Black and non-Black Library Workers' Perceptions of Hiring, Retention, and

Promotion Racial Equity Practices

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Abstract: Using data collected through an online survey, this study examined employees' perceptions of their library's racial equity efforts and workplace experiences with racial equity and racism. Black and non-Black participants' perceptions are analyzed on hiring, retention, and promotion of Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) employees. Our quantitative data reveals Black participants are more decisive about their experiences or perceptions than non-Black participants. Our qualitative data also reveals that libraries with no or few BIPOC employees, or organizational issues, or hostile work environments lead to a variety of negative experiences for BIPOC employees.

Introduction

Despite an ongoing focus within the library profession to diversify the library employee workforce (Winston and Li, 2003; Neely and Peterson, 2007; Dewey and Kealley, 2008; Davis-Kendrick, 2009; Galvan, 2015; Davis Kendrick and Damasco, 2019), racial parity remains a historical and persistent issue regarding the hiring, retention, and promotion of Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) library employees (Library Professionals: Facts and Figures, 2021). Yet, no known survey to date has examined library employees' knowledge and attitudes about racial equity issues at their libraries. To address these issues, a survey was developed and distributed to the library and information science (LIS) community.

Although participants were not asked about anti-Blackness specifically, to highlight how anti-Blackness manifests in libraries, this article focuses on the survey responses of Black library employees' perceptions of their library's efforts to hire, retain, and promote BIPOC library employees, with attention to differences between Black and non-Black participants. Anti-Blackness is described "as being a two-part formation that both voids Blackness of value, while systematically marginalizing Black people and their issues" (Racial Equity Tools Glossary, under Anti-Black, as cited from Ossom-Williams et al., 2020). Ossom-Williams et al. (2020) demonstrates the connection between the history of anti-Black

racism in libraries (slavery and segregated libraries) to a hostile environment for Black patrons and library employees today (4-5). A hostile working environment for Black library employees contributes to a lack of representation, and systematic racism reinforces a lack of representation (Ossom et al., p.4-p.5).

Understanding how Black library employees view their library's efforts to hire, retain, and promote BIPOC employees as well as the ways in which Black library employees experience racism is important when considering how to address the lack of racial parity within the field and within the libraries we work. For this paper we aim to answer a series of research questions about racial equity as process and outcome, including:

(1) What are Black participants' perceptions of their library's efforts to hire, retain, and promote Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) employees?

(2) What are non-Black participants' perceptions of their library's efforts to hire, retain, and promote BIPOC employees?

(3) Why is hiring, retention, and promotion of BIPOC employees in academic and public libraries unsuccessful?

Literature Review

Library and information science (LIS) peer-reviewed literature specifically employing the term "racial equity" is scant. A recent case study discussed the University Library at the University of North Carolina Chapel-Hill's anti-racism efforts and specifically discusses the results of those efforts when organizing a 21-day racial equity challenge (Figueroa & Shawgo, 2022). More commonly, racial equity comes up in reports and case studies (Sonnie, 2018), trainings, and organizational initiatives, but has not been rigorously studied in LIS literature. Though not interchangeable with the term *racial equity*, which seeks to get to the root causes of disparate life outcomes based on race (Racial Equity Tools Glossary, under racial equity), equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) are much more common terms in LIS

literature. Below, we pull from EDI LIS literature as well as sociology literature that discusses the ways in which organizations are racialized to situate our study within the broader LIS and organizational contexts.

While affirmative action laws (CM-607 Affirmative Action, 1981) were passed as a direct response to the civil rights movement and meant to redress historical wrongs to Black people who experienced discrimination, with the passage of the Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) (U.S Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, n.d.) and the expansion of protected classes to include women, veterans, people over the age of 40, and disabled people, there was more focus on recognizing difference than on addressing oppression (Peterson, 1999). As DeEtta Jones notes, "Affirmative action aggressively includes individuals from protected groups as candidates in search processes, whereas equal employment opportunity, in a more passive fashion, addresses the avoidance of discrimination based upon protected group membership" (1999, p. 12). While affirmative action mandates can be imposed by the court, mandated by executive order, or voluntarily followed by the institution, it is not required by law whereas equal employment opportunity is required by law (Jones, 1999).

Furthermore, Lorna Peterson traces the origin of diversity discourse back to affirmative action and specifically to Justice Lewis Powell's opinion in *Regents of University of California v. Bakke, 1978*, which resulted in a backlash against Affirmative Action (1999). Diversity as a goal evolved out of affirmative action and EEO and became a prevalent topic of discussion within the field of librarianship, but by losing sight of redress for past discrimination against Black people and instead focusing on difference, which emerged with the expansion of protected classes, the emphasis on diversity did not result in a more racially diverse profession (Office for Research and Statistics, 1998; Rosa & Henke, 2017). Several scholars, including Peterson (1996), pointed to the profession's reluctance to center race in

discussions on diversifying the profession or reckoning with the profession's past, which

included segregated libraries (Honma, 2005; Hall, 2012).

Since the 1980s and 1990s, attempts to racially diversify the library profession have

been extensive. They have included diversity initiatives, committees, trainings, residencies

for librarians from underrepresented groups (Rutledge et al., 2019), scholarships for future

BIPOC librarians (Spectrum Scholarship Program, n.d.; Kaleidoscope Program, n.d.),

improving recruitment and hiring processes (Recruiting for Diversity, n.d.) as well as

including equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) in strategic planning, mission statements, and

job advertisements (Anaya & Maxey-Harris, 2017). While equity audits, also known as

diversity audits, have increased in popularity, they have often focused on collections rather

than improving hiring, retention, and promotion processes for BIPOC. In the frequently cited

and debated article, "White Librarianship in Blackface: Diversity Initiatives in LIS,"

Hathcock writes, "Our diversity programs do not work because they are themselves coded to

promote whiteness as the norm in the profession and unduly burden those individuals they

are most intended to help (2016, para 2)." Diversity residencies, which are spearheaded by

individual academic libraries and fall under the umbrella of a diversity initiative, have also

been critiqued for their reliance on short-term contracts with no long-term job security and

their ineffectiveness of increasing racial diversity in libraries (McElroy & Diaz, 2015).

Additionally, positions that were created to focus specifically on minoritized collections or

are EDI specific roles, such as EDI librarian, are typically tasked with changing the

workplace culture, a task no one person can take on, and are often filled by BIPOC (Harvey

& Worthington, 2014; Clarke & Lawson, 2021).

In tandem with the legal reforms and the emphasis on diversity, corporate diversity

trainings emerged out of the civil rights movement with the intention of creating work

environments that were inclusive to women and BIPOC employees (Dobbin & Kalev, 2018).

While libraries have embraced diversity trainings to improve attrition of BIPOC employees by creating a more inclusive environment, thirty years of research has shown diversity trainings do not actually reduce bias in the workplace (Dobbin & Kalev, 2018).

Although libraries may be intentional about including their commitment to hire diverse candidates in job advertisements, bureaucratic processes, such as degree requirements, can make it so the library can skirt around hiring diverse candidates while still complying with federal law and institution-specific policies (Nataraj et al, 2020). A deep discussion of whether eliminating the masters of library and information science (MLIS) degree from the requirements for professional positions in order to make the profession more equitable and racially diverse is outside the scope of this article. However, David Hudson et al. have pointed to the ways in which removing the degree requirement could lead to the loss of positions, autonomy, and overall lowering of wages and benefits within the LIS field (Hudson et al., 2021).

What we do know, however, is that lower-paid positions that do not require the MLIS have more BIPOC employees than positions that require the MLIS. For example, Keith Curry Lance demonstrates that the demographics of library assistants is closer to being in proportion with the U.S. population than those with graduate degrees, including librarians, who are majority white (2005). Citing Curry Lance and ALA's Diversity Counts Report (Davis & Hall, 2007), Jennifer Vinopal highlights the fact that the disparity in racial representation between librarians and library assistants is starker in academic libraries than in public libraries and connects this to the ways in which the socio-economic status of a family impacts an individuals' trajectory and educational attainment (2016).

Research has shown that in the United States, the average white family has eight times the wealth of the average Black family (Neil et al., 2019), and according to de Brey et al., "The percentage of adults aged 25 and older who had earned a bachelor's or higher

degree in 2016 was highest for Asian adults (54 percent). Among the other racial/ethnic groups, 35 percent of White adults, 34 percent of adults of two or more races, 21 percent of Black adults, 18 percent of Pacific Islander adults, and 15 percent each of American Indian/Alaska Native and Hispanic adults had earned a bachelor's or higher degree" (2019, p. 7). Therefore, the wealth disparities and educational attainment between BIPOC and white people impacts who can attain the MLIS requirement to become a librarian, which are positions that typically have higher pay, better benefits, and come with greater job stability than library assistant positions. Rather than suggest the elimination of the MLIS degree from professional job requirements, Isabel Espinal et al. propose "redirecting library budgets toward the recruitment and training of librarians of color" and "consists of the creation of postbaccalaureate library positions that include full funding for MLIS degrees targeted toward People of Color" (2021, p. 224). They highlight the fact that student loan debt is higher for students of color, which in turn effects their net wealth.

When we examine the ways in which BIPOC make up a larger portion of library assistant positions, which are also lower paying (Library Salaries Information, n.d.) and with fewer decision-making responsibilities, we see how structural racism creates a librarian and library assistant divide. Ann Glusker et al. highlight major themes affecting library staff morale from their qualitative study. One such theme "relationship with colleagues," demonstrates the ways in which librarians treating library staff as "less than" negatively affects library assistants' morale in the workplace, even those who reported their morale was high (2022, p. 13). Even interviewees whose morale was high reported experiences of being treated as 'less than,' as 'being at the kids' table,' as being consistently disrespected through microaggressions aimed at them by librarians, whether intentionally or not (2022, p. 13). The librarian and library assistant divide, particularly when the library assistant employee is BIPOC, sets a fertile ground for a hostile working environment. BIPOC library employees

must be represented in positions requiring the MLIS, in managerial and administrative positions, and with decision making authority that can shape the hiring, retention, and promotion practices of the library and ultimately influence the organizational culture of the library.

To that end, sociologists have written about the ways in which organizations themselves are racialized. Victor Ray discusses how scholars of organizations begin with the assumption that organizations are race neutral while scholars who study ethnicity and race neglect to discuss the ways in which race is shaped by organizations themselves (2019). He argues that organizations are racial structures built on default assumptions linking to organizational rules, which impact the social and material resources of employees. He unpacks four tenets: 1) racialized organizations enhance or diminish the agency of racial groups 2) racialized organizations legitimate the unequal distribution of resources 3) Whiteness is a credential 4) the decoupling of formal rules from organizational practice (2019, p. 27). Wooten and Couloute argue organizations, and not just individuals, produce and experience racial inequality (2017), which ties into Ray's theory of racialized organizations. Finally, King et al. examine how anti-Blackness manifests specifically within the context of organizations (2022).

While the field of librarianship has contended with the reasons why libraries lack racial diversity, we have yet to discuss it explicitly from the perspective that libraries as organizations are racialized, which impacts hiring, retention, and promotion of BIPOC employees.

As a response to the overwhelming whiteness of the field (Espinal, 2001; Jackson et al, 2012; Brook et al., 2015; Schlesselman-Tarango, 2016; Leung & López-McKnight, 2021; Burns et al., 2022), the impact of both individual and institutional racism experienced by BIPOC library employees has been more thoroughly identified and critiqued. Kaetrena Davis

Kendrick and Ione Damasco (2019) elucidate the ways in which racism within libraries from leadership and colleagues leads to low morale amongst BIPOC library professionals and impacts whether they stay at a particular institution or in the profession. Other studies have identified the prevalence of racial microaggressions in academic libraries (Alabi, 2015) and the added burdens placed on BIPOC library staff due to their race and their experiences being marginalized within the field (Van Scoy & Bright, 2019).

Solutions for creating a racially inclusive work culture (Alabai, 2018; Espinal et al., 2018) have been put forth as well as how to incorporate social justice into the academic library (Morales et al., 2014), but none have explicitly focused on racial equity efforts in academic and public libraries. The purpose of this article is to explore the attitudes and knowledge of library employees regarding racial equity concerns in their libraries by centering responses from Black participants.

Data and Methods

Background

In 2019, the Building Cultural Proficiencies for Racial Equity Framework Task Force was formed as a joint effort of Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL), Association of Research Libraries (ARL), the American Library Association's (ALA) Office for Diversity, Literacy and Outreach Services (ODLOS) and the Public Library Association (PLA). The Task Force was charged to create a framework for cultural proficiencies in racial equity that can be used in public and academic libraries through: scanning the environment, including review of relevant documents, to identify literature and similar statements and frameworks related to racial equity; a cross sector survey, drafting the framework; and seeking comment from stakeholders and the library community on the draft, and revising as needed. The resulting framework would be applicable to both public and academic libraries.

The Task Force consisted originally of twelve members charged with information gathering. The authors took on principal investigator roles and along with a small team of Task Force members (see Acknowledgements) developed the Racial Equity in Libraries survey as a part of the Task Force Survey Working Group.

Survey Development

The Task Force Survey Working Group evaluated multiple pre-existing DEI-centered surveys covering similar areas to find where the gaps were, including the "Assessing Our Staff's Racial Equity & Inclusion Competency" survey by Living Cities and the "Tool for Organizational Self-Assessment Related to Racial Equity" by the National Healthcare for the Homeless Council, as well as library-centered surveys like the 2019 Denver Public Library survey. While most questions were closed-ended, open-ended questions were included to give participants the opportunity to provide answers the authors may not have anticipated and to give them unrestricted space to share their perspective and experience. Besides collaboratively creating the survey instrument and seeking feedback from the larger Task Force, the authors had it reviewed by LIS professionals from a variety of backgrounds via the ALA Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Assembly group. We received and integrated feedback on the questions from the above-mentioned LIS expert groups to improve the survey instrument. The survey was tested by a senior colleague prior to the call for participation and feedback was incorporated before being released to ensure ease of use for participants.

The survey contained thirty open- and closed-ended questions assessing public and academic libraries' racial equity efforts, employees' perception of those efforts, as well as their experiences with racial equity and inequity within their library.

The survey is divided into three parts: Demographics, Personal Thoughts and Experiences with Racial Equity in the Workplace, and Workplace Experiences with Racial Equity. The complete survey instrument is provided in Appendix A.

The Demographics portion of the survey consists of 8 close-ended questions that help to identify who the participant is by asking questions about their identity. The questions include asking participants about their race, gender, and whether they identify as transgender. In addition to selecting one of the provided responses for racial identity and gender identity, participants had the chance to self-identify their race and gender since we provided a "prefer to self-describe" option. The purpose of these questions is to help us better understand the participants' positionality as it impacts their experience and understanding of racism and racial equity in their workplace and therefore, the way they interpret and answer the survey questions. We also ask questions regarding their professional life, including the type of library they work in, their role, and the length of time they have worked in an academic or public library to understand their workplace position and how it might impact their perception of racism and racial equity in their workplace.

The Personal Thoughts and Experiences with Racial Equity portion, which consists of a set of 9 close-ended questions focused on the individual's comfort with discussing race in the workplace as well as their understanding of institutional versus individual racism. To ensure participants were clear on the difference between institutional and individual racism, we integrated the definition of each term "institutional racism" (question 11) and "individual racism" (question 12) into the survey questions.

Differentiating between individual and institutional racism within the survey was necessary to ensure there were shared definitions to help participants accurately answer the questions. Personal Thoughts and Experiences with Racial Equity ends with a set of questions that helps us to better understand participants' perception of how their race

influences their ability to speak up about the racism they may experience or witness in the workplace.

The final set of questions, Workplace Experiences with Racial Equity consists of 13 closed and open-ended questions. These questions identify the formalized racial equity efforts happening at the participant's library as well as how racism is dealt with in their workplace, particularly with administration and formal accountability processes.

The survey received IRB approval from the University of Illinois Chicago. Participant demographics were collected to better ascertain representativeness and variance across responses, but no personally identifying information, such as their name or library, was collected. The survey was developed using the online survey software, Qualtrics (Survey Software: The Best Tool and Platform, n.d.).

Survey Distribution

The survey was released in November 2020 for a six-week period. The survey invitation was posted on multiple professional LIS listservs and public LIS forums as well as the American Library Association (ALA) website. The institutional support of ALA, ACRL, PLA, and ARL allowed us to reach a larger audience.

Non-probability (Vehovar et al., 2016) convenience sampling was utilized since participants self-selected to participate in the online survey (Waterfield, 2018). The non-random, self-selected survey is a widespread and appropriate method to explore the complexity of attitudes, rather than to make inferences about the whole population (generalizability). It is not possible to calculate a response rate, because the total number of people who saw the survey invitation on library-related listservs is not known, nor is it known what percentage of library employees belong to one of these listservs. Library employees who opted to participate may differ from those who did not. For example,

respondents may be more interested in or committed to racial equity, or more antagonistic to it, than those who declined to respond. If that is the case, results may overrepresent the level of understanding of EDI issues among library employees overall. Additionally, since ALA was instrumental in pushing out the survey, participants may also skew towards those who are ALA members. Benefits of the web-based survey include reaching a large number of participants rapidly, at low cost, and to assure anonymity for a sensitive topic. As a result, the data (n=717) contribute the largest investigation to date of U.S. and Canadian library employee perspectives on EDI initiatives in libraries.

Participant inclusion criteria was:

•Library employees who currently work in a public or academic library

•Retired library employees who worked in a public or academic library

•Unemployed library employees whose previous position was in a public or academic library

•Subjects must work in the United States or Canada

There was no incentive for participating in the research study, and participants were allowed to withdraw at any point, unless they completed the survey. Therefore, only submitted surveys were analyzed. Since it was anonymous, there was no way for us to retract an already submitted survey. After limiting respondents to those who met the inclusion criteria and consented to participate, there were a total of 717 respondents.

Data Preparation

During ACRL 2021, Mona Chalabi, the closing keynote speaker, and data journalist, spoke about having humility about the imprecision of categorization when visualizing racial demographic data since most quantitative research requires participants to select only one race and/or ethnicity option provided (Carlton, 2021). To that end, crafting a racial identity question that represented the multitude of racial identities was the most discussed by the Task

Force Survey Working Group precisely because categorization is imprecise. While we provided seven racial identities participants could select (please see Appendix A for the full survey instrument and racial identity question), we ultimately decided to provide participants the chance to fill-in their racial and/or ethnic identity. For other demographic questions including gender identity and [job] role, participants also had the option to write free text rather than select a single pre-defined answer.

Fifty participants wrote in their racial identity. A "two or more races" category emerged made up of participants who wrote multi-ethnic or multiracial as well as participants who elected to share in more detail their multiple racial backgrounds. Although combining participants into a "two or more races" category erases the specifics of their racial background (because most of the participants in the two or more races category did not elect to share specific racial identity information) we decided to leave in them in the more generic category to protect their identity (Liebler & Halpern-Manners, 2008). Since our study is focusing on disaggregating groups into Black and non-Black participants, four participants who self-described their racial identity and included Black in their response were moved to the Black participant group.

Eleven participants elected to fill in their answer but did not provide their racial identity. These participants were left in the self-describe category. The remaining participants were recoded into the existing racial identity categories from free-text responses.

Data Analysis

While we recognize that non-Black POC and white participants do not have the same experience, in order to focus on the experiences of Black participants, the responses from all non-Black participants were merged.

To analyze the aggregate quantitative data, we used simple descriptive statistics provided through Qualtrics' analysis tool. We then ran crosstabs using Statistical Package for

the Social Sciences (SPSS Stastics Overview, n.d.). Crosstabs allows for the relationship between variables to be quantitatively analyzed (Grotenhuis and Matthijsen, 2016) and facilitates disaggregating data by race/ethnicity to uncover where inequities may exist (McNair, Bensimon, & Malcolm-Piqueux, 2020) to avoid making potential inequities invisible.

Qualitative Theme Development

Research team members worked collaboratively to develop themes and -extract quotations from the participants that best reflected the themes. There was an average of 370 responses per open-ended question. The most prevalent themes serve as the organizational structure for this article.

Themes were subjectively generated from this exploratory data set. Specifically, participants who said no or unsure in response to one of the three questions "My library addresses racial inequities by" hiring, retaining, or promoting BIPOC employees were asked "If no or unsure, please explain" as a follow up question. The subjectively interpreted themes came from the authors' perspectives as a white, cis woman, first generation college student and scholar and a Black, cis woman, first generation college student and scholar.

To subjectively generate the themes, thematic development was an iterative process between the researchers. After independently coding the first fifty answers, the researchers met and discussed the codes and came to intercoder agreement (Popping, 2015). We worked through preconceptions when developing the codebook to make sure the codes had utility and were descriptive. After developing the codebook, we reviewed the first fifty responses and then collaboratively coded the remaining answers for each of the three open-ended questions referenced above. Intercoder agreement was utilized in a limited fashion to ensure the authors were on the same page regarding theme development but was not used to rate responses or derive statistics about how closely our impressions matched. Like the quantitative data,

qualitative responses were disaggregated into Black (n=68) and non-Black participants (n=648) and then further analyzed by hiring, retention, and promotion.

Results

The results are organized into sections on hiring, retention, and promotion. Under each section on hiring, retention, and promotion, there are subsections on quantitative results. More nuanced explanations are provided in the qualitative results, which are further divided into Black and non-Black participants' responses.

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of Participants

Characteristic	n	Percentage of Total Responses
Racial Identity		
American Indian, Alaska Native, Indigenous, or Native	8	1.1%
Asian	42	5.9%
Black or African American	68	9.5%
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	0	0.0%
White	500	69.8%
Hispanic or Latinx	57	8.0%
Western Asian or North African	7	1.0%
Two or more races	23	3.2%
Prefer to self-describe:	11	1.5%
Gender		
Man	93	13.0%
Woman	595	83.2%
Non-Binary	25	3.5%
Prefer to self-describe:	2	0.3%

Table 1 shows the demographic characteristics of participants (n=717), however participants were not required to answer every question. The largest participant group was white participants, 500, at 69.8%, followed by Black participants, 68, at 9.5%, Hispanic or Latinx participants, 57, at 8%, Asian participants, 42, at 5.7%, Two or more races, 23, at 3.2%, Prefer to self-describe, 11, at 1.5%, American Indian, Alaska Native, Indigenous, or Native, 8, at 1.1% and finally Western Asian or North African, 7, at 1%. There were no Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander participants.

While the percentage of BIPOC who participated in the survey is small in comparison to the number of white people who participated, the percentages are in line with ALA's 2017 Demographics Study (2017), which points to the underrepresentation of racialized groups in the field of librarianship. Additionally, compared to the U.S. Census demographic reporting from 2016-2020, white participants are overrepresented (59.3% population compared to 69.8%) whereas Black participants (13.6% population compared to 9.5%) and Hispanic or Latinx participants (18.9% population compared to 8%) are underrepresented (QuickFacts United States, n.d.) Asian participants (6.1% population compared to 5.7%) and American Indian, Alaska Native, Indigenous, and Native participants (1.3% population compared to 1.1%) were slightly underrepresented while Two or more race participants (2.9% population compared to 3.2%) were slightly overrepresented (QuickFacts United States, n.d.).

Out of all the participants who identify as men, women, or non-binary, only 1% identify as transgender. We were unable to find library specific data on gender that included statistics on the number of transgender library employees working in libraries.

Table 2. Occupational Characteristics of Participants

Characteristic	n	Percentage of Total Responses
Current Institution Type		
Public library	343	47.8%
Public university or college library	265	37.0%
Private university or college library	76	10.6%
Community college or equivalent	33	4.6%
Number of Years Worked in a Library		
Less than a year	12	1.7%
1-4 years	113	15.8%
5-9 years	157	21.9%
10-19 years	231	32.2%
20 or more years	204	28.5%
Role		
Library staff	159	22.2%
Librarian	371	51.7%
Administrator	126	17.6%
Faculty	32	4.5%
Library and Information Science (LIS) Student	7	1.0%
Mid-level supervisor/Middle management	21	2.9%
Please specify:	1	0.1%

Created with Datawrapper

Forty-eight percent of participants work in public libraries and 51% work in some type of academic library with most of the respondents working in academic libraries coming from a public university or college library. The occupational characteristics skew towards those who are mid or late career; 60% of participants have worked in libraries ten years or longer. Fifty-six percent of participants said they have supervisory responsibilities. From those who self-reported their role, a mid-level supervisor/middle management category emerged.

Qualitative Theme Analysis Results

We looked at the number of times certain concepts and examples were mentioned, grouped them under subthemes and then grouped subthemes into themes. After analyzing all the participants' responses, four central themes emerged from the qualitative data:

- **Unsuccessful hiring searches** of BIPOC library employees

- **Acknowledgment** that hiring, retention, and promotion of BIPOC employees is an ongoing issue within their library and/or library system

- Libraries, departments, or library systems that have **no BIPOC employees** or only one BIPOC employee

- **Organizational** issues that impact the hiring, retention, and promotion of BIPOC employees

- **Hostile work environment** for BIPOC employees

Table 3 provides the definition of themes and subthemes with examples from participants.

Table 3. Qualitative Themes

Themes	Subthemes
Unsuccessful hiring: unsuccessful searches that were deliberate in hiring diverse candidates, or where there were no diverse applicants, or where no BIPOC employees were hired. Example: "We are specifically prohibited from using race as a criteria for hiring someone. However, we are allowed to use "poor fit" to *not* hire someone. It seems like poor fit often applies to BIPOC or other marginalized groups."	No diverse candidates: When no diverse candidates applied for the position. Covert racism: Racism that is subtle and not so publicly obvious. Can include, for example, references to intentionally diverse searches that fail to hire BIPOC candidates.
Acknowledgement: Participant acknowledges racial equity is an issue and may mention outcomes, if any, that can be formal or ad hoc, regarding improving the hiring, retention, and promotion processes for BIPOC employees, or when a participant specifically mentioned that	Lip Service: When the library purports to believe in EDI work, but their words do not match up with their actions.

processes have been revised to be more intentionally equitable. Example: There have been ad hoc (not systematic or formal) mechanisms implemented to achieve retention of BIPOC staff, but success has been limited.	
No BIPOC Employees: None or few BIPOC employees Example: "We are a very white staff, though also a very white community."	Supervisory: When leadership is all white Geography: When a participant refers to the racial demographic makeup of their community as a reason why there are none or few BIPOC employees Demographics: When the participant refers to the racial demographic makeup of employees as a reason why there are no or few BIPOC employees All white: When a participant refers to the racial demographic makeup of employees as all white. Majority White: When a participant refers to racial demographic makeup of employees as majority white.
Hostile work environment: bullying, targeting, hypervisibility, punishing BIPOC employees from advancing due to racism in the workplace, including firing them. Example: "When we do hire them (rarely) we shoot down their ideas for improvements until they get frustrated and move on."	Ostrich: Head in the sand regarding hostile work conditions for BIPOC employees Glass escalator: Decoupling of formal rules for white employees; BIPOC employees excluded from mentorship and leadership grooming. Targeted: When participants state that BIPOC are targeted and when BIPOC employees state they are targeted. Turnover (high): High turnover of BIPOC employees Denied promotion: When a participant perceives they, or a BIPOC employee, were

	unfairly denied a promotion or an opportunity for a promotion.
Organizational: no promotion structure, no pathway for promotion, seniority, hiring freeze, budget cuts, and policies that impact BIPOC from being hired, retained, or promoted. Example: "Hiring practices are not enough. POC are underrepresented within units, often 1 or 2 max within a unit. And upper administration is all white with little idea of how to extend racial equity in meaningful ways." "We do not have a promotion structure and a staff of 3."	Hiring freeze: When the library is in a hiring freeze and is not hiring Budget cuts: When the budget of the library is being cut and there are no open positions No pathway: When there is no pathway to promotion within the library Too small: When the library is too small and there are no open positions Lib staff: refers to when library staff are racially diverse but professional staff is not Low turnover: When there is low employee turnover Precarious positions: temporary or on a contractual basis Flat: a flat hierarchical structure

Results

The results will report findings from the quantitative data followed by the qualitative data to provide more insight into the findings.

Hiring

Participants' perceptions of their library's hiring practices suggest their libraries are hiring BIPOC employees since 48.5% of participants selected "yes" to the question "My library addresses racial inequities by hiring BIPOC employees" whereas 25.5% of participants said "no" and 26% said unsure (with a total of 715 participants electing to answer the question). Furthermore, because the survey includes credentialed library employees (who hold a MSLIS or equivalent), as well as library employees who do not have a MLIS, we do not know whether participants are referring to credentialed or non-BIPOC library employees when answering survey questions regarding their library's hiring practices.

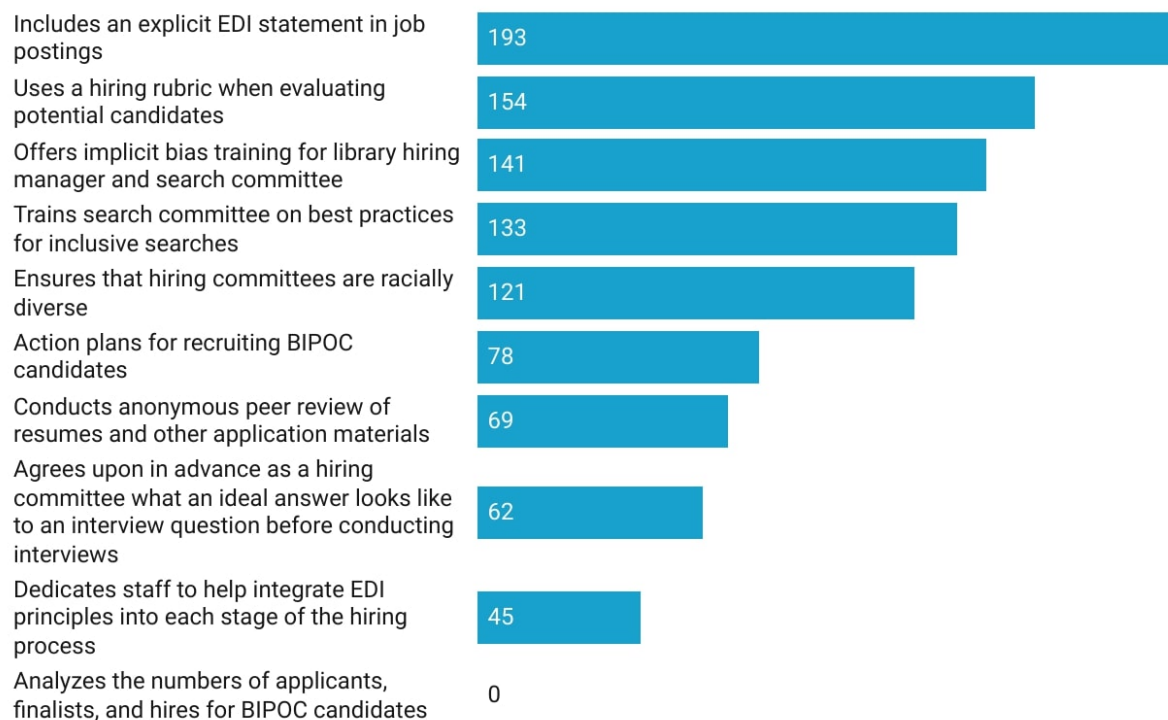Figure 1. My library addresses racial inequities by hiring BIPOC employees (*n*=715)

Percentage of Black and Non-Black participants yes, no, or unsure answers

	Yes	No	Unsure
Black	54.4%	29.4%	16.2%
Non-Black	48.0%	25.1%	26.9%

When we disaggregated the results into Black participants and non-Black participants, as shown in figure 1, Black participants were more likely to indicate that their library was addressing racial inequity by hiring BIPOC employees: 54.4% compared to 48% of non-Black participants said "yes", 25.1% said "no" and 26.9% said unsure.

Figure 2. Mechanisms used to make hiring practices more equitable at participants' libraries (*n*=322)

Number of counts for each option from participants who said yes to the question: My library addresses racial inequities by hiring BIPOC employees?

Includes an explicit EDI statement in job postings	193
Uses a hiring rubric when evaluating potential candidates	154
Offers implicit bias training for library hiring manager and search committee	141
Trains search committee on best practices for inclusive searches	133
Ensures that hiring committees are racially diverse	121
Action plans for recruiting BIPOC candidates	78
Conducts anonymous peer review of resumes and other application materials	69
Agrees upon in advance as a hiring committee what an ideal answer looks like to an interview question before conducting interviews	62
Dedicates staff to help integrate EDI principles into each stage of the hiring process	45
Analyzes the numbers of applicants, finalists, and hires for BIPOC candidates	0

Participants who selected yes to the question "My library addresses racial inequities by hiring BIPOC employees" were asked to select all of the mechanisms in place to ensure BIPOC candidates are hired at their library. Figure 2 shows that the highest ranked mechanism was "Include an explicit EDI statement in job postings" (60% of the participants), followed by "Using a hiring rubric when evaluating potential candidates" (48% of participants). In third place is "Offers implicit bias training for library hiring manager and search committee" (44% of the participants), followed by "Trains search committee on best practices for inclusive searches" (41% of the participants). The fifth most chosen mechanism is "Ensures that hiring committees are racially diverse" was selected 121 times (or by 38% of participants). The mechanisms chosen the least amount were: "Action plans for recruiting BIPOC candidates" was selected 78 times, or 24% of participants, "Conducts anonymous peer review of candidate resumes or other application materials" was selected by 21% of participants, "Agrees upon in advance as a hiring committee what an ideal answer looks like to an interview question before conducting interviews" was selected by 19% of participants, followed by "Dedicated staff to integrate EDI into each stage of the hiring process" was selected by 14% of participants. Zero participants selected "Analyzes the number of applicants, finalists, and hires for BIPOC candidates." (See discussion section for more details).

Black Participants on Hiring

When the responses of Black participants who selected no or unsure were explored, the most prevalent theme reported was unsuccessful hiring of BIPOC employees followed by acknowledgement that hiring is an ongoing issue within their library, department, or library system. For example, one participant (a Black woman library staff) provided more context to the issue of BIPOC representation being most prominent in access services:

The vast majority of the racial diversity within the library lies in the access services department or put more succinctly the department with the fewest 'professionals' that is the least paid. Until very recently, the only librarians of color were the diversity resident and the diversity coordinator. It's highly problematic when BIPOC representation within the library is quite literally viewed through the lens of diversity. Those roles are necessary, but why not make efforts to racially diversify other departments? The reason is obvious.

While this quote demonstrates there are BIPOC working in the library, they are not hired into roles that require the MLIS, or equivalent, including administrative and management positions.

Other Black participants highlighted the multiple ways in which their libraries were unsuccessful in hiring BIPOC employees. A Black woman librarian noted how their library does not seek alternative venues to recruit BIPOC candidates and instead relies on standard job advertisement platforms. A Black woman librarian observed, "While I think we try to hire the best person for the job, I don't see a lot of BIPOC being interviewed for positions. How can you hire people you never give a chance? I'm unsure if this stems from Human Resources who reviews applications then gives them to the Directors or if the Directors only select candidates that conform with their ideal." Finally, a Black woman administrator noted the importance administrators play in failing to hire BIPOC candidates, observing that hiring managers are white and they only hire their friends, who are not people of color.

One subtheme discussed was covert racism, which is racism that is more subtle. One participant (who identified as biracial, woman, and a librarian) stated, "We *say* we hire BIPOC people, but then we slide white people into positions without searches and run searches with no meaningful outreach to BIPOC candidates." Another participant (Black mid-level supervisor/middle management) noted, "I was hired because a city councilmen asked the director to hire someone of color. Unfortunately, the Director repeated this to me. He would not hire a person of color unless he is pressured."

The next most prevalent theme we observed from this participant group was acknowledgement that hiring BIPOC employees is an ongoing issue. A Black woman academic librarian stated, "My institution talks a good game about EDI, but when it comes time to hire, can always find reason why they don't hire diverse librarians." A Black woman library staff employee noted how hiring is only part of the solution:

> Attracting and hiring BIPOC staff in libraries that will hopefully solve and help to eliminate the issue of racial inequity and institutional racism that has been historically pervasive in libraries is only half the battle. By actually being intentional on retaining staff and help to meet their needs (emotional, physical, mental, as well as professional) in spaces that have been, again, historically known to be intrinsically violent towards BIPOC individuals and being able to harmoniously and peacefully co-exist with their non-BIPOC constituents in such spaces, all while being truthfully and viscerally intentional on advancing racial equity without being ill-willed, resistant and hesitant to the overall organizational changes needed within all types of libraries, will help to galvanize the changes so desperately needed in the field and profession of librarianship, as a whole.

A Black woman librarian noted the importance of leadership in setting the tone, "We just hire[d] a new Dean and she is committed to DEI and is now moving our library in that direction to hire/promote people of color."

Non-Black Participants on Hiring

Similar to the Black participant group, the most prevalent theme we observed from non-Black participants was also unsuccessful hiring of BIPOC employees at their libraries. The most frequently mentioned reason given was there were no diverse candidates who applied to open positions. The second most prevalent reason was covert racism during the interview process, which we attribute as an indicator of a hostile working environment for prospective BIPOC employees. A white woman librarian stated:

> We have some diversity in the staff, but there is nothing formalized about making sure the staff is diverse. I have been on many search committees and it has never come up. There might have been some instances of discrimination, but they were unspoken. One search committee I was on had 3 candidates whom we all liked. While

looking at the pros and cons to try to come to a decision, I said that one pro for one of the candidates was that she was Black and the library needed more diversity. No one responded.

Another participant (Hispanic or Latinx woman librarian) stated:

We have no black employees and the two who have worked there since I started quit partially due to institutional racism (from what I understand, management did not believe their experiences of racism.) We recently hired another bilingual Spanish staff person. The hiring took over a year because HR has a policy to re-start the search if they do not receive enough historically underrepresented candidates. We ended up hiring a white person who is not latinx. They may have been the best candidate, but they have no job experience: this is their first job. It was somewhat disheartening to see policies that are in place to try to hire more systemically non-dominant people end up benefiting someone who experiences privilege in the traditional hiring process as well. My friend who applied for the job who is latinx and a person of color was rejected and they showed me the rejection letter, which stated that they did not have enough education, even though they had over a decade of experience working, including currently working in a very similar job.

Additional reasons given were a library's local governmental rules that bar factoring in race when making hiring decisions. A white woman librarian contextualized, "We do hire BIPOC employees, but because we're local government, we can't *deliberately* hire them to redress racial imbalances."

Some participants also said that their library follows merit-based hiring processes that do not acknowledge systemic oppression or the ways in which unconscious bias can factor into hiring decisions. A white woman library staff participant stated, "Race is not an official criterium in our hiring decisions. If we functionally hire with a racial component, it would be due to how applicants present themselves on their resume/cover letter or in the screening questions resulting in them not being interviewed."

Finally, some participants highlighted how institutional policies make it more difficult to hire BIPOC employees. At the time the survey was distributed, former President Donald J. Trump was still in office. During his administration, Trump issued an executive order for federal workers and contractors (Executive Order 13950 on Combating Race and Sex Stereotyping) that forbad diversity trainings (Federal Court Issues Nationwide Order

Enjoining Enforcement of Trump Executive Order on Diversity Training, 2020). A white man academic librarian stated, "They claim we are not allowed to do anything because of the recent executive order about it."

Unsuccessful hiring of BIPOC employees is interconnected with the next theme: libraries that have no or very few BIPOC employees. A white woman librarian said, "There are very few BIPOC who are hired into my library system, and almost none who have any sort of managerial/administrative power. Also, just hiring folks does not actually do anything to address our inherent inequities." Another Hispanic or Latinx woman librarian stated, "I've worked at my current place of employment for 22 months and I have not seen them hire diverse candidates when I know they do apply. As the only person of color on staff, I am very aware of this discrepancy."

The most frequently cited reasons given by non-Black participants as to why BIPOC employees are not hired into their library, included the demographics of their library being all or majority-white, followed by living in all or majority-white communities. For example, one participant stated, "My library is located in a community that is apx. 94% white. Many employees live in the community or nearby and as a result are white. We have one person on staff who is a person of color. Also because the community is very homogenous, I think fighting racial inequity in terms of hiring practices is not thought of."

Similar to institutional policies that make it more difficult to hire BIPOC employees, the next most prevalent reason non-Black participants who said no or unsure stated what we describe as "organizational reasons." The most frequently mentioned organizational reason highlighted by non-Black participants was that BIPOC employees are hired only in non-credentialed staff positions (whereas credentialed positions and those in leadership positions were overwhelmingly white.) A (Hispanic or Latinx woman mid-level supervisor/middle management) participant stated:

There is no policy that values experience or forms of knowledge other than MLS which limits successful applicants from Latinx and BIPOC communities. There one adjustment was made for bilingual preferred. There is no mentoring program and the folks doing culturally specific work have community experience, language expertise but no MLS and are paid less despite similar job duties as other librarians.

Some participants in this group indicated there was increased representation due to the hiring of BIPOC employees into non-credentialed staff positions and this was frequently attributed to the library being geographically located in a racially diverse community and thus, had access to a pool of more diverse candidates. A white woman mid-level/middle management participant stated, "We have more BIPOC working at our library system than most other library systems, but still [does] not represent of our city's population. People in professional jobs tend to be mostly white. The hiring practices [and] policies in place from our city government need to be changed before the library is free to make changes." Participants also stated their library previously had a hiring freeze or was in, at the time of taking the survey, a hiring freeze, was too small in size, or had insufficient employee turnover.

Acknowledgement that the hiring of BIPOC employees is an issue in their library is another theme we observed from this participant group. An Asian woman librarian noted, "They claim that they want to hire a more diverse workforce, but aren't putting in the work to do so, or [are] making excuses like 'they're just not out there,' 'they just don't want to live in this area,' etc." A small number of participants indicated that their library was in the process of or intended to revise their hiring processes to be more equitable. We observed a smaller subset of participants, like the participant quoted above, who indicated their library only pays lip service to the issue and does not make any actionable change. For example, one participant (Hispanic or Latinx LIS student worker) stated, "Superficial effort is made, but I'm not sure how far it goes to actually get people hired."

Retention

Figure 3. My library addresses racial inequities by retaining BIPOC employees (*n*=709)

Percentage of Black and Non-Black respondents yes, no, or unsure answers

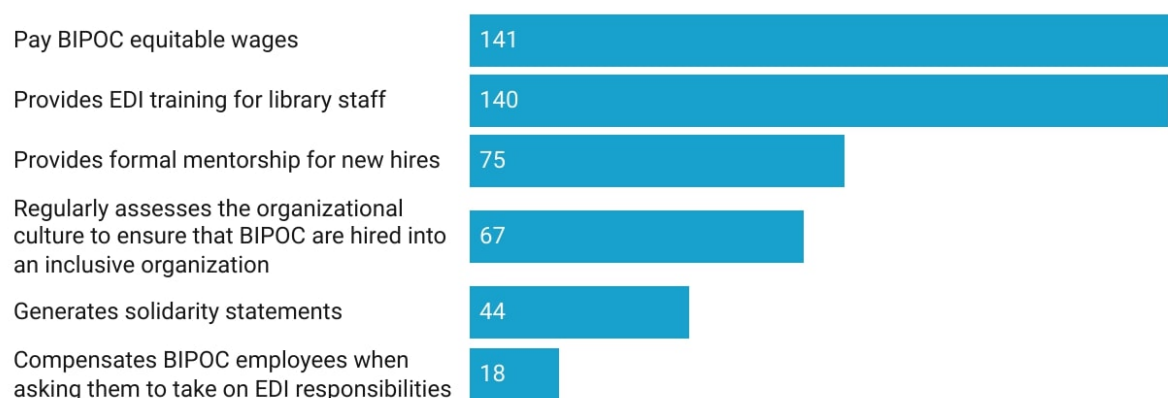|	Yes	No	Unsure
Black	35.3%	35.3%	29.4%
Non-Black	28.6%	27.2%	44.2%
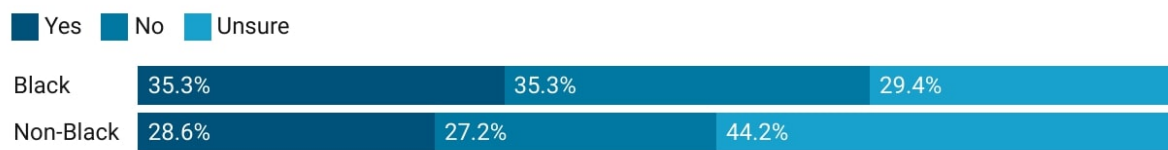
When asked if their library addresses racial inequities by retaining BIPOC employees, of the 709 participants who elected to answer the question, 42.9% said "unsure." Whereas a similar percentage of participants selected "yes" at 29.2% as "no" at 27.9%. Compared to the question on hiring, participants appear to be less certain on whether their library retains BIPOC employees than they are about whether their library hires BIPOC employees.

The disaggregated results of Black and non-Black participants (figure 3) showed a similar trend to figure 1. Black participants were more likely to report their library addresses racial inequities by retaining BIPOC employees than non-Black participants. The gap between the non-Black participants' unsure answer compared to Black participants was 14.8%.

Figure 4. Mechanisms used to make retention practices more equitable at participants' libraries (*n*=192)

Number of counts selected by participants who said yes to the question: My library addresses racial inequities by retaining BIPOC employees

Pay BIPOC equitable wages	141
Provides EDI training for library staff	140
Provides formal mentorship for new hires	75
Regularly assesses the organizational culture to ensure that BIPOC are hired into an inclusive organization	67
Generates solidarity statements	44
Compensates BIPOC employees when asking them to take on EDI responsibilities	18

Participants who selected "yes" were asked to select the mechanisms their library uses to address "racial inequities by retaining BIPOC employees." The top mechanism selected

was "Pay BIPOC equitable wages" (73% of participants) followed by "provides EDI training for library staff" (73% of participants).

Black Participants on Retention

Participants who answered unsure or no were also given the option to provide additional open-ended qualitative responses about their library's retention practices for BIPOC employees. Many of the Black participants reiterated they were unsure what their library was doing to retain BIPOC employees or simply stated that their library did not put in a concerted effort to retain BIPOC employees. For Black participants who reiterated in their qualitative responses that they were unsure or that their library was not addressing racial inequities by retaining BIPOC employees, the top reasons given included: 1) they either were not privy to retention efforts at their library due to their position, or 2) they did not observe their library engaging in any efforts to retain BIPOC employees. For example, a Black woman librarian stated, "I am not aware of any explicit efforts to retain BIPOC employees. At least one Black employee has left in the 1.5 years since I started my position." A Black man administrator noted, "Our library rarely make[s] retention offers to BIPOCs." Another biracial woman librarian stated, "We don't do anything to retain our BIPOC library workers. We meet among ourselves to help one another."

Aside from participants who answered they were unsure or no, the next most common theme we received from Black participants regarding retention of BIPOC employees was about hostile work environments. Participants experienced hostile work environments as high turnover of BIPOC employees, being targeted at work, being denied promotions, and interacting with coworkers who deny the reality of racism. One participant (Black woman librarian) stated:

> I have personally witnessed and heard about many BIPOC leaving the library because of difficulties faced related to race, from bus drivers to directors. These issues include minimizing workplace contributions, stealing ideas, higher levels of scrutiny, lack of

promotion, lack of empathy where white staff members have been treated better under similar circumstances, blacklisting for speaking up [too] much or too often, and explicit refusal of higher ups to remove racial inequities when brought to their attention. Many more, myself included, have discussed leaving with peers for similar reasons.

Another participant (Black woman librarian) provided context on the high turnover of BIPOC employees at her library, "All of the Black and LatinX libraries [librarians] keep leaving. They do nothing to make sure that we feel accepted and supported as librarians of color. Librarians yes, but not librarians of color." Another participant (Black man library staff) observed, "Faculty and Staff of color are constantly leaving, those that stay are not happy working here." A participant (Black woman mid-level supervisor/middle management employee) provided context on BIPOC employees being targeted at work, stating, "BIPOC have been pressured out of their jobs." A Black Latinx former librarian stated, "They just replaced me with another black librarian and pretended they were never racist."

A Black man library staff employee added context to the lack of pathway for BIPOC employees, noting a "Lack of promotion leads to staff finding employment elsewhere," which contributes to BIPOC employees not being retained. A Black woman administrator noted, "Opportunities to move-up or make more money are unfairly denied to the people of color."

Acknowledgement of the issue was a less mentioned theme we observed from Black participants. The main subtheme we observed was how their libraries often paid lip service to retention efforts. Lip service is a subtheme across hiring, retention, and promotion. A Black woman librarian observed, "Library has only 3 BIPOC librarians. Keep saying they want diversity, never work on hiring or developing BIPOC lib assistants to get MLIS." A Black or African woman library staff employee noted their library, "Need[s] to actually be proactive in this endeavor instead of providing lip-service about it."

Some participants noted that there are no pathways for BIPOC employees to be promoted in their library, which contributes to BIPOC employee turnover. One participant (Black woman library staff) added additional context:

> Again, when the department with the least turnover is comprised of Black people within the lowest ranks, that doesn't necessarily mean that the library is actively doing anything to retain them. It simply is a reflection of the economic realities that BIPOC, non-professionals have fewer resources--financial and network to find other employment. Living in a Southern right-to-work state makes it hard and our public university system is non-unionized but does offer protections that contract exempt librarians do not have. However, those "race-neutral" policies are statewide, not particular to our library.

Some participants noted that lack of pathways for promotion make it difficult for BIPOC employees to attain executive or leadership positions that impact policies.

A less frequent theme we observed from this group was libraries that were unintentionally successful in retaining BIPOC employees. We define *unintentionally successful* to mean libraries that have BIPOC employees and keep them but have not do so through intentional effort. A Black woman library staff employee stated, "Not sure if BIPOC employees are 'being retained' or simply staying." A Black woman librarian stated, "Not a lot of BIPOC have left. However, I do not think we are actively maintained/supported."

Finally, we also observed participants in this group reiterating that there are no or few BIPOC employees to retain. A Black librarian stated, "I don't believe it is a priority, but since I am the only Black person in staff, who knows."

Non-Black Participants on Retention

Like the Black participant group, many non-Black participants reiterated they were unsure, or no, their library did not address racial inequities by retaining BIPOC library employees. The reasons given were similar to Black participants, such as: 1) being uncertain if there are specific efforts to retain BIPOC employees, 2) being unsure because of their position, not having access retention data, or 3) being unsure what HR is doing to retain BIPOC

employees. One white non-binary librarian stated, "The large public library system is huge and I am just one librarian so I don't know what the retention rate is." As noted in the aggregate data, non-Black librarians are often unsure of the climate around hiring, retention, and promotion at their library, either intentionally or unintentionally. Another stated, "As a white person, I'm not sure about how hard the organization is trying to retain BIPOC employees. But I suspect the organization could do better."

The next most prevalent theme is a hostile working environment for BIPOC employees largely due to high turnover of BIPOC employees. A white woman academic librarian noted, "We do not provide a safe inclusive space. Our admin does the bare minimum saying "oh we will hire people of color" but then when they get hired they do not make it inclusive, resulting in those hires leaving quickly."

The next reason we observed related to the hostile working environment theme was denial of the reality of racism. A white woman librarian contextualized the ways in which racism goes unacknowledged at their library, "We do not offer EDI trainings on a regular basis, did not make any statements this spring regarding racial injustice and the murder of George Floyd, and of the almost 30 managers/upper level staff, only one is a person of color so there are no mentorship opportunities for new BIPOC staff." An Asian woman librarian added:

> There is no thought regarding retention in general, but especially for BIPOC employees. My library has become less and less diverse in the time I have been here, and upper management doesn't seem to be fazed by it aside from saying "we need to recruit." No mention of why it's been hard to retain or how our current organizational and institutional culture may be directly contributing to it.

Two other reasons observed related to hostile working environment include BIPOC employees being denied promotions, as well as the glass escalator phenomenon, instances

where white library employees, particularly men, were promoted and/or moved into positions without following proper library policies (Williams 1992). A Hispanic or Latinx woman librarian observed, "Job adjustments that were made for white upper management were not made for women of color leading to (among other issues) an unsuitable work environment and her departure from the org."

Another aspect of hostile work environments detailed by participants is the targeting of BIPOC employees. A white man academic librarian stated, "When we do hire them (rarely) we shoot down their ideas for improvements until they get frustrated and move on." A white woman academic librarian stated:

> I know of two POC who left faculty positions - one because of how they were treated by admin (and while not explicitly [because] of their race, I would be surprised if a white man was treated similarly. I'm not sure if admin made any attempt to retain or apologize this employee of many years). The other left [because] their spouse had a job in a different state, but I get the feeling that leaving was a little easier . . . But of course these are my impressions as a white woman. The individuals themselves may agree or disagree.

Participants also noted that their libraries have no or few BIPOC employees. A participant (who identifies as two or more races woman librarian) stated, "I am the only POC manager and I am leaving next month. I am 99% positive I will be replaced with a white person." A white woman administrator noted, "We have very few BIPOC employees currently and most are at lower-level positions. To my knowledge there are no specific, intentional retention policies in place." Their library's community demographics was stated as the main reason why participants noted there was an issue preventing BIPOC employee retention. Many of these participants state not having BIPOC employees is a non-issue due to being a majority or all white community. A white woman administrator noted, "We currently have no BIPOC staff. We live in a rural area with probably less than 1% BIPOC." A white woman librarian said, "Again, we bring back performers and speakers that are well received by our community, but our staff is almost completely white (just like the town)."

Another stated challenge is organizational. For example, a white woman librarian stated, "We've asked why they don't look into BIPOC retention and they've indicated it's racist to do so." A frequent reason given by participants included low turnover of library employees and the library organization being too small. A white woman administrator said, "There are only two library employees, including myself. At one point prior to my arrival, one of the two was BIPOC."

Two additional reasons participants offered: library staff comprised mainly of BIPOC employees had few or none BIPOC in professional positions and no pathway for BIPOC employees to advance within the library. On the topic of BIPOC employees being predominantly in library staff positions, a white woman librarian provided more context on the issue:

> The demographic makeup of our community is very white. We try to recruit people of color for staff positions and board vacancies. We have the most luck with hiring young POC for library page positions. We have a longstanding board member who is a person of color, but other than that there are very few people of color working for our organization.

On the topic of no pathway for BIPOC employees, one white woman librarian stated, "retention has improved but was an issue. I think many BIPOC staff experience microaggressions, lack of promotional opportunities, and other barriers to retention." To a lesser extent, we also observed non-Black participants noting BIPOC employees being in precarious positions (we define precarious positions as temporary or on a contractual basis). A white woman librarian noted, "Before COVID-19 our few BIPOC staff were part-time, per-diem librarians. There was no work for them when we cut hours, budget, and services."

The last major theme we observed from the non-Black participant group is acknowledgement of the issue with the top reason being listed as lip service. An Asian woman librarian noted, "Lots of lip service to EDI principles, but very little substantive

action. Any gains are due to the extra labor of BIPOC staff and a handful of white allies. Little effort put into retaining BIPOC staff."

Promotion

When asked if their library addresses racial inequities by promoting BIPOC employees, out of the 702 participants who elected to answer the question, most participants selected "Unsure" at 39.4% whereas 32% of participants selected "no" and 28.6% said "yes" (figure 5).

Figure 5. My library addresses racial inequities by promoting BIPOC employees (*n*=703)
Percentage of Black and Non-Black respondents yes, no, or unsure answers
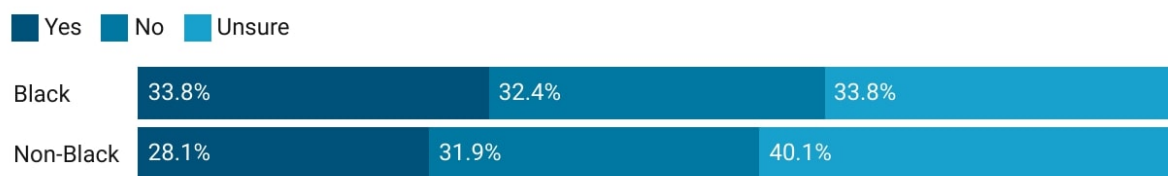
As seen in previous questions, Black participants were more likely to report their library addresses racial inequities by promoting BIPOC employees (33.8% said "yes") compared to non-Black participants (28.1% said "yes"). However, comparably, the gap between the Black participants unsure answer at 33.8% and 40.1% of non-Black participants at 6.3% is less of a substantial difference when compared to unsure results in figures 1 and 3.

Figure 6. Mechanisms used to make promotion practices more equitable at participants' libraries (*n*=271)
Number of counts selected by participants who said yes to the question: My library addresses racial inequities by promoting BIPOC employees
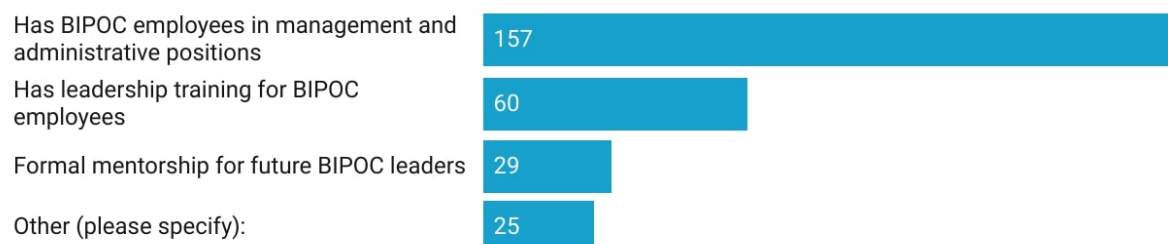
For participants who indicated their library addresses racial inequities by promoting BIPOC employees, when asked to select the methods their library uses to address "racial inequities by promoting BIPOC employees," most participants selected "Has BIPOC employees in management and administration positions" (86% of participants as seen in figure 6).

Participants had the opportunity to expand on this question via the "Other (please specify)" category. Participants listed a select few, ranging from attempting to implement salary increases and employee recognition programs; encouraging BIPOC workers to pursue their MLS; inviting BIPOC workers to apply to open professional positions; advocating for respectful wages to better promote retention; providing informal mentorship opportunities or developing formal mentorship for BIPOC workers in order to improve retention; attaching leadership roles to positions related to serving marginalized populations (such as ESOL and/or citizenship classes); providing leadership training that includes DEI awareness for all employees and simply, promoting BIPOC workers when able. Some participants also mentioned trying to ensure hiring practices are equitable at the start. For example, one participant states "as with hiring new employees, we looked very closely at what we required or preferred for education and experience and have committed to hiring based on values and not 'fit' as well as prioritizing lived experience." Some of the strategies that were implemented to promote leadership opportunities for BIPOC employees are described as unexpectedly less successful for retaining them. For example, one participant stated that BIPOC library workers are encouraged to take leadership positions on committees without compensation or support for reclassification or stipends, which can lead to burnout. To quote one participant, "...our organization, a large public library system, has all of the support programs and language in place to support BIPOC members but my theory is that not even

BIPOC [staff] can overcome the insular myopic administrative/HR culture of DEI activism because it is so painfully jarring to anyone with real disadvantaged life experience."

Black Participants on Promotion

Black participants reiterated they were unsure or reiterated that their library was not addressing racial inequities by promoting BIPOC employees. Reasons given were: not assuming the intent behind promoting BIPOC employees, not being in management, or simply being unsure. One participant (Black woman librarian) stated, "I'm not sure if the intent for promoting BIPOC folks is to address racial inequity. I can't/won't assume the intent."

The most frequent response offered from this group as reason why BIPOC employees were not being promoted was what we categorized as organizational and unsuccessful promotion. A Black woman library staff elaborated in detail about the ways in which systemic racism are ingrained in library promotion practices and how it's unlikely to change without intentional action from those in positions of power:

> I don't really think any individual, group, or governing entity whose responsibility this falls on will ever be cognizant, interested, be intentionally forthright nor have the intellectual acumen/acuity (or simply care enough to be proactive about this) needed to assess and determine their decision about properly promoting their BIPOC workers, recognize their achievements nor even acknowledge the varied and rich diverse experiences that BIPOC workers possess that libraries could use to their advantage in making their workplace truly diverse (racially, culturally, ethnically, informationally, intellectually, etc.) within their communities that would prove be to an invaluable benefit on who their audience are and how they are able to rightfully serve them. Not doing so will be the detriment of their mission to serving diverse communities within their locality. That's just a simple fact that can be negotiated outright, but again, the persons who are in such power positions to make the decision to promote their existing BIPOC staff should be intentional, somewhat understanding and empathetic about this, which would help to undermine the underlying (and often times, invisible) racist policies and behaviors of persons within such institutions that have been historically normalized and often allowed to keep happening that continue to deliberate[ly] bar and keep out such persons needed to serve their communities.

Reasons observed were no pathway, including for library staffs/library staff, no upward

mobility, which we believe are interconnected. One participant (Black man library staff)

noted, "Most do not make it past the Page role." To a lesser extent participants noted high

turnover and willful ignorance as reasons. One participant (Black woman librarian) stated:

> Recent years have seen more BIPOC managers, but only to the smallest branches in
> the system and many are either newer to the system or otherwise greenlighted for
> agreeing with or being complacent towards admin. Most do not hold LIS degrees
> despite many experienced and qualified LIS librarians in the system. While white
> staff have been promoted above manager level, BIPOC have always been external
> hires at that level, with one notable exception. So far, 2/3 of those BIPOC hires have
> left the library in less than two years.

Participants frequently noted that their libraries are hostile work environments for

BIPOC employees, largely because BIPOC employees were denied promotion. One

participant (Black woman librarian) noted, "One BIPOC employee was "demoted" in an

effort to create a different organizational chart. This was demeaning and humiliating even

though it was not based on job performance. No other employees were demoted in the same

way." Another participant (Black woman library staff) noted:

> I've worked there for 6 years and have yet to see a BIPOC person get a promotion.
> Within the lowest ranks, library administration is complicit in maintaining a racial
> hierarchy by ensuring that the those who manage the department are White. As far as
> I've known, they have never had a BIPOC department head. Highly problematic as
> now our university is deemed a minority-serving institution.

One participant (Black woman librarian) noted, "We hold BIPOC staff to different (higher)

standards... I am the only person of color who has been promoted in the last 5 years and that

was because it is interim and I asked for it. They were going to make me take on the duties

without a title change or more money and I knew I wasn't going to let that slide."

Another reason noted by participants that also applies to promotion is glass escalator,

where white colleagues were promoted without following proper library promotion

procedures. One (Black woman administrator) noted, "White colleagues with less degrees and experience receive promotions over employees of color."

The third most prevalent theme we observed was acknowledgement that this was an issue. Lip service was a small subtheme that emerged. A Black woman librarian noted, "Movement in the library field is slow are [and] nonexistent, especially in smaller systems. So when I see primarily white staff being promoted, I wonder if it is by worth or bias." Another participant (Black woman librarian) added context, "Everything here is symbolic. There are 2 committees here for diversity, but both are more about theory than boots on the ground. I don't want to be a part of either [because] they're more concerned [with] which heritage months we recognize than looking at how we serve our community."

Non-Black Participants on Promotion

The most prevalent theme regarding promoting BIPOC employees reported by non-Black participant group was organizational. We observed a variety of organizational reasons shared by non-Black participants explaining why BIPOC employees were not being promoted. One reason included policies and bureaucratic structures that made promotion practices difficult. For example, one participant (white woman librarian) stated, "The bureaucratic structure of our community college district does not allow for 'promotions' - individuals actually have to apply for a different job in order to advance upward."

A frequently mentioned subtheme was no pathway to promotion for BIPOC employees. A white woman librarian provided more context, "Yes, but there are few opportunities for promotion and most hinge on higher education degrees, which often leave BIPOC without promotion opportunities. When they have those credentials, they have been promoted." A white woman library administrator stated, "The only avenue for promotion in my library is for library faculty through the promotion and tenure process. Due to the flat

hierarchical structure within the library, support staff really don't have opportunities for promotion." Another white woman library administrator stated, "Civil service limits our abilities to promote from within the organization. BIPOC have not had upward career mobility within the organization." Finally, a white woman library staff stated, "Being a small, rural library, there is not enough positions available for advancement. Many employees of the library system work part-time."

Another subtheme related to organizational issues that impact promoting BIPOC employees is small library size. One participant, (white man librarian) stated, "My library has only 2 employees including me, and there hasn't been any turnover here since I started. To my knowledge, our library has never employed anyone who was not a white cis woman before me, and I am a white cis man." One participant (white woman librarian) stated:

> Many libraries, particularly in rural areas, are small and still in largely white areas. While we don't discriminate against BIPOC, hiring and promoting is really not applicable if we A.) don't get any applicants of other races because there are so few BIPOC in our area, and B.) only have 1-3 staff anyway

Another participant (white woman librarian) stated, "The three full-time employees are all white. These positions are honestly dead-end jobs. There was one clerk who is Latino who went on to work in a higher position at a larger library. To gain a better job, you need to go to a different library. This place is just very small and no one is paid that well."

The final organizational reason given by this group was BIPOC employees being disproportionately represented in library staff library positions. One participant **(**white woman academic librarian) explained, "It's a mixed bag. Most of our BIPOC employees are staff, not faculty, so have less opportunity for promotion. We have instances of BIPOC folks being promoted and others of BIPOC folks not being encouraged to go up for promotion." Another participant (white woman librarian) stated, "We have many staff in entry level positions who have applied for promotion and remain in entry level positions. I know of some white staff who had custom positions created for them that were better fits--I do not see

this happening for BIPOC staff." An American Indian, Alaska Native, Indigenous, or Native woman library staff employee stated, "Upper management is almost entirely white, middle management predominately. Most BIPOC employees are lower-level - pages and direct patron contact, not management."

The next most frequent reason given was that libraries that had no or few BIPOC employees to promote.

Several responses discussed how their library's administration and/or supervisory roles were all held by white people. For example, one participant (white woman librarian) stated, "We have not promoted BIPOC staff above the librarian position. Although we have waived the degree requirement in favor of staff able to best serve our Latinx community." A Hispanic or Latinx woman librarian stated, "Only one black supervisor. Latinx supervisors are white passing." A white woman librarian stated, "As far as I can tell, a majority of our staff are white, though we have a number of Asian and South Asian staff as well. It isn't clear to me whether there are efforts being made to promote BIPOC employees. All but one member of our [about] 20 person 'leadership team' are white."

Geography (i.e., libraries that serve majority or all-white communities) was given as a reason why there are none or few BIPOC employees to promote. A white woman administrator noted, "We currently have no BIPOC staff. We live in a rural area with probably less than 1% BIPOC." A white woman librarian stated, "Again, a lack of opportunity to demonstrate due to lack of diversity in our community and our staff."

Similar to the Black participant group, a large number of non-Black participants reiterate they were unsure if their library addresses racial inequities by promoting BIPOC employees or reiterated that their library does not address racial inequities by promoting BIPOC employees. Additionally, some non-Black participants expressed awareness of what is happening regarding promotion of BIPOC employees in their department but are unsure

what is happening library-wide. Finally, some non-Black participants reiterated they do not believe race is considered in promotion processes.

Another experience described by participant is unsuccessful promotion of BIPOC employees. An Asian woman librarian stated, "Only the leadership team members get promotions. They are slowly getting more diverse, but I haven't seen any entry-level librarians (white or BIPOC) move up the ladder. I have seen lateral moves though."

The reasons given are no internal promotion or no upward mobility for BIPOC employees. One participant (white woman librarian) stated, "Structure is pretty flat, so promotions happen infrequently. All recent managerial positions have been hired for (not promoted) and have hired white candidates. As an academic institution we have a lot of ossified practices that do not permit the direct promotion of BIPOC employees without an open, nationwide search."

Another reason offered is BIPOC employees not being encouraged to go up for promotions. One participant (white woman librarian) observed, "Most BIPOC staff members do not seem to be encouraged to pursue promotions/new titles." Another participant (white non-binary librarian) stated, "There's no effort underway that I can discern to provide BIPOC employees with specific opportunities for advancement, much less provide them with mentorship or other tools to allow them to apply and feel confident in their ability to interview for and obtain promotions and higher-ranked jobs." An Asian woman librarian said, "We do provide a lot of leadership training across the board but I am not sure that leadership roles that are on offer meet the needs and goals of BIPOC." Finally, we observed a smaller subset of participants refer to policies that impact promoting BIPOC employees with participants stating that their promotion processes are dictated by local government policies, which they state are merit-based.

Participants also discussed hostile working environment for BIPOC employees. For example, one participant (white woman librarian) stated, "It took 8 years for a BIPOC staff person to be promoted to Senior Library Assistant when she was already doing the work of a Senior Library Assistant for most of that time." Another participant (a Hispanic or Latinx woman academic librarian) stated, "There are some librarians of color who have been promoted, but it has been difficult for those on the tenure track."

Reasons we were given for why it is a hostile working environment include BIPOC employees being denied promotions. One participant (white man librarian) observed. "I don't think we promote people of color as we should. Some are highly experienced and knowledgeable in their fields." Another participant (white woman librarian) noted, "I have never seen someone who is BIPOC promoted in the library I worked in." Some participants referenced circumstances the research team describes as the glass escalator phenomenon, where white colleagues are promoted without following library promotion procedures. One participant (Asian woman academic librarian) noted, "Black staff are not promoted at the same rate as white staff are. The only staff that has been promoted to faculty are white, except for [one] black staff member who is no longer with us." A smaller subset of participants shared that their library does not acknowledge racism is an issue. One (white man librarian) stated, "Again, I don't think racial inequities are what our library is worried about in staffing." Another participant (white woman librarian) stated, "No, and pay inequities have been brought to the attention of admin with no action to rectify that situation, only delay after delay." Finally, participants noted that their libraries had high a turnover rate of BIPOC employees due to a hostile work environment. One participant (American Indian, Alaska Native, Indigenous, or Native woman library staff) stated, "I've never observed any BIPOC staff be promoted. They all just leave in disgust at a certain point."

Discussion

Anti-Blackness simultaneously devalues Blackness while marginalizing Black people (Racial Equity Tools Glossary, under anti-black) whereas racial equity seeks to get to the root causes of disparate life outcomes based on race (Racial Equity Tools Glossary, under racial equity). We chose to analyze the data by focusing on Black participants to uncover where anti-Blackness may be operating within libraries. The disaggregated data suggests that Black participants were more likely to report their library hires, retain, and promote BIPOC library employees compared to non-Black participants. Please note, in the survey we did not define promotion for participants. Conversely, the disaggregated data suggests Black participants were also more likely to report their library does not hire, retains, and promotes BIPOC library employees compared to non-Black participants. Black participants were also less likely to report they were unsure about their libraries' practices. A possible reason for being less unsure include being on more EDI committees that may discuss and attend to BIPOC hiring, retention, and promotion efforts.

Black participants may also be more keenly aware of the ways in which systems of oppression operate. As Ferretti writes, "The marginalized library worker is *subject* to inequities, while the white/heteronormative worker has the luxury of choosing whether or not to engage or interrogate inequities" (2020, p. 142). White people can opt-out of noticing systemic inequities in the workplace, including regarding hiring, retention, and promotion and can claim to be unsure by stating they are not aware of those efforts (as demonstrated by white library employees in the open-ended questions related to hiring, retention, and promotion.) While we can acknowledge a lack of organizational transparency or complexity may have led to participants selecting unsure, not noticing who is not being hired or promoted as well as not prioritizing BIPOC hiring and retention are issues white library employees at all levels need to contend with, particularly library leadership who set the tone

for the library. Easily accessible organizational policies and practices, including hiring and promotional practices, should be made transparent for all employees of an organization.

For example, zero participants selected "Analyzes the number of applicants, finalists, and hires for BIPOC candidates." This might be for a variety of reasons, but the lack of participants who selected it highlights how hiring practices that focus on racial equity may not be transparent. For example, sometimes applicant tracking software is used to automate the initial screening of candidates. There is often a centralized human resources (HR) unit that exists within the university as well as within a city or state, or at the federal level. These units may rely on automated applicant tracking software. After the centralized HR unit screens candidates, a shorter list is typically sent to library HR or a hiring manager. One reason this option may not have been selected could be because the library HR department (if it exists), may never get optional data (such as the total number of applicants.) While some hiring managers or search committees can negotiate access to this data for institutional DEIA goals, this is highly specific to the organization.

Black and non-Black POC participants may have indicated their library does not hire, retain, or promote BIPOC library employees because their library may only have a small number of BIPOC employees, which is reflected in the current LIS race and ethnicity statistics (Rosa & Henke, 2017). This finding is also supported by Ossom-Williamson et al., which highlights how mistreatment of Black library employees contributes to a lack of representation (2020). Additionally, participants perceived that BIPOC employees may only be hired into the least paid positions, such as library staff positions (Curry Lance, 2005), part-time time positions, or precarious positions within the library, such as library residencies (McElroy & Diaz, 2015). They also do not feel that their library is hiring BIPOC library employees in order to address racial inequities. BIPOC employees may have been unfairly denied a promotion or may have experienced a lack of opportunity and support for

advancement within the library. As researchers, we believe ensuring BIPOC people are represented in all levels, including management and administrative levels, is crucial to ensuring future BIPOC library employees have a say in hiring, retention, and promotional practices within a library.

It is promising that some libraries are including EDI statements in job postings, utilizing hiring rubrics, and offering implicit bias training for hiring managers and search committees (see figure 2 for a full breakdown of participant selections). We hope these mechanisms can serve as a starting place for libraries invested in hiring, retaining, and promoting BIPOC library employees. However, based on the results, more attention needs to be paid to hiring best practices (Handbook of Best Practices for Faculty Searches, 2021.; Recruiting for Diversity, n.d.), which include some of the less selected options in the survey: "agrees upon in advance as a hiring committee what an ideal answer looks like to an interview question before conducting interviews" and "conducts anonymous peer review of candidate resumes or other application materials." While a library may not get to sift through the application materials of all applicants, it is still possible to provide anonymous peer-review of candidate materials. More attention also needs to be paid to creating action plans for recruiting BIPOC candidates, including where to post and how to get the word out about the opportunity. As Hathcock notes, libraries also need to be reflective over whether the opportunities they must recruit BIPOC for are not only precarious positions (2019).

The issue of credentialed librarians being overwhelmingly white (Rosa & Henke, 2017) compared to library staff being more racially diverse has been discussed in LIS literature and professional discussions (Curry Lance, 2005). However, further research is needed to gather updated statistics on race among library employees who have the MSLIS versus library employees who do not have the MSLIS degree. This will enable libraries to accurately address BIPOC recruitment, hiring, and promotion, especially as they relate to pay

disparities. This is particularly important because economic justice is a key tenet when addressing racial equity.

The data from this study elucidates the need for libraries to move beyond "counts" for racial diversity and ensure BIPOC library employees are represented in all departments and all levels of leadership. Having BIPOC represented predominantly in the lowest paid and/or precarious positions and with the least amount of power while simultaneously claiming to have a "diverse" library is problematic. Simultaneously, the data shows library participants are acknowledging that the hiring, retention, and promotion of BIPOC library workers is an issue, with a small percentage of participants indicating their library is revising hiring processes or are in the beginning of having conversations on addressing hiring, retention, and promotion, including the organizational culture. While this is promising, many participants also acknowledged it was an issue while offering no indication they were going to bring these issues up within their library. Participants may have indicated this because they do not feel they have the power to change hiring, retention, and promotion processes. Although these processes may be outside of an employee's role, library employees need to take a vested interest in their library's hiring, retention, and promotion processes, including finding out who does have a say if they have feedback for improvement.

A hostile work environment is related to the topic of BIPOC representation and the acknowledgement that BIPOC hiring, retention, and promotion is an issue at their library. The data demonstrates a hostile work environment leads to BIPOC employees leaving the organization, and in some cases the profession, and prevents BIPOC employees from having opportunities to progress within the library or unfairly denies those opportunities to them. Libraries who have all white or majority white staff and who indicated they have no or few BIPOC library employees need to reconsider the working environment they are inviting potential BIPOC library employees into and need to re-evaluate hiring practices to see where

covert racism is impacting hiring decisions. Concurrently, organizational issues were raised as reasons why hiring, retention, and promotion of BIPOC employees did not happen or are hampered by inequitable systems to which the library belongs. While we cannot individually change each policy, library leadership, both in university and public libraries, play an instrumental role in advocating for their library employees, including calling out unjust systems that disproportionately impact BIPOC library employees.

Limitations and Future Research

This study used convenience sampling as a precursor to more rigorous methods, which we hope this research will inspire. Future generalizable research is needed on the hiring, retention, and promotion of BIPOC and particularly Black library employees. Another limitation of our survey is we did not ask BIPOC participants if they are read as white by others. Being read as white might influence BIPOC's responses, particularly because that might impact their perceptions of hiring, retention, and promotion. For example, being stereotyped as a model minority or being compliant with reinforcing organizational racism. Additionally, like all researchers, our positionality as individuals impacts our analysis. Finally, further research would be needed to determine if Black and non-Black library workers at the same institution would respond similarly to the survey questions. We plan to publish additional analyses of this dataset in which we prioritize different variables.

Conclusion

This study sought to assess library employees' perceptions of their library's racial equity efforts with a specific emphasis on understanding Black and non-Black participants' perceptions and experiences with the hiring, retention, and promotion of BIPOC library

employees. While the quantitative data reveals Black participants are clearer and less unsure than non-Black participants, the qualitative data reveals the need for libraries to move beyond acknowledging the hiring, retention, and promotion of BIPOC library employees is an issue and address the root causes: a hostile working environment and organizational issues, such as no pathway to promotion. Additionally, libraries with no or few BIPOC employees would benefit from addressing the causes as to why beyond simply pointing to community and library employee demographics as justification.

Declaration of Interest

The authors report there are no competing interests to declare.

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Appendix A: Consent and Survey Instrument

Racial Equity Task Force Survey

We are Kristyn Caragher and Tatiana Bryant, two researchers from the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC) and University of California Irvine (UCI). We are inviting public and academic library staff who are 18 years and older who work in academic or public libraries in the United States and Canada to participate in a survey that includes closed and open-ended questions, including demographic questions, on racial equity in public and academic libraries for a national research study. Survey results will be used to identify areas of improvement in regard to racial equity efforts in public and academic libraries and the research study will add to the existing literature that addresses race, racism, and racial equity efforts in public and academic libraries.

The national research study is also connected to the Building Cultural Proficiencies for Racial Equity Framework Task Force, a joint effort of the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL), the Association of Research Libraries (ARL), the American Library Association's Office for Diversity, Literacy and Outreach Services (ODLOS), and the Public Library Association (PLA). An aggregate data report of the survey will be used to help inform the development of the Building Cultural Proficiencies for Racial Equity Framework. The survey is expected to take about 20 minutes to complete and it has been reviewed and has been determined to be exempt by the University of Illinois at Chicago IRB Office. You will not directly benefit from participating in this online survey today.

Participation in the survey is completely voluntary and no identifiable information will be collected during the study. If you decide to participate in the study, you are free to withdraw anytime while you are taking the survey. You have the right to not answer a particular question in addition to withdrawing from the survey. Please note that If you complete the anonymous survey and then submit it to us, we will be unable to extract the anonymous data should you wish it to be withdrawn.

All data collected will be anonymized and held in a password protected cloud-based storage system at UIC and only the principal investigator and co-investigator will have access to it. Confidentiality will be maintained to the degree permitted by the technology used. Your participation in this online survey involves risks similar to a person's everyday use of the Internet.

Thank you for your participation. If you have any concerns about the survey, please contact the UIC IRB Office at (312) 996-1711 or contact the investigators below.

Principal Investigator:

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Please indicate your willingness to participate in this research.
o I have read the consent form and agree to participate. (1)
o I have read the consent form and do not wish to participate. (2)

End of Block: Informed Consent

Start of Block: Demographics

Q1 Are you from a library in the United States or Canada?
o Yes, I am currently working in a library (1)
o Yes, I worked in a library in the past 5 years (2)
o Yes, but I am currently between jobs (3)
o No (4)

Q2 Which type of library best describes your current or last workplace?
o Public library (1)
o Public university or college library (2)
o Private university or college library (3)
o Community college or equivalent (4)
o School K-12 library (5)
o Special non-academic library (6)

Q3 I identify as...
o American Indian, Alaska Native, Indigenous, or Native (1)
o Asian (2)
o Black or African American (3)
o Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander (4)
o White (5)
o Hispanic or Latinx (6)
o Western Asian or North African (7)
o Prefer to self-describe: (8) _____

Q4 I identify my gender as…
o Man (1)
o Woman (2)
o Non-Binary (3)
o Prefer to self-describe: (4) _____

Q5 Do you identify as transgender?
o Yes (1)

o No (2)

Q6 How long have you worked in libraries?
o Less than a year (1)
o 1-4 years (2)
o 5-9 years (3)
o 10-19 years (4)
o 20 or more years (5)

Q7 What is your current role?
o Library staff (1)
o Librarian (2)
o Administrator (3)
o Faculty (4)
o Library and Information Science (LIS) Student (5)
o Please specify: (6) _____

Q8 Do you have supervisory responsibilities?
o Yes (1)
o No (2)

Please answer the following questions based on your experience at your current library or the
last library you worked at if you are currently unemployed or retired. Please indicate your
level of agreement with each of the following statements.

Q9 I am comfortable talking about race in my library with people of my same race
o Strongly agree (5)
o Agree (4)
o Neither agree nor disagree (3)
o Disagree (2)
o Strongly disagree (1)

Q10 I am comfortable talking about race in my library with people of different racial
backgrounds from my own
o Strongly agree (5)
o Agree (4)
o Neither agree nor disagree (3)
o Disagree (2)
o Strongly disagree (1)

Q11 I can identify examples of institutional racism. Please refer to the definition below.
Institutional racism refers to organizational policies and practices — based on explicit
and/or implicit biases — that produce outcomes which consistently advantage or
disadvantage one or more racial group(s).
o Strongly agree (5)
o Agree (4)
o Neither agree nor disagree (3)
o Disagree (2)
o Strongly disagree (1)

Q12 I can identify examples of interpersonal/individual racism. Please refer to definition below.   **Individual racism** refers to the beliefs, attitudes, and actions of individuals that support or perpetuate racism. Individual racism can be deliberate, or the individual may act to perpetuate or support racism without knowing that is what is being done.
o Strongly agree (5)
o Agree (4)
o Neither agree nor disagree (3)
o Disagree (2)
o Strongly disagree (1)

Q13 I feel my voice matters within the workplace
o Strongly agree (5)
o Agree (4)
o Neither agree nor disagree (3)
o Disagree (2)
o Strongly disagree (1)

Q14 I believe my race influences the degree to which my voice matters within the workplace
o Strongly agree (5)
o Agree (4)
o Neither agree nor disagree (3)
o Disagree (2)
o Strongly disagree (1)

Q15 I can speak up about the racism I experience or witness in the workplace
o Strongly agree (5)
o Agree (4)
o Neither agree nor disagree (3)
o Disagree (2)
o Strongly disagree (1)

Q16 I trust that my job security is not at risk when I address the racism I experience or witness in the workplace
o Strongly agree (5)
o Agree (4)
o Neither agree nor disagree (3)
o Disagree (2)
o Strongly disagree (1)

Q17 I believe my workplace has a responsibility to address racial equity
o Strongly agree (5)
o Agree (4)
o Neither agree nor disagree (3)
o Disagree (2)
o Strongly disagree (1)

Q18 My library has made a formalized commitment to addressing and eliminating racial inequities
o Strongly agree (5)
o Agree (4)

o Neither agree nor disagree (3)
o Strongly disagree (2)
o Disagree (1)

Q18.1 If strongly agree or agree, what does that commitment look like? Select all that apply.
☐ Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Committee (1)
☐ Racial equity or EDI mission statement (2)
☐ Racial equity audit (3)
☐ Racial equity trainings (4)
☐ Racial equity statement of support (5)
☐ Commitment to be an anti-racist organization (6)
☐ Racial Equity/EDI officer (7)
☐ Designated EDI HR representative (8)
☐ Other (please specify): (9)

_____

Q19 Does your library promote EDI principles and practices to library staff?
o Yes (1)
o No (2)
o Unsure (3)

Q19.1 If yes, select all that apply
☐ Assign personal librarians as liaisons to programs devoted to Black, Indigenous, people of color (BIPOC) or marginalized groups (1)
☐ Allow library staff to attend library programming and/or events related to EDI on work time (2)
☐ Charge one or more library committees to focus on EDI issues and initiatives (3)
☐ Collect and preserve materials related to BIPOC and marginalized groups (4)
☐ Collect materials related to teaching and/or research in EDI (5)
☐ Participate in and/or lead research related to EDI (6)
☐ Serve on campus committee(s) focused on EDI (7)
☐ Support staff participation in professional development for EDI (8)
☐ Conduct ClimateQUAL surveys to assess for racial equity within the library (9)
☐ Has supports for BIPOC library staff, such as racial healing circles or affinity groups (10)
☐ Other (please specify): (11)

_____

Q20 My library addresses racial inequities by hiring Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) employees
o Yes (1)
o No (2)
o Unsure (3)

Q20.1 If yes, select all that apply:
☐ Action plans for recruiting BIPOC candidates (1)
☐ Uses a hiring rubric when evaluating potential candidates (2)

☐ Conducts anonymous peer review of resumes and other application materials (3)

☐ Analyzes the numbers of applicants, finalists, and hires for BIPOC candidates (4)

☐ Includes an explicit EDI statement in job postings (5)

☐ Offers implicit bias training for library hiring manager and search committee (6)

☐ Dedicates staff to help integrate EDI principles into each state of the hiring process (7)

☐ Agrees upon in advance as a hiring committee what an ideal answer looks like to an interview question before conducting interviews (8)

☐ Ensures that hiring committees are racially diverse (9)

☐ Trains search committee on best practices for inclusive searches (10)

☐ Other (please specify): (11)

_____

Q20.2 If no or unsure, please explain:

_____

Q21 My library addresses racial inequities by retaining BIPOC employees?
o Yes (1)
o No (2)
o Unsure (3)

Q21.1 If yes, select all that apply:
☐ Regularly assesses the organizational culture to ensure that BIPOC are hired into an inclusive organization (1)

☐ Generates solidarity statements (2)

☐ Provides EDI training for library staff (3)

☐ Provides formal mentorship for new hires (4)

☐ Pay BIPOC equitable wages (5)

☐ Compensates BIPOC employees when asking them to take on EDI responsibilities (6)

Q21.2 If no or unsure, please explain:

_____

Q22 My library addresses racial inequities by promoting BIPOC employees:
o Yes (1)
o No (2)
o Unsure (3)

Q22.1 If yes, select all that apply:
☐ Has BIPOC employees in management and administrative positions (1)

☐ Has leadership training for BIPOC employees (2)

☐ Formal mentorship for future BIPOC leaders (3)

☐ Other (please specify): (4)

_____

Q22.2 If no or unsure, please explain:

_____

Q23 Select all of the support structures that your workplace has set up for employees to address the racial inequities they experience or witness:

☐ Human resources process (1)
☐ Supervisor or administrative support (2)
☐ Formalized accountability process (3)
☐ Town halls (4)
☐ Bias incident reporting system (5)
☐ Ombudsman office (6)
☐ Union representation (7)
☐ Mediators (8)
☐ Other (please specify): (9)

_____

Q24 Have there been employee trainings on racial equity or EDI principles?
o Yes (1)
o No (2)

Q24.1 If yes, how frequently has your organization provided trainings on racial equity or EDI in the past year?
o Once (1)
o 2-3 times (2)
o More than 3 times (3)
o Unsure (4)

Q24.2 Have they been mandatory for all employees?
o Yes, for all (1)
o Yes, for some (2)
o No (3)
o Unsure (4)

Q24.3 Did you attend these trainings?
o Yes (1)
o No (2)

Q24.4 Who conducted the training?
o Library personnel (1)
o Human Resources (2)
o External presenter (3)
o Campus or administrative personnel (4)
o Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Office (5)
o Unsure (6)
o Other (please specify) (7) _____

Q24.5 What content was covered in the training? Select all that apply:
☐ Recruitment and retention of Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) employees (1)
☐ How to be an anti-racist organization (2)

☐   Implicit bias (3)
☐   Microaggressions (4)
☐   Alternatives to calling the police (5)
☐   How to restructure decision making so that power is shared within the library (6)
☐   Other (please specify) (7)

_____

Q24.6 Did you find the training useful in your professional practice?
o Very useful (3)
o Somewhat useful (2)
o Not at all useful (1)

Q24.7 Why or why not?

_____

Q24.8 Did the trainings lead to any changes in library procedures or policies?
o Yes (1)
o No (2)
o Unsure (3)

Q24.9 If yes, please explain more.

_____

Q25 Does management acknowledge when racist actions and comments take place in your library?
o Yes (1)
o No (2)
o Unsure (3)

Q25.1 If yes, how do they communicate this? Select all that apply:
o Publicly (1)
o Privately (2)
o Other (please specify): (3) _____

Q26 There is a management and leadership protocol for acknowledging and apologizing for racist actions and comments in my library
o Yes (1)
o No (2)
o Unsure (3)

Q27 When racist actions or comments have occurred in your workplace, management and leadership are proactive in addressing the situation and requiring accountability?
o Strongly agree (5)
o Agree (4)
o Neither agree nor disagree (3)
o Disagree (2)
o Strongly disagree (1)

Q28 Power is shared within my library to enact changes around racial equity in regard to policies, practices, and procedures:
o Strongly agree (5)
o Agree (4)
o Neither agree nor disagree (3)
o Disagree (2)
o Strongly disagree (1)

Q29 Are racial equity commitments within your library subject to specific accountability measures?
o Yes (1)
o No (2)
o Unsure (3)

Q29.1 If yes, what are they?

_____

Q30 Is there anything else you would like us to know? Please share below.

_____