own and society's

standard of good parenting, but also that their own shortcomings could create harm for their children (Clark & Mills, 1979; Greenbaum, 2021). Parents may experience shame in response to their child's perceived misbehavior because their own identity is likely to include their role as a parent of their child, and their child's wrongdoing can damage this identity (Aron et al, 1991). Further, parents may also feel guilt because of their child's misdeeds due to societal expectations that parents will monitor and shape their child's behavior, and that negative evaluations from others will befall them for their child's misbehaviors (Lickel et al., 2003). Though studies indicate that parents' sense of shame and guilt over their parenting is connected to their child's behavior (Scarnier et al., 2009), the internal struggle of one's perception of adequate parenting is felt inordinately by mothers. A 2017 study conducted by University of Michigan's CS Mott Children's Hospital, reported that 56% of mothers polled (n= 2001) eighteen and older, believe mothers get too much blame and not enough credit for children's behavior, with children's discipline as the most frequent topic of criticism according to 70% of respondents. Additionally, 42% of mothers polled reported that the criticism they receive made them unsure about their parenting producing feelings of being overwhelmed and maternal anxiety (Clark et al., 2017). To be sure, shame and humiliation can be projected onto parents for varied reasons, some of which was covered above, but there are instances where shaming is exhibited from classroom teachers on to students and parents due to their authority-laden position within schools and society at large.

Bullying is a long-standing negative behavior that is conducted by a group or individual and is directed against a person who is not able to defend themselves due substantive and perceived power imbalances (Gusfre et al., 2023). A topic that has seen scant attention within bullying research is bullying from teacher to student. Teacher bullying research in both elementary and secondary grades shows that teacher bullying can adversely affect a child's physical and mental health, participation in education and occupational life, as well as threaten one's sense of well being into adulthood. In the schooling context, the power bestowed upon teachers by society and their institutions *vis-a-vis* students and parents (especially those who are nonwhite, and from lower income backgrounds), is normative. Symbolic power, a concept introduced by Bourdieu (1979) accounts for the tacit, suggestive modes of cultural and social domination occurring within everyday social habits maintained over individuals that serves to confirm one's place in social hierarchies and within institutions. For implementation, symbolic power requires both an empowered individual and a hierarchical subordinate to accept their respective positions and the social norms that occur between them (Thapar-Björkert et al, 2016). Bourdieu argues that cultural roles are stronger than economic forces in determining how hierarchies are situated and reproduced in society as status and economic capital are both necessary to maintain dominance in a capitalist system (Bourdieu, 1979). Further, symbolic power is the imposition of categories of thought and perception of dominant social agents who, once they begin observing and evaluating the world, unaware of their reasoning, perceive the social order as organic and fair, thus, perpetuating a social structure favoring those with the most capital and reifying the existing social order as legitimate (Siisiainen, 2008).

Armed with the appearance of meritocratic, schools are one systemic institution (of many) in society that "seemingly objectively affirms the dominant classes' own dominant position" by "establishing a theodicy of their privilege" (Bourdieu, p. 4, 1987) which, helps to maintain a persistent power imbalance between those with agency and capital, and those without it, all while maintaining the illusion of equality and obscuring the unequal distribution of resources

and outcomes (Fine, 1992). Schools are government institutions where students (and parents) are reminded of social norms, cultural values, and popular discourses. Within the school setting, students, in addition to curricular content, also learn how society views and categorizes them; commonly influenced by their racial, ethnic, sexual, and economic identities. The constant exposure and eventual acceptance of such sorting impacts how students, especially of minority low socioeconomic backgrounds, view themselves and their potential (Horwath & Thurlow, 2004).

Seemingly innocuous status messages concerning authority are reinforced to students and parents with less social and cultural capital. With building administrators and educators positioned as representatives of government, their possession of college degrees, mastery of institutional linguistic norms, and by profession, granted authority as the individual who knows about educating children, such factors coalesce to communicate a message to parents, without similar attributes, where official power lies in their relationship. The power bestowed upon educators who, 79.3% of whom in America are overwhelmingly white and middle-class (National Center of Education Statistics, 2020; Will, 2020; Driehaus, 2022), due to their position in society compared to non-white parents with comparatively less annual income, less formal education, less command of normative speech patterns, educators' operationalizing their power imbalance constitutes institutionalized violence even as the power imbalance may seem imperceptible to parents themselves (Monzo, 2013).

The incongruity in treatment from schools to parents depending on their race and socioeconomic status is well-established in education research, still, disparities in treatment from schools to low-income parents of color exist, often with appraisals of parents' abilities to raise their school-aged children. Though wildly simplistic, white middle-class parents receive praise for their style of "authoritative parenting" as the ideal parenting style for school aged children as it instills habits of option-weighting and self-advocacy (Hayek et al., 2022; Kuppens & Ceulemans, 2018). It bears noting here, the collective understanding and social construction of "middle class" is racialized in it of itself positioning whiteness and a level of affluence as normative while masked in race neutral vocabulary (Petrella & Loggins, 2018). Conversely, black parents are criticized for "authoritarian parenting" (McMurtry, 2013) despite the possibility that it may benefit their child (Bornstein & Zlotnik, 2008). As is often the case, educators associate the behavior and academic achievement of children with their parent's ability to parent and their judgment more generally, parents of black children, parents of children with disabilities, and black parents of children with disabilities may be recipients of unwarranted judgment and discrimination from school staff (Cicciarelli, 2022). Fox and Stallworth (2005) view the discrepancy in treatment between school and parents to be one of perception in that it leads the empowered to make assumptions and discriminate against people who are members of marginalized groups. Bishop and Glynn suggest school staff's unwillingness to engage with parents of nontraditional backgrounds respectfully in honoring their full humanity, is a matter of viewing such populations through a deficit lens (2006); seeing parents of low socioeconomic status from a vantagepoint of their perceived shortcomings as opposed to their unrecognized attributes (Yosso, 2005).

With the overwhelming majority of educators being white and middle class, much of the available research attributing the prejudicial perspectives of school staff reflects the views of educators who are white and middle class (Driehaus, 2022). What we know much less about, is

the extent to which young black teachers, who are themselves positioned within America's educated middle class, hold similar views about low SES black students and parents. In the following section, I will explore the differential status black educators hold in relation to the bulk of the black students and parents within their orbit, and how their appraisals of black parents and students may not be too dissimilar to that of middle-class white teachers, which is what we see reflected in social media posts of young black educators.

PRIVILEGED YOUNG, BLACK EDUCATORS HOLD A DISTINCT STATUS FROM THE MASSES OF LOWER SES BLACK STUDENTS AND PARENTS THEY SERVE

Expansive literature explores racial and cultural disconnects between the predominant middle-class, white female educator base and the diverse K-12 student body which increasingly comprises students of color from lower SES backgrounds (Schaeffer, 2021). Misjudgements are common pertaining to a black parent's perceived willingness to assist in their child's academic success (Cooper, 2009; La Vizzo, 2016) and in providing behavioral support as broad swaths of white educators believe black parents to be ambivalent of educators' efforts to address both (Marchand et al., 2019). Sociocultural disconnects between black parents and white teachers (Brown, 2022), the national shortage of black teachers, and research indicating positive academic impacts black teachers have on black students, initiated modern urgent efforts to recruit and retain black teachers. Black students seeing educators who look like them and share a similar cultural background has been shown to improve students' academic performance as well as improve classroom behaviors (Gershenson et al., 2021).

Many black educators indicate a recognition of systemic racism in American society and the harm it presents to black children, both in and out of school, that has always made black children comparatively, more vulnerable to both physical and psychological violence (McKinney de Royston, et al., 2021). For black children, school itself can be both physically and psychologically threatening as common activities like walking (outside authorized spaces), talking (too loudly), and playing can be met with swift discipline, even force (Okonofua & Eberhardt, 2015; Greenwell, 2012; Benson, 2023). "No excuses" (Goodman & Cook, 2019) and zero tolerance disciplinary policies are school-based iterations of "broken windows" policing implemented primarily within urban public schools and mission-oriented corporate charter schools that serve near exclusively low-income students of color (Teske, 2011). Intended to improve student both behavior and academic outcomes, "no excuses" disciplinary approaches penalize even minor behavioral infractions including unauthorized cell phone usage, insubordination, truancy and lateness, and being out of uniform (Golann & Jones, 2021). Predictably, students of color from low-income backgrounds, students with behavioral disabilities, and students who are underperforming academically are the most common targets of such disciplinary models and punitive action (Heitzeg, 2009). Though black students make up 15% of students nationwide (NCES, 2022), in 2018 (the year with the latest data available) black students comprised 30% of suspensions and 36% of expulsions meted out America's public schools despite such exclusionary practices having far-reaching (National Center for Education Statistics, 2022), detrimental consequences including declining academic performance, dropping out, and greater exposure to the criminal justice system (Witt, 2007). Unlike their white counterparts, black educators are more likely to recognize how ecological factors impact perceived racial disparities and experiences between black and white students in school, as well as understand commonly interpreted deficiencies have less to do with an actual inability or disinterest of individual black children or families, but instead are byproducts

of systemic racism and non-school based factors such as intergenerational poverty, exposure to violence, stress, and the lack of access to health care. As such, many black educators acknowledge the vulnerability of black children in schools and find ways to protect black children from racialized harm in schools (Dixon, 2003, Walker, 2000). Milner suggests some black educators intentionally enact protective stances towards Black students, to not only care for, but to protect their well-being (Milner, 2006).

By no means, however, are the aforementioned perceptual predispositions of ecological awareness or cultural protection universal among black educators. Some black educators, conversely, uphold the educational values of the “status quo which centers whiteness and its associated behavioral norms; place a primacy of respectability over the dignity of black children, as well as hold views that are rooted in perceptions of cultural deficit” (McKinney de Royston et al., p. 70, 2021) - similar to the fashion in which white teachers engage with lower income black students and black parents. Exactly 50% of black households, domiciles with at least two residents, earn up to \$49,999 or less per year and 27% earning less than \$25,000; and only 26% of Black adults have a college degree or an advanced degree (Lopez & Moslimani, 2024). The requirements of being an educator, a college degree and in some states a master’s degree, along with the financial reward of a middle-class income coupled with health benefits, positions black educators as distinct from the majority of black Americans who are working class and non-degreed. Black teachers who, by majority, work in lower income urban school districts attended by black children with black parents (National Center for Education Statistics, 2022), do share cultural and racial similarities with those communities, but also have divergent educational and economic realities from the bulk of the students they teach, and parents with whom they are acquainted (National Center for Education Statistics, 2022). Though young middle class blacks are most in danger of downward mobility due to relatively new access to the middle class, have less connection to financially stable networks, and a higher likelihood of having relatives needing financial support (Jarosz et al., 2020; Page & Soriano, 2018), they still share greater commonality, experientially, with middle class whites than black people of lower economic strata (Lareau, 2000) - the very kind of student middle-class black teachers are most likely to encounter in their classrooms. The accumulation of black teachers’ education credentials and professional salaries comes with increased economic and societal benefits including more frequent opportunities to assimilate and acculturate within white middle-class life. Middle class blacks’ connection to whiteness and middle-class norms is directly proportional with their income yielding what Claytor calls, *black privilege* (Massey & Fischer, 2000; Claytor, 2020); possessing a dual sense of cultural pride and awareness while possessing the ability to maneuver easily within white spaces and adapting to white norms. The prolonged exposure to middle-class expectations, and adaptation to white norms, however, may influence the way some young black teachers interpret and respond to lower SES black students and parents.

Where a growing body of research highlights the benefits black teachers serve all students (Motamedi & Stevens, 2018), specifically black students in terms of college readiness, college acceptance (Papageorge et al., 2018), cultural awareness (Williams, 2018), delivery of pedagogy (Irvine, 2009), mathematics (Frank et al., 2018), science curriculum (Smith-Mutgei, 2023), and behavior modification (Linday & Hart, 2017); and black parents pertaining to black teacher’s cultural competency (McAllister & Irvine, 2000), community awareness (Milner & Howard, 2004), it would be incomplete to assume the lifestyles and perspectives of black

teachers and lower-income black students and parents cleanly align. As research indicates, educators like the rest of society are not immune from racial and class-based bias. Additionally, the divergent lives of the black middle class and the black working class or poor, has been the subject of sociological research since the early 1900s (DuBois, 1903), 1930s (Frazier, 1932), and more visibly since Wilson's *Declining Significance of Race* (1980). A black teacher's mere presence in the classroom, as a professional and institutional authority, may tacitly reinforce the values of meritocracy demonstrating to lower income black students and parents, that if one simply continues their education through college, is willing to fulfill the requisite requirements, and can effectively navigate white norms, they too can become part of the educated and the comparatively comfortable black middle class as they are. To be sure, more research on both points warrants greater in-depth discussion and reflection.

CONCLUSION

Prior to social media, teachers who harbored frustration, disappointment and even bias against their students limited the exposure of emotions by expressing them within a closed set of individuals. Teachers' appraisals of students' academic or behavioral shortcomings, traditionally, yielded a range of responses from student detention, requests for parent-teacher conferences, suspension, a poor grade and in some cases, retention. It was not uncommon however, for educators to resort to shaming tactics by employing the disdainful judgment of others to indicate broad disapproval of the intended target by estranging them from the comfortable space as part of the group that abides by established norms. As shaming has commonly been part of the schooling process, like society more broadly, as a mechanism to achieve behavioral modification on the part of the student, the educator directing the shame at the student takes on the authoritative role in determining who should be shamed and what offense warrants the shaming. Prior to social media, shaming too, was an affair that was contained within a relatively closed circle, comparatively.

With the boom of social media and billions of social media consumers across various platforms, it follows that increasingly teachers will be availing themselves to social media for similar reasons as the rest of the public: to learn about other's experiences, build and join a social network along similar interests, and to share their experiences. With young black Americans consuming social media more than any other demographic, correspondingly, young black teachers are consuming and posting to social media much about their experiences as being both young black Americans, as well as young black teachers. And while material shared by young black teachers on social media is intended to establish and join network of other young black educators, a profession in dire need of black representation as America's classrooms increasingly diversify, some postings within the genre of young black teachers serve to shame and pathologize black students and parents - those who are most marginalized in our society. Here, I considered the privileged position of young black educators who are more formally educated and more affluent than the masses of black students they serve, yet some have adopted a similar deficit perspective of their students and parents as that of the traditional middle-class white educators.

Where, then, do we situate the unique space young black educators occupy? Black teachers do belong to a historically oppressed racial minority group, yet have historically approached their educator role with the dual responsibility to educate and protect black children from harm, as well as be an ally for black parents in the raising of their children even while themselves being,

educationally and economically, outsiders from the socioeconomic contexts of majority of those black parents and children they serve. *Just how divergent are the more formally educated and economically stable young black teachers' expectations of black parents and students from that of the traditional teacher who is a white and middle-class? Are young black teachers that different in their treatment and respect for lower-income black students and parents, than their white counterparts?* While this article did not touch on these questions explicitly, in order to fully appreciate the value of black educators entering the profession where they will likely serve students of color from lower-income populations, we need to develop a framework that not only expresses the urgent need for, and benefit of, black educators for all students - especially black students, we also must be open to researching potential problem areas as well; that young black educators who develop the similar deficit framing of black students and parents due to their own privileged economic and educational status, can possibly be as harmful to those in their charge as traditional white teachers who do the same.

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