SHUT UP AND LEAD: A MIXED METHODS STUDY ON THE IMPACTS MICROAGGRESSIONS HAVE ON MARGINALIZED INDIVIDUALS OF COLOR WHO HOLD A LEADERSHIP POSITION IN HIGHER EDUCATION

by

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ABSTRACT

Microaggressions are subtle and sometimes unrecognizable as racist, biased, and stereotypical actions. With the increased number of Minoritized Individuals of Color (MIOC) hired into staff, faculty, and leadership positions, it is imperative to assess the degree microaggressions impact them as they navigate their duties, responsibilities, and day-to-day interactions. These impacts can vary from emotional and psychological to physiological. Moreover, it is vital to understand the occurrence and type of microaggressions endured by marginalized individuals of color (MIOCs). Although students, staff, faculty, and administrators are significant populations in higher education, this study focuses on MIOCs who hold leadership positions in Texas. This mixed methods phenomenological study describes the degree microaggressions directly impact the experience of (1) Black or African American, (2) Hispanic or Latino, and (3) Asian leaders in higher education institutions. The research aspires to answer the primary question: What are the occurrences, types, and impacts of microaggressions experienced by marginalized individuals of color who hold a leadership position in a Texas higher education institution, and what responses and approaches do they use to acknowledge, address, or eliminate microaggression incidents?

Keywords: microaggressions, minoritized individuals of color (MIOC), marginalized leaders of color (MLOCs),

DEDICATION

To my mother, Leonor Calderon, and my father, Roberto Calderon, for having the courage and resilience to traverse another country and provide their children with incredible opportunities.

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Chapter One: Introduction

INTRODUCTION

With the shift towards equity and inclusion initiatives, higher education institutions are increasingly hiring marginalized individuals of color (MIOCs) into staff, faculty, and leadership positions (Wallace et al., 2014). Hiring more MIOCs could potentially create a false sense of advancement if hidden factors (microaggressions) continue to linger, destroying sustainable diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) initiatives. Marginalized individuals hired into leadership positions are American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, Black, or African American, Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, and Hispanic or Latino. Although racism is recognized as a heinous reality that people believe was left in the Antebellum days, society is blind to a new invisible destroyer— microaggressions (Sue & Spanierman, 2020). These microaggressions influence individuals regardless of social status, gender, religion, sexual orientation, or professional position. Acts committed under the umbrella of microaggressions can be elusive and unrecognizable as racist, stereotypical, or biased actions (Young et al., 2015). Therefore, there has been an increased interest in studying and understanding microaggressions (Young et al., 2015), in the workplace, predominantly from a qualitative approach. However, the method used in this study is convergent mixed methods research that focuses on a phenomenological approach that describes the occurrences, types, and impacts experienced by MIOCs who hold executive leadership positions at a higher education institution in Texas. The executive leadership positions

in this study are president, vice president (not academic affairs), provost (academic affairs), executive director, and director.

Furthermore, it is essential to understand and describe the responses to microaggressions by these leaders of color when confronted with these experiences. Young et al. (2015) clarify that "although there has been substantial research examining the effects of microaggressions in the public sphere, there has been little research that examines microaggressions in the workplace" (p. 61). The study did not manipulate microaggressions; instead, the researcher queried the current degree to which they exist in the working environment of MIOCs in executive leadership positions (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). This chapter outlines (a) the background of the study, (b) a statement of the problem, (c) research questions, (d) the purpose of the study, (e) the definition of terms, (f) conceptual frameworks, (g) assumptions, (h) limitations and delimitations, (i) the researcher's rationale for the study, and (j) organization of the dissertation.

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Historically, White males dominated executive leadership positions in academia, including the president and other leadership positions. Espinosa et al. (2019) proclaim that "in 1986, Whites represented 91.9% of all college and university presidents. While Whites remained the majority in 2016, their representation declined...[to] 83.2%" (p. 266). Moreover, an increased percentage of MIOCs have moved into the president, vice president, provost, executive director, and director positions (Table 1). Demographics from 2022 highlight that MIOCs in leadership positions continue to grow.

Table 1. Demographic of Higher Education Leaders, by Percent (2022)

Demographic Trait	Position Title			
	President (%)	Vice President of Student Affairs (%)	Vice President of Academic Affairs (%)	Provost (%)
Male	52.0	49.2	57.1	54.2
Female	47.6	50.8	42.9	45.8
White	68.0	68.7	69.0	68.6
Hispanic or Latino	14.0	13.1	13.3	13.4
Black or African American	10.2	11.2	10.7	11.0
Asian	4.6	4.5	4.5	4.5
American Indian and Alaska Native	.06	0.6	0.6	0.6
Unknown	2.0	1.9	1.9	1.9

Exploring this shift in leadership demographic is essential because there is a misconception that increased hiring of MIOCs means institutions have reversed social injustice or eliminated biases and racism (Lyer, 2022). Institutions must determine if hiring MIOCs influences their improvement toward advancing people of color and sustainable diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) efforts. Additionally, with the increased number of marginalized individuals of color (MIOCs) hired into leadership positions, it is imperative to assess the degree to which microaggressions impact them as they navigate responsibilities, relationships, and progression efforts. Evatt-Young and Bryson (2021) proclaim that:

> In the midst of a global pandemic, racialized violence, and civil unrest, higher education leaders are faced with a difficult reality as their constituents call for meaningful engagement and leadership. While many higher education institutions claim to value racial equity and inclusion and have identified them as hallmarks in their mission statements or strategic plans, a culture of Whiteness and everyday White supremacy continues to plague higher education institutions. (p. 47)

Because systems and governments are functioning under a culture of Whiteness, higher education institutions must explore the experience MIOCs leaders in higher education have with

the detrimental hindrance of microaggressions. Without this reflection and acknowledgment, institutional shifts toward social justice and DEI may lack sustainable implementation (Lyer, 2022).

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

As higher education institutions shift toward hiring more marginalized individuals of color into staff, faculty, and leadership positions, it can create hindrances or a false sense of progress toward diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) (Lyer, 2022). Organizations from all sectors, including higher education, have increasingly needed to combat antiracism and enact transformational change (Alcade, 2021). This revolutionary transformation is placed on MIOCs, which can increase the promotion of people of color to leadership positions (Alcade, 2021). However, there is a misconception that institutions with people of color in executive leadership positions have combatted inequality and exclusion. Alcade (2021) reiterates that people of color, particularly women in leadership positions, "continue to experience toxic environment rife with microaggressions, tokenism, harassment and bullying" (p. 1). Microaggressions may plague the structures, frameworks, and governance used at institutions pushing for DEI.

Therefore, there is an urgent need to determine if microaggressions are occurring in the executive leadership realm and the types of microaggressions that impact MIOCs in their day-to-day responsibilities. Furthermore, deciding if microaggressions have any emotional, psychological, or physiological impacts on these executive leaders is essential. Also, if marginalized leaders of color (MLOCs) experience microaggressions, it is significant to understand the responses and approaches implemented to address and eliminate these occurrences. Understanding these factors can indicate the seriousness of exclusion and inequality in an institution's infrastructure. The complexity of DEI advancement is that microaggressions

are subtle and unrecognizable as racist and biased actions which can be difficult for White colleagues to acknowledge or understand. Although there is an increased number of people of color in leadership positions, there is a "lack of support and mentorship…[MIOCs] receive little or no encouragement to seek leadership positions while men, particularly White men, are…pursued [for] administrative roles to a greater degree" (Breeden, 2021, Lack of Support section, para. 1). While the lack of a mentoring structure may not appear as a microaggression, to MIOCs this is a system of exclusion that hinders their path towards leadership. Therefore, it is imperative to conduct phenomenological research to describe the degree to which microaggressions directly impact the experience of MLOCs who hold leadership positions at Texas' higher education institutions. Including various MLOCs provided a clearer understanding of the impact of leaders. Hence, the study described the experience of Asian, Black or African Americans, and Hispanics or Latinos with microaggressions as they navigate their ranks in higher education institutions.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This convergent mixed method study used a phenomenological approach to address one primary and five secondary research questions. The data gathered in response to these inquiries provided a descriptive analysis of microaggressions' influence on MLOCs in higher education.

- *Primary Question*:

    1. What are the occurrences, types, and impacts of microaggressions experienced by marginalized individuals of color who hold a leadership position in a Texas higher education institution, and what responses and approaches do they use to acknowledge, address, or eliminate microaggression incidents?

- *Secondary-Level Research Questions*:

    1. What are the leadership positions MIOCs hold while still experiencing microaggressions?

2. Are microaggression occurrences, types, impacts, and responses/approaches different for MIOCs once they navigate toward leadership positions in higher education?
3. Do intersectionalities influence the occurrences, types, impacts, or responses/approaches?
4. What is a leader's understanding of their institution's attempt to acknowledge, address, or eliminate microaggressions committed against leaders who are marginalized individuals of color?
5. What advice do MLOCs give to other MIOCs aspiring to become leaders who might experience microaggressions?

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

This phenomenological approach aimed to describe microaggressions MLOCs experience in higher education institutions as they navigate professional advancement. A mixed methods approach provides a statistical and narrative description of the phenomenon that is microaggressions. Quantitative and qualitative data reveal the prevalence, severity, and impacts microaggressions have on MIOCs' day-to-day leadership commitments, relationships, and methods. Schoonenboom and Johnson (2017) explain that "the overall goal of mixed methods research, of combining qualitative and quantitative research components, is to expand and strengthen a study's conclusions and, therefore, contribute to the published literature" (p. 110). Therefore, examining and exposing these leaders' experiences with microaggressions can result in training and initiatives that recognize and eliminate these acts from top to bottom. Moreover, institutions must use microaggression data to identify, comprehend, and address the microaggressions experienced by leaders of color in their organizations.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Existing studies focus extensively on qualitative research that explores the experience students, staff, and faculty face with microaggressions, proving the significance and value of this study's aim. There is an incredible worth and importance to this study because limited research

focuses on the impacts or experiences that minority individuals of color (MIOCs) who hold leadership positions in higher education have with microaggressions. Espinosa et al. (2019) proclaim that since 2016 MIOCs have moved toward leadership positions; furthermore, "Blacks (7.9%), Hispanics (3.9%), Asians (2.3%), and individuals of more than one race (1.4%)" now hold executive leadership positions in higher education institutions (p. 266). It is imperative to study the impact microaggressions have on people of color who are executive leaders because their experiences with these acts can influence the implementation and sustainability of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) initiatives within their organizations. DEI infrastructures must exist to support top to bottom approaches for organizations to sustain transformative change.

Moreover, quantitative research is limited to describing the microaggressions that MIOCs in leadership roles experience as they navigate their positions in higher education institutions. Quantitative analysis provides the study with "a solid foundation in statistics [that] ensures that…the study has statistical validity" (Fallon, 2016, p. 15). Through quantitative research, the researcher determined that categories and variables were influenced by microaggressions, providing descriptive data rather than inferential statistics (Fallon, 2016). The quantitative analysis narrowed the gaps and limitations in current studies that aim to describe the strain that MIOCs leaders face with hindering microaggressions that influence their interactions in an environment that has traditionally excluded their experience. More significantly, this quantitative research validates microaggressions as data-driven experiences rather than sheer personal narratives.

It is vital to incorporate a mixed methods approach to improve the description of the phenomenological focus of microaggressions. This approach strengthens and validates the experiences of people of color because it uses quantitative and qualitative data. The qualifiable

data provided numerical interpretation. In contrast, qualitative data supports and further explains this phenomenon through narrative data. Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2001) describe the value of mixed methods research as the following:

> During the data analysis stage, quantitative data can facilitate the assessment of the generalizability of the qualitative data and shed new light on qualitative findings. Alternatively, during the data analysis stage, qualitative data can play an important role by interpreting, clarifying, describing, and validating quantitative results, as well as through grounding and modifying. (p. 115)

Due to the gaps, limitations, and inadequacies in the current research, it is valuable to use mixed methods research with a phenomenological aim to describe the degree to which microaggressions directly impact the experience of minoritized individuals of color (MIOCs) who hold a leadership position at a Texas' higher education institutions. Also, this study includes the experience of several multiple race groups that identify as MIOCs. It is vital to use race and ethnicity variables to "explore phenomena directly related to [the researched] concepts… [and they can] describe differences in experiences among racial and ethnic groups" (Ross et al., 2020, p. 319). Including various race groups is essential as microaggressions can impact without discrimination of intersectionality, but rather misguided misconceptions on race and ethnicity.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

This study explores various aspects of microaggressions, race, and intersectionality factors. Therefore, it is essential to understand the definition of these terms as the reader engages with the data, findings, analysis, and recommendations.

- Microaggressions

> The concept of microaggression is defined as "subtle snubs, slights, and insults directed toward minorities, as well as to women and other historically stigmatized groups, that implicitly communicate" (Lilienfeld, 2017, p. 139) or produce hostility, exclusion, or divisiveness. Furthermore, it is crucial to understand the microaggression types (Table 2) in the environment in which MIOCs engage as they traverse higher education.

Table 2. Microaggression Types and Definitions

TYPE	DEFINITION
Microinsult	Behavioral/verbal remarks or comments that convey rudeness, insensitivity, and demean a person's racial heritage or identity.
Microassault	Explicit racial derogations are characterized primarily by a violent verbal or nonverbal attack meant to hurt the intended victim through name-calling, avoidant behavior, or purposeful discriminatory actions.
Microinvalidation	Verbal comments or behaviors that exclude, negate, or nullify the psychological thoughts, feelings, or experiential reality of a person of color.
Environmental	Racial assaults, insults, and invalidations are manifested on systemic and environmental levels.
Ascription of Intelligence	Assigning a degree of intelligence to a person of color based on race.
Color Blindness	Denial or pretense that a White person does not see color or race.
Myth of Meritocracy	Statements that assert that race plays a minor role in life success.

Note. The microaggression terms and definitions are directly from Sue et al. (2007a) Racial Microaggressions in Everyday Life: Implications for Clinical Practice. The terms and definitions are provided in Figure 1: Categories of and Relationships Among Racial Microaggressions.

The research addresses microaggressions using the following terms to clearly and specifically describe an experience.

- Racial Microaggression: These are subtle exchanges that insult or degrade a person of color because of the racial minority group they are perceived to belong to (Sue & Constantine, 2007).
- Sex/Gender Microaggression: These subtle exchanges insult or degrade a person based on the sex/gender they are perceived to belong to.
- Age Microaggression: These are subtle exchanges that insult or degrade a person based on the age they are perceived to belong to.
- Sexual Orientation Microaggression: These are subtle exchanges that insult or degrade a person based on the sexual orientation they are perceived to belong to.

Other Terms

Explaining that the terms marginalized and minoritized are used interchangeably throughout the research is essential.

- Minoritized groups are defined as marginalized individuals who identify as people of color.
- Intersectionality is defined as the interactions of social categories and experiences such as social class, race/ethnicity, sex/gender, sexual orientation, and age.

These terms play an essential component in the research and describe the influence microaggressions have on the experience of marginalized individuals of color who hold leadership positions in a Texas higher education institution.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OF THE STUDY

When dealing with traumatic issues like microaggressions, using an appropriate framework and design to guide participant interactions is imperative. The mixed methods approach allowed for the inclusion of qualitative elements due to the nature of this phenomenon. Providing the participants with the opportunity to use narrative and feedback to describe the harsh impacts of microaggressions may have limited the stress experienced by recalling experiences with microaggressions. Descriptions permit participants to provide their lived experience through their lens and experienced truth. Creswell and Poth (2018) express that narrative research has "the ability to transform the world" (p. 7). Allowing MLOCs to voice specific encounters with microaggressions brings visibility and validity to their experience. Narratives and written artifacts support further exploration of cultural, political, educational, and social limitations (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 67). People of color (POC) are experts at telling their stories through narratives. For some participants, this study might have been the first time

they had been allowed to share their trauma with microaggressions experienced in higher education.

Furthermore, the inclusion of quantitative research aided in overcoming the challenge of minimizing the living participants' potentially harmful and detrimental experiences with the phenomenon of microaggressions. It provides the same value as qualitative narrative research. The mixed methods approach allows conceptual frameworks that strengthen data that expose, support, or expand on social constraints that coerce minoritized populations. This phenomenological study uses Microaggression Theory (MT) and Critical Race Theory (CRT) perspectives; furthermore, it considers the role of identity-neutral leadership (INL) and the psychological significance of microaggressions.

MICROAGGRESSION THEORY

It is essential to use this perspective as it directly correlates, intending to describe the phenomenological experience with microaggressions. Microaggression Theory was used because it "validates the experience of those who have been targets and educates those who have been (un)willing perpetrators" (Torino et al., 2019, p. 274). Tinto et al. (2019) believe that the Microaggression Theory has had the most impact on higher education due to student and employee activism against social injustice. Furthermore, this theory provides awareness of the effects people of color experience with microaggressions comments when they intersect with their race, gender, and sexual orientation (Torino et al., 2019). It is important to note that microaggressions can be communicated implicitly or explicitly; regardless of the experience, it is received the same by MIOCs who are the targets of these actions. Therefore, Microaggression Theory relies on the belief that when individuals are offended, institutions must have structures

that allow for respectful dialogue that eliminates microaggressions between groups (Torino et al., 2019).

CRITICAL RACE THEORY

The study used Critical Race Theory (CRT) as it influences progress in higher education organizations. CRT is imperative as it empowers humans to overcome limitations and obstacles based on social constructs. Furthermore, CRT explores and challenges the relationship between racism, race, intersectionality, and power (McCoy & Rodricks, 2015). Additionally, this perspective allows for descriptive data that voice the experiences of MIOCs who have experienced microaggressions while progressing through positions of authority and status within traditional systems created to exclude certain groups. Critical Race Theory studies can identify that "negative experiences with discrimination…affect the campus racial climate, which is associated with educational inequities that exist between" (Lewis et al., 2019, p. 1050) individuals of color and White groups. Critical Race Theory is crucial as it intersects with microaggressions by placing race and racism in historical and contemporary frameworks (McCoy & Rodricks, 2015). More importantly, using CRT was vital to determining microaggressions' influence on "educational structures, practices, and discourse" (McCoy & Rodricks, 2015, p. 17).

IDENTITY-NEUTRAL LEADERSHIP

However, MIOCs' existence relies on engaging through the double-consciousness as it is rooted in generations of oppression (Bruce, 1992). In *The Souls of Black Folks,* W.E.B. Du Bois describes the complex duality of existing in White structures and frameworks while being American and a person of color (Bruce, 1992). Double consciousness is a precursor to identity-neutral leadership, which asserts that leadership was not constructive with frameworks that

validated racial or gender intersects; in fact, they were ignored or silenced (Weiner et al., 2021). Furthermore, identity-neutral leadership focuses on the reality that "gender and racial discrimination in educational leadership in the United States are pervasive and well-documented" (Weiner et al., 2021, p. 5). Therefore, the descriptions of marginalized individuals of color who experience microaggressions while holding an executive leadership position can provide an analysis of this phenomenon. INL explains that expectations and behaviors of leadership have remained traditionally White-male dominant.

Furthermore, the slow shift towards diversity, equity, and inclusion reveals that hidden barriers (microaggressions) threatened the sustainability of this ambitious paradigm shift towards obtaining social justice for a population subjugated through American history. Identity-Neutral Theory is sprung from the established Leadership Identity Theory that explores the factors influencing leadership in organizational structures (Marchiondo et al., 2015). Also, LIT and INT explore and maintain that a leader must sustain a sense of belonging because the feeling of being an outsider can negatively impact professional advancement (Settefens et al., 2014).

PSYCHOLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE

Torres et al. (2010)'s *Racial Microaggressions and Psychological Functioning Among Highly Achieving African-Americans: A Mixed-Methods Approach* explains the psychological significance microaggressions have on people of color. This study identifies the link these experiences have on mental health implications and their impact on the advancement of MIOCs. The psychological significance perspective suggests that the "everyday disparaging messages [of microaggressions], which are often ambiguous, carry with them more severe psychological consequences than overt forms of discrimination" (Torres et al., 2010, p. 1076). Through this perspective, the study aimed to provide a descriptive analysis that explained the experiences

marginalized individuals of color endure while holding executive leadership positions in higher education.

ASSUMPTIONS

This study is centered around ontological, epistemological, and axiological assumptions. The ontological approach provides findings that deliver multiple realities through multiple forms of evidence and themes (Creswell & Poth, 2018). MIOCs experience microaggressions in various forms. The other identifiers of the person of color, such as race, gender, age, religion, culture, sexual orientation, and language, directly impact microaggressions' occurrence and magnitude. The experiences of MIOCs develop and support the multitude of microaggression perspectives in higher education. Furthermore, with the epistemological postulation, the study establishes that personal narratives and expressed experiences of MIOCs serve as reliable knowledge (Creswell & Poth, 2018). This assumption relies on the recounting of an individual's experience with microaggressions. The narratives should encourage the further need to address the context and themes woven into the descriptions (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Finally, through the axiological assumption, the study understands that their gender, ethnicity, generation, and cultural identity encompass their existence as minoritized individuals of color (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p.21). Furthermore, their personal and continuous experiences with microaggressions directly influence their commitment to developing data that provides an honest and transparent understanding of MIOCs who experience microaggressions as they traverse leadership responsibilities.

LIMITATIONS AND DELIMITATIONS

No research process is free from limitations and delimitations, so it is essential to present them to validate and provide transparency in a study. Limitations are factors not under the

researcher's control; furthermore, they can impact "the interpretation of the findings or the generalizability of the results" (Lunenburg & Irby, 2008, p. 133). Additionally, delimitations are limitations or boundaries established by the researcher to narrow "the purpose and scope of the study" (Lunenburg & Irby, 2008, p. 134). The limitations and delimitations are as follows:

LIMITATIONS

Although the researcher used a pilot for the Microaggression Climate Survey, the prescreening of demographic questions resulted in limited recruitment. While fifty participants engaged in the survey, nineteen were excluded due to their responses. The language and terms used in the three prescreening questions provided confusion: (1) Do you identify as a MIOC (marginalized individual of color)? (2) Do you hold one of the following leadership positions: president, vice president, provost, executive director, or director? and (3) Do you hold a leadership position at a Texas higher education institution? For example, question one used the term marginalization, and some participants expressed that they did not identify with this term and selected 'no' to this question. Also, the terms used for each leadership position limited others from participating as they felt their title did not fit under any of the possible selection options. Finally, for the final question, other participants stated not to be employed at a higher education institution even though they were recruited through Texas organizations. Perhaps using a general term instead of community college or university created confusion.

Using an online survey design provided an incredible opportunity for completing a mixed methods study. However, there were limitations in the quantitative and qualitative data. First, due to the topic's sensitive nature, participants were permitted to skip questions, so the number of responses varied from twenty-four to thirty-one throughout the questions. Also, the participants were asked to provide additional comments on the quantitative questions, but these

responses were not required. Additionally, the instructions did not provide examples of viable or effective narrative descriptions. Furthermore, the qualitative data was limited as participants responded to two open-ended questions instead of semi-structured interviews. Although almost twenty-four participants provided narratives for these questions, there was no opportunity for follow-up or clarification.

Due to the inclusion of multiple intersections and desegregated factors, the data resulted in exuberant information, which is beneficial to the study of microaggressions; however, due to a limited period for data collection and analysis, the researcher had to be selective on which data to present in the analysis chapter.

Delimitations

The researcher decided to include specific executive leadership positions: president, vice president (not academic affairs), provost (academic affairs), executive director, and director, excluding middle managers (like deans and department chairs).

The study limited participation to executive leaders employed in a Texas higher education institution, excluding all other states in the United States.

The study relied heavily on two organizations for recruitment and social media (LinkedIn) with snowballing for participation, limiting substantial participation and engagement with the survey to two organizations and one social media platform.

The researcher designed questions focusing on microaggressions, excluding occurrences with overt racism or other isms.

Even with these limitations and delimitations, the researcher worked diligently to ensure that the data and analysis reflected the experiences of the marginalized individuals of color who participated in this study. The researcher assiduously addressed any misconceptions or biases

toward the phenomenon of microaggressions to ensure that results reflected the outcome as expressed by the participants and not the researcher.

RESEARCHER'S RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY

The researcher is a marginalized individual of color who has navigated academia as a student, faculty, and leader. More significantly, she has lived in a world that continuously reminds her of her hyphenated existence through overt racist comments or covert microaggressions. Throughout the years, she witnessed incidents that reminded her that ethnic minorities must 1) be grateful for their advancement, 2) remain silent among social injustice or exclusion, and 3) remember they hold an inferior racial position. Anbinder (2019) reiterates that "the idea that immigrants and their offspring should either accept America as it is or 'go home' echoes attacks against" (p. 1) ethnic minorities for centuries. This creed sends the message that people of color, regardless of the number of centuries they have lived in America, are not entitled to equal rights as Americans (White groups). Therefore, those who complain, particularly those who have made it, are ungrateful, strengthening an ideology rooted in racism (Cheng, 2017). The word 'grateful' establishes a visual notion of an ethnic minority looking at White America with "a kind of silent deference" (Cheng, 2017). Individuals of color who advance in sectors of America, including academia, science, technology, film, music, or sports, have earned those accomplishments through aptitude, ability, dedication, and assiduousness.

Moreover, the 'shut up and dribble' occurrence in 2018 between Fox host Laura Ingraham and Lebron James and Kevin Durant (Galily, 2019) reignited the researcher's interest in exploring the duality that people of color must confront as they gain advancement in racist structures and frameworks. These exceptional athletes were ridiculed for protesting against the government and social injustice against Blacks in America (Tenjido, 2020). These athletic

leaders' activism against antiquated and racist policies and practices revealed that organizations "reinforce subordination, marginalization, and exploitation of certain groups" (Galily, 2019, p. 1). Ingraham's comments were viewed as racist by these athletes, but she argued that it was a misunderstanding. Ingraham proclaimed that athletes should avoid political discourse (Niven, 2021). However, she welcomed White quarterback Drew Brees on her show to discuss his criticism of other predominantly Black athletes who protested the national anthem (Niven, 2021). This double standard reinforces that "immigrants, including African Americans, should be eternally grateful for living in the US" (Uzoezie, 2020) and should refrain from expressing dissatisfaction with a county that has provided them with an 'American' dream.

Additionally, people of color who move through barriers to obtain advancement and success must remember that there is a hierarchal order in racial position. There are those in society, regardless of sector, who believe an individual's race, gender, and age are appropriate measures of value and intellect. Zou and Cheryan (2017) explain that

> Whites are perceived and treated as superior and American; African Americans as inferior and relatively American compared with Latinos and Asian Americans; Latinos as inferior and foreign; and Asian Americans as foreign and relatively superior compared to African Americans and Latinos (p. 696).

This comparison of superiority and citizen status between Black, Latinos, and Asians creates and sustains an attitude that ethnic populations must fight for their privilege and equity (Cheng, 2017). Furthermore, the model minority myth reinforces this clash between minorities by establishing the misconception that Asian Americans are efficacious due to their hard-working nature and that their advancement proves that racism does not exist (Matriano et al., 2021). More devastating, this misguided myth reinforces the assumptions that Black and Brown individuals are limited by their inadequacies and inability to be assiduous enough to advance (Matriano et al., 2021).

Finally, considering these factors and realities, the researcher contemplated the experience of marginalized leaders of color (MLOCs) as they advance in higher education institutions. She sought to discover if MLOCs face microaggressions influencing their path toward success. Even more importantly, the researcher wanted to identify if the declaration 'shut up and lead' plays any role in the experience of MLOCs who either experience or witness microaggressions.

ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY

This mixed methods approach study is organized into six chapters.

Chapter One (Introduction): Launches the introduction of the study by developing the background, statement problem, research questions, purpose and significance, the definition of terms, conceptual framework, assumptions, limitations and delimitations, and the researcher's rationale for the study. Chapter Two (Literature Review): Provides a thorough and scholarly literature review that develops the concepts of marginalized individuals of color in higher education, microaggressions in higher education, leading literature and studies on microaggressions, microaggressions in literature and research, and theoretical and methodology constructs for the research. Chapter Three (Methodology): Establishes the rationale for the purpose of the study, selection of participants, instrumentation, data collection, and data analysis, along with the supporting subcategories, to explain the mixed methods phenomenological approach of the study. Chapter Four (Results and Findings): Illustrates the research questions, quantitative results and findings (demographics), quantitative results and findings (occurrences, types, impacts, and responses/approaches), qualitative results and conclusions (emerging concepts), and (e) quantitative results and findings (emerging themes). Chapter Five (Analysis and Discussion): Presents the quantitative and qualitative analysis and discussion, providing

quantifiable comprehension and the emerging concepts and themes. Chapter Six (Conclusions, Implications, and Recommendations): Finalizes the study by exploring conclusions, implications, and recommendations, supporting them with the findings and analysis.

CONCLUSION

Identifying quantitative and qualitative data that truthfully measure and elucidate the experience marginalized individuals of color endure with microaggressions in an executive leadership position in higher education organizations is challenging. However, using the phenomenological method through a mixed methods approach allowed for descriptive analysis, identifying the commonality of experience with microaggressions among MIOCs. This study's purpose and significance are vital in this paradigm shift toward sustaining diversity, equity, and inclusion in higher education. Furthermore, this study contributes to the limited literature review on microaggressions' impacts on executive leaders. Elusive and unrecognizable as racist, stereotypical, and biased actions under the umbrella of microaggressions impact MIOCs, and acknowledging and addressing them is critical to sustainable DEI initiatives. The mere increase in hiring MIOCs into executive leadership positions does not resolve social injustice and exclusion, which are embedded in ancient institutional structures, policies, and practices. Therefore, an exploration and examination of the literature review in Chapter Two support the need for further empirical research on MLOCs' experience with microaggressions in higher education.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

INTRODUCTION

As higher education shifts towards improving diversity, equity, and inclusion, an increased initiative exists to promote marginalized individuals of color (MIOCs) into leadership positions. Academic research has expanded to focus on the experience students, staff, faculty, and leaders have as they progress through higher education. Therefore, it is imperative to explore the literature to determine if DEI's higher education paradigm shift in leadership positions has improved relationships between people of color and the structures and frameworks designed for and by White counterparts, eliminating racism, biases, and microaggressions. However, it is vital to determine if the increased hiring of leaders of color has created a false sense of advancement due to the failure to acknowledge, address, and eliminate pervasive microaggressions that impact the relationships between marginalized leaders of color (MLOCs) and their institutions.

This mixed methods phenomenological study aimed to explore and research the role and influence microaggressions have on marginalized individuals of color (MIOCs) who hold leadership positions at Texas higher education institutions. Furthermore, the literature surveyed examines and reveals the experiences of African American or Black, Asian, Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, and Hispanic or Latino with microaggressions, exposing the value of this study. Experts have studied the impacts and influence microaggressions have on the advancement of inclusion at all levels of organizational leadership; therefore, this exploration exposed the value of a mixed method over a qualitative or quantitative approach. The human

experience is complex, and the literature revealed the importance of continuous research on microaggressions.

Using relevant and contemporary research and case studies, the researcher of this microaggression study sought to build on the current literature's strengths, gaps, and limitations to establish validity and value to their exploration and findings. The following literature review is pertinent, supporting the impacts marginalized individuals of color experience as they move towards leadership positions in higher education institutions. Furthermore, it examined the literature to identify the direct hindrance microaggressions have on implementing and sustaining transformational diversity, equity, and inclusion at Texan institutions. Chapter Two is organized into five sections: (a) Marginalized Individuals of Color in Higher Education, (b) Microaggressions in Higher Education, (c) Leading Literature and Studies on Microaggressions, (d) Microaggressions in Literature and Research, and (e) Theoretical and Methodology Constructs for the Study.

MARGINALIZED INDIVIDUALS OF COLOR IN HIGHER EDUCATION

OVERVIEW

Wechsler and Diner (2021) enlighten that before World War II, African Americans, immigrants, and ethnic minorities (Hispanics, Chinese, and Japanese) students and applicants were fundamentally different from Whites. Even though institutions were admitting token minority students, most "northern white colleges remained segregated" as Black students enrolled in Historically Black Colleges or Universities (HBCUs) (Wechsler & Diner, 2021, p. 39). It was essential to explore the historical background of race issues, social justice, and the inclusion of marginalized individuals in American society and higher education. Furthermore, this information offered a more significant comprehension of the trajectory of overt racism into

covert microaggressions, revealing the current position of marginalized individuals in higher education.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

American history is riddled with inequality, social injustice, racism, and brutal exclusion; therefore, it is unequivocal that higher education structures and frameworks mirror these traits in their organization (Luster Edward & Martin, 2018; Sue et al., 2007a; Sue et al., 2007b). Historically, higher education institutions were vital in advancing predominantly affluential White Americans, eventually including low-income and working-class Whites (Harris, 2021; Bailey et al., 2015). Ellsworth et al. (2022) emphasize that colleges and universities "only accepted White students until compelled to diversity under student pressure and civil legislation" (p. 6). As political, economic, and social needs and trends shifted, higher education realized the value marginalized individuals of color had on financially advancing an institution (Harris, 2021; Acker, 2006). There are hindering reminders of the racist systems that exist in higher education institutions. For example, some institutions did not begin to higher Black faculty until the 1970s; furthermore, at other institutions, White faculty members were allowed to teach that people of color were biologically intellectually inferior (Ellsworth et al., 2022; Wechsler & Diner, 2021). More devastating is that institutions, buildings, awards, and events bear the names of individuals who practiced and expressed ideologies of racism and inequality (Ellsworth et al., 2022; Wechsler & Diner, 2021). These facts support racist and oppressive systems and frameworks that hinder the initiatives of institutions to eliminate exclusions and social injustice. Harris (2021) reiterates that until the 1960s, "America's unequal higher-education system, with its well-funded institutions for White students, and its crappy Black colleges, was slowly changing" (p. 164).

Higher education institutions committed to social justice pushed programs and initiatives that increased equity and inclusion.

Bailey et al. (2015) reiterate that effective and socially aware institutions were "instrumental in improving educational equity and in efficiently developing" (p. vii) marginalized people of color. Influential institutions began to use altering demographics to advance their institution, focusing on diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI). These institutions started to serve low-income, first-generation, indigenous, immigrant, and people of color (Bailey et al., 2015). However, despite ongoing initiatives to shift towards DEI, analysis reveals that students, faculty, and leadership from marginalized populations (Latino and Hispanic, Black, Native Americans, and Pacific Islanders) are highly underrepresented in higher education institutions (Ellsworth et al., 2022). Although diversity and inclusion increased among student populations, the advancement of marginalized individuals of color (MIOCs) into middle-management and executive leadership was crippling low, as over 85% was represented by White males in higher education institutions (Hawkins & Nicola, 2017). With the push towards equality and the elimination of racism, institutions sought to increase diversity among leaders; however, due to increased inclusion but a failure to address systematic oppression and racism, the contemporary marginalized individual of color experiences new impediments.

CONTEMPORARY POSITION

As the views of racism shifted, social scientists proved that blunt expressions of racial discrimination in social realms were unaccepted; however, this led to an invisible and equally dangerous method of exclusion and bias, microaggressions (Douds Wyndham & Hout, 2020). Establishing inequality and social injustice is practiced and sustained in organizational structures (Acker 2006) such as higher education institutions. Furthermore, these organizations focus on

one aspect of an individual's intersectionality, often race and ethnicity, hindering the complexity of a marginalized individual's experience (Acker 2006). Eagly and Chin (2010) reiterate that researchers and scholars in education and leadership have inconsistently focused on the impacts and influences a leader's intersectionality (gender, race, culture, race, ethnicity, or sexual identity) has on their leadership practices, philosophies, and experiences with microaggressions. Therefore, this limitation has hindered an institution's understanding of the aspects that influence marginalized leaders, such as limited access to leadership roles, the double consciousness of these leaders, and a leader's success and influence based on support and resources (Eagly & Chin, 2010; Hawkins &Nicola, 2017). Furthermore, research indicates that marginalized individuals of color (MIOCs) experience microaggressions regularly, impacting their identities and intersections (Douds Wyndham & Hout, 2020). This circumstance is vital to understanding the current experience of people of color who hold leadership positions or aspire to move toward a leadership role.

Chun and Feagin (2020) reiterate that there is a lack of "racial and gender diversity in presidential and other top leadership positions in higher education…which serves to reinforce dominant norms" (pp. 3-4). These outdated and systematic systems limit diversity, equity, and inclusion and can promote microaggressions toward students, faculty, and leaders of color (Chun and Feagin, 2020). Therefore, the research proves that educational leadership diversity is instrumental in eradicating social injustices and inequality (Tchoumi, 2020). Institutions that promote DEI must continue to ensure that representation is possible throughout their institutions, including leadership. There must be measures to ensure that microaggressions are not impacting the advancement of leaders of color. Institutions seem to be more reactive than proactive with issues of race and equality. After the social and political unrest brought by Covid-19, the killing

of George Floyd, and the Black Lives Matter protests, institutions pushed toward inclusion efforts (Lederman, 2022). Between June 2020 and November 2021, about "35.4% of the presidents and chancellors that American colleges and universities hired were members of racial minority groups" (Lederman, 2022, p.1). The overall percentages of executive leaders were about 64% White, 25% Black, and 6% Latino (Lederman, 2022, p.1). Although this data focuses on the presidential position, the representation of people of color in various leadership positions parallels this evidence. Preskill and Brookfield (2009) explain that White individuals have been "socialized by patriarchy and White supremacy" (p. 1) because when they imagine a leader, they visualize an intellectual White man in a blue-power suit who deserves respect and authority. Therefore, hiring minorities is stigmatized with inferiority and affirmative action demands (Preskill & Brookfield, 2009), promoting misconceptions and microaggressions.

Furthermore, an institution's geographical location can reflect the hiring practices of people of color; red states (including Texas), which voted for former president Donald J. Trump hired 70% White and 30% minority presidents (Lederman, 2022). However, states that voted for president Joseph R. Biden hired only about 59% White and 41% minority presidents (Lederman, 2022). This data strengthens the reality that social and political constructs directly influence the structures and frameworks of higher education institutions. The issue with hiring more people of color is that institutions get caught up in a trend of DEI but fail to establish systems and resources that support leaders who are MIOCs (Lederman, 2022). Moreover, when microaggressions or racism arise at institutions, White institutional leaders and board members proclaim that these events are isolated incidents (Chun & Feagin, 2020). The severity of this mindset is that it encourages microaggressions and White silence, pacifying White bystanders and targeting students, faculty, and leaders of color (Chun & Feagin, 2020). It is essential to

understand four aspects associated with microaggressions in higher education: occurrences, types, impacts, and responses/approaches (coping strategies).

MICROAGGRESSIONS IN HIGHER EDUCATION

MICROAGGRESSIONS OVERVIEW

Microaggressions are subtle and occur daily (Sue & Spanierman, 2020) for marginalized individuals of color in America; these can happen at work, school, or on a family vacation. It is essential to understand that "micro" does not denote minor or inoffensive but instead describes the micro-level context of the action or behavior (Sue & Spanierman, 2020). Also, psychologists define "aggression as verbal and nonverbal behavior intended to harm" (Sue & Spanierman, 2020, p. 7). Microaggressions can be associated with various intersections (gender, race, and sexual orientation) and include multiple environmental factors (Sue & Spanierman, 2020). Also, Sue and Spanierman (2020) explain that microaggressions can take various forms and themes, including unconscious or conscious communications and actions. The ambiguous nature of microaggressions can cause adverse physical and psychological outcomes for marginalized individuals of color (Sue & Spanierman, 2020). Even more so, it is vital to create microinterventions that include targets (people of color), allies (dominant group), and bystanders (witnesses) (Sue & Spanierman, 2020, pp. 252-256). Therefore, exploring the literature further to understand occurrences, types, impacts, and responses/approaches is crucial.

OCCURRENCES

Microaggressions occur in each sector marginalized individuals of color interact with as they navigate systems and structures centered around Whiteness daily. Ong and Burrow (2017) present a damaging reality that most African American men in America experience microaggressions doing everyday tasks: shopping, walking, or using an elevator (173). In an

educational environment, an African American student might receive a compliment from a White professor, such as “Wow, you are so articulate” (Lilienfeld, 2017, p.139). This interaction of microaggressions reinforces the racist perspective that people of color are inarticulate (Lilienfeld, 2017). Ong and Burrow (2017) express that examining microaggression’s occurrences and influences must be measured on the experience of the natural world and everyday situations. For some marginalized individuals of color, this includes professional, academic, and personal sectors. The occurrence of microaggressions should demonstrate “some frequency in the recipient’s natural, everyday contexts…if subtle cues regarding deliverer intent are to be implicated as reliable” (Ong & Burrow, 2017, p. 175). Although microaggressions are subtle forms of exclusion and marginalization, they are spun from overt racism, stereotypes, and misconception. Also, a person's race, gender, and age directly impact their interpretation of microaggressions (Sue & Spanierman, 2020; Thompson et al., 2019). Furthermore, to understand microaggression occurrence, scholars need to advance methodology and frameworks in empirical research (Ong & Burrow, 2017), including intersectionality.

Microaggressions are prevalent because “racial oppression is a problem in American Society and higher education” (Kelly, 2021a, p. 4). Moreover, scholars have begun to explore the occurrence of racial microaggressions in educational environments (Kelly, 2021a, p. 4), including other intersections (gender, age, social status, and sexual orientation). Kelly (2021a) reiterates that exploring microaggressions influences students, faculty, and leaders. Research on microaggression occurrences can guide faculty members to acknowledge and address subtle racism and provide leaders with practices to validate the experience of marginalized individuals of color who experience microaggressions (Kelly, 2021a). The occurrence of microaggressions in higher education appears through microinsults and microinvalidations (Kelly, 2021b; Sue &

Spanierman, 2020), impacting everyone who interacts with the institution. Kelly (2021b) explains that the occurrence of microaggressions exists because there is "limited awareness of white privilege, lack of sensitivity to perceptions of faculty of color, and reluctance and lack of skill to prepare for dialogue" (p. 10). Recognizing and combating microaggressions in higher education can create incredible advancement at an institution (Kelly, 2021b), improving diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Lilienfeld's (2017) manuscript reveals that although the increased research on microaggression occurrence has proved that incidents have decreased, inequality and discrimination are contemporary factors for marginalized individuals in several sectors. However, the scholarship proves that in Western cultures, racism is subtler and therefore is perceived as decreasing, but it has only become more elusive (Lilienfeld, 2017; Tao et al., 2017). In his manuscript, Lilienfeld (2017) establishes that research on microaggression occurrence must support five premises: that microaggressions:

> (1) are operationalized with sufficient clarity and consensus to afford rigorous scientific investigation; (2) are interpreted negatively by most or all minority group members; (3) reflect implicitly prejudicial and implicitly aggressive motives; (4) can be validly assessed using only respondents' subjective reports; and (5) exert an adverse impact on recipients' mental health. (p. 138)

The difficulty with microaggression occurrence is not that marginalized individuals of color cannot identify the experience. Still, they struggle with reporting an incident rooted in ambiguity for others which can then be manipulated or disregarded (Lilienfeld, 2017). Moreover, some individuals might struggle with verifying subtle instances of racism and exclusion because they appear harmless; interpretation of microaggressions can vary from a person of color. Also, "older adults [display] more exacerbation of distress in the face of microaggressions than

younger adults" (Thompson et al., 2019, p. 712). Therefore, further research on microaggression occurrences is warranted to strengthen the current literature (Lilienfeld, 2017).

Ogunyemi et al. (2020) reiterate that microaggressions occur daily in marginalized people; about 90% of African Americans, 77% of other minority groups, and 21% of Whites expressed experiencing a form of discrimination (p. 98). Ogunyemi et al. (2020) reviewed the literature on microaggression occurrence in higher education from 1998 to 2018 (p. 97). This exploration included forty articles categorized into:

> Microaggression experiences of all races/ethnicity (27.5%), microaggression experiences of minorities (22.5%), difficult racial dialogues (10%), coping strategies for microaggressions (17.5%), and system intervention strategies (22.5%). Microinsults were reported in 82.5%, microinvalidations in 4.5%, microassaults in 20%, and institutional microaggressions in 27.5%. (Ogunyemi et al., 2020, p. 97)

The studies in these sources focused on the experience of students and faculty members with microaggressions (Ogunyemi et al., 2020), excluding leaders' experience. Furthermore, the locations of the forty institutions explored in these studies were from the Midwest (37.5%), Northwest (17.5%), West (10%), Southeast (7.5%), Southwest (7.5), Mid-Atlantic (5%), and South (2.5%) (Ogunyemi et al., 2020, p. 102). This examination proved that the occurrence of microaggressions is not decreasing in higher education and that there is a denial of White privilege (Ogunyemi et al., 2020). The research demonstrated that perpetrators of microaggressions believe themselves to be "good, moral, and decent human beings who believed in equality and democracy" (Ogunyemi et al., 2020, p. 111). Therefore, exploring microaggression occurrences is complex and challenging to assess due to the juxtaposition—minorities understand these exist in everyday life, and White Americans believe minorities have more significant opportunities than previously (Ogunyemi et al., 2020).

Another factor to consider when exploring the occurrence of microaggressions is the influence the Covid-19 pandemic has had on the experience of marginalized individuals (Correia et al., 2022). Kim et al. (2022) studied the coronavirus disease's impact on nineteen Asian American nursing students who were already tackling historical macroaggressions and stereotypes. The participants reported that they had experienced verbal and nonverbal assaults from patients, nurses, and even professors (Kim et al., 2022). The results demonstrated that patients preferred White nurses, veteran nurses excluded them due to inexperience, and instructors did not learn their names or attempt to distinguish the Asian students from each other (Kim et al., 2022, pp. 4-5). Yan et al. (2022) explored anti-Asian microaggressions during the Covid-19 pandemic. The study examined the experience of 345 East Asian Americans and their response to the increase in microaggressions during this period of increase fear of the 'other' (Yan et al., 2022). The participants' narratives reported on microaggression occurrences were 20% first-hand and personal, 10% endured by family members or friends, and 25% news media incidents (Yan et al., 2022). A shift in the economy, society, and political realm can turn subtle microaggressions into overt and brutal racism (Kim et al., 2020), revealing the dangerous inequalities that linger invisibly in the structures of American higher education institutions (Gover et al., 2020; Correia et al., 2022). Therefore, investigating microaggression occurrences in higher education is vital to sustaining diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives that promote social justice for marginalized people of color.

TYPES

Microaggressions can be intentional or unintentional and are presented in everyday environments through all forms of actions (Tao et al., 2017; Wilson et al., 2017; Sue et al., 2007a; Sue et al., 2007b). The extensive research from D.W. Sue has established three forms of

microaggressions: microassault, microinsult, and microinvalidation (Sue & Spanierman, 2020; Tao et al., 2017; Wilson et al., 2017; Smith et al., 2016; Sue et al., 2007a; Sue et al., 2007b). The distinction between these forms is that microassaults are often intentional and conscious; microinsults can be unconscious and unknown to the perpetrator; and microinvalidations can unconsciously "exclude, negate, or nullify the psychological thoughts, feelings, or experimental reality of a person of color" (Sue et al., 2007b, p. 2). The types of microaggressions resulted in nine racial microaggression themes (including an example):

1. Alien in one's own land: Where are you from?
2. Ascriptions of intelligence: You are so articulate.
3. Color blindness: When I look at you, I don't see color.
4. Criminality/assumption of criminal status: A White person waits to ride the next elevator.
5. Denial of individual racism: I'm not racist; I have several black friends.
6. Myth of meritocracy: Everyone can succeed in this society, if they work hard enough.
7. Pathologizing cultural values/communication styles: Dismissing an individual who brings up race/culture in work/school setting.
8. Second-class status: Person of color mistaken for a service worker.
9. Environmental invalidation: A college or university with buildings that are all named after White heterosexual upper-class males (Sue et al., 2007a, p. 276; Sue et al., 2007b, p. 2).

Sue et al. (2007a) reiterate that environmental microaggressions are harbored through systemic and structural settings that encourage microinsults, microassaults, and microinvalidations. The research and scholarship on microaggressions are an emerging state; however, researchers exclude subtle "racism and microaggressions from their research agendas, and this absence conveys the notion that covert forms of racism are not as valid" (Sue et al., 2007a, p. 283) because they cannot be measured as overt racism (Tao et al., 2017).

Although there is extensive research on the experience of students, Young et al. (2015) emphasize that there are limitations in the study centered around employees' experiences with microaggressions on campus. However, researchers are exploring the inclusion of microaggressions in higher education and their impact on employees who navigate an institution's frameworks (Young et al., 2015). This research aims to establish conversations about implementations that can guide institutions toward sustaining initiatives and practices that reduce microaggressions on their campus (Young et al., 2015). In the study, Young et al. (2015) examine microaggression types and their impact on university employees. The researchers focus on hierarchical microaggressions (HMs), which they coined (Young et al., 2015). The results identified four types of HMs: "valuing/devaluing based on role/credential (VDRC), changing accepted behavior based on role (CABB), actions (ignoring/excluding/surprise/interrupting) related to role (ARR), and terminology related to work position (TRTW)" (Young et al., 2015, p. 61). The results of the hierarchal microaggressions were 52% VDRC, 10% CABB, 36% ARR, and 2% TRTW (Young et al., 2015, pp. 66-68). Young et al. (2015) include the forms established in the Sue et al. (2007a) findings; however, they incorporate the use of "isms" (age, disability, gender, language, race, sexuality, and other) to establish a relationship among HMs in higher education. Smith et al. (2016) further this intersectionality research by including classism, exploring the experience of fifteen graduate students from poor and working-class backgrounds. The participants expressed that social class directly influenced their social and interpersonal relationships (Smith et al., 2016). These findings demonstrate that "any marginalized group in society may become targets of microaggressions" (Smith et al., 2016, p. 130). The inclusion of intersectionality can reveal differences in influence and impact experienced by marginalized individuals (Sue & Spanierman, 2020), and Tao et al. (2017) proclaim that the nature of the

microaggression (overt versus covert) can impact the physical or emotional condition of the victim.

IMPACTS

The literature proves that microaggressions can result in adverse emotional, physiological, and psychological outcomes for marginalized individuals of color through all sectors of their existence. Racist acts can result in various mental-health consequences for MLOCs since microaggressions are subtle attacks; they can provoke physiological and psychological stress (Sue & Spanierman, 2020; Williams, 2020) because the MIOCs must engage and respond to the incident. Williams (2020) explains that microaggressions can result in "confusion, anger, anxiety, helplessness, hopelessness, frustration, paranoia, and fear" (p. 15). Furthermore, increased exposure to microaggressions can lead to an individual withdrawing due to inadequate coping strategies (Williams, 2020). The emotional and psychological impacts of microaggressions have detrimental physical ramifications, including cardiovascular disease, chronic heart disease, and memory decline brought on by continuous exposure to stress and anxiety (Williams, 2020). Moreover, an individual's intersectionality can influence the severity of the negative impacts; in fact, microaggression harm was highly linked to the experience of Black and Hispanic Americans (Williams, 2020). Williams (2020) implores the need for increased research examining methods for reducing and responding to microaggressions to lessen the detrimental harm it is causing marginalized populations. Much of the study is in the psychological realm, particularly in counseling and therapy practices (Williams, 2020).

Owen et al. (2014) explore the impact racial and ethnic minorities (REM) experience when procuring therapy or counseling for microaggression incidents but are then confronted with microaggressions from medical professionals at a university counseling center. The participants

were graduate (24.2%), senior (28.3%), junior (20.8%), sophomore (11.7%), and freshmen (13.3%) students (Owen et al., 2014, p. 285). Also, this included the experiences of African American (1.7 %), Asian Americans (42.5%), Hispanics (24.2%%), and multiethnic (30.8%) students (Owen et al., 2014). The findings in this study reported that 53% of participants experienced microaggressions from the therapists (Owen et al., 2014). Moreover, when reported by participants, REM and White therapists did not demonstrate statistical differences in addressing microaggressions during counseling sessions (Owen et al., 2014). Also, participants who reported an incident felt an increased alliance level after a successful discussion was incorporated, lowering their experience with microaggressions (Owen et al., 2014). The fact that a university counseling center was the setting for this study highlights "the power of addressing the missteps that can occur in therapy" (Owen et al., 2014, p. 288) because they represent the structures and frameworks at an institution that influence MIOCs' experience. Owen et al. (2014) explain that a limitation of this study is that it did not implore the impact intersectionality has on these experiences and the role the setting played in establishing and sustaining a sense of a safe environment for individuals at this institution of higher education.

Nadal et al. (2014a) designed a study that examines racial microaggressions' impact on the mental health of marginalized individuals of color (including undergraduate students). The participants were Asian American/Pacific Islander (31%), Black/African American (15.8%), Latinas/os (25.9%), White (12.5%), and multiracial (9.5%) (Nadal et al., 2014a, p. 59). This demographic variation allowed the researchers to explore the variance in microaggression types and their impacts on individuals from different groups (Nadal et al., 2014a). The findings found that participants who "perceive and experience racial microaggressions in their lives are likely to exhibit negative mental health symptoms, such as depression, anxiety, [and] negative affect (or

negative view of the world)" (Nadal et al., 2014a). Furthermore, REM experienced higher insistences of microaggressions than White participants, but there was no notable difference between Black, Hispanic, Asian, and multiracial participants (Nadal et al., 2014a). The limitation of this research is that marginalized individuals of color often underreport mental health issues and that perceptions vary from person to person (Nadal et al., 2014a). Although these studies may have limitations, their findings can be instrumental in providing strategies and approaches for recognizing, addressing, and eliminating microaggressions in higher education and other sectors.

Responses and Approaches

Sue et al. (2019) implore that with the devastation brought on by microaggression occurrences and their detrimental harm, it is time for the nation to eliminate these experiences by implementing effective strategies. Sue et al. (2019) present four microinterventions "(a) make the invisible visible, (b) disarm the microaggression, (c) educate the perpetrator, and (d) seek external reinforcement or support" (p. 128). These approaches are significant as they shift from the current coping strategies, predominantly passive, deflective, and dependent (Sue et al., 2019). Moreover, "little has been done to offer people of color the tools and strategies needed to disarm, diminish, deflect, and challenge experiences of bias, prejudice, or aggression" (Sue et al., 2019, p. 132). There need to be conversations on the role and expectations of agents and targets of microaggressions because targets (people of color and the marginalized) often become overwhelmingly hopeless and disconnected from situations (Sue et al., 2019). The mere action of tolerance negatively burdens marginalized individuals 'ability to cope with microaggressions (Verkuyten et al., 2020). Verkuyten et al. (2020) explain that tolerance is rooted in the aspect that people endure facets they object to; furthermore, that tolerance can serve as subtle contributions

to discrimination and inequality. Marginalized people of color do not want to be tolerated; they want to be respected for their contributions and attributes (Verkuyten et al., 2020). Therefore, creating strategies that include White allies, bystanders, and marginalized people of color, that go beyond tolerance can eliminate microaggressions (Sue & Spanierman, 2020; Sue et al., 2019) in higher education. Although empirical research proves that tolerance can benefit the perception of discrimination, it is less positive in establishing a sense of acceptance and recognition (Verkuyten el al., 2020). The research is limited as there needs to be a further exploration of the role and depth White allies and bystanders need to play in microinterventions to reduce incidents of microaggressions (Sue et al., 2019).

Furthermore, Sue et al. (2019) explain that victims of microaggressions must recognize that there are consequences to addressing these occurrences and must consider these factors:

1. Pick your battles
2. Where and when you choose to address the offender
3. Adjust your response as the situation warrants
4. Be aware of relationship factors and dynamics with perpetrators
5. Always consider the consequences of microinterventions, especially when a strong power differential exists between perpetrator and target (pp. 139-140).

A higher education institution's current structures and culture may lack the support to encourage and acknowledge microaggressions, particularly those enacted by people of power. Even more so, due to the nature of microaggressions, these acts are subtle, creating a tone of ambiguity (Perez Gomez, 2022; Sue & Spanierman, 2020). The victim is faced with determining if an action was motivated by unconscious or conscious bias or racism due to evidence (Perez Gomez, 2022). However, to eliminate doubt or uncertainty, they must prove a target occurred and gather more evidence (Perez Gomez, 2022). For example, collecting digital communications

by the agent of the microaggressions can create a pattern of bias or racism behavior and actions. Perez Gomez (2022) reiterates that the current literature's limitations lack new strategies for identifying, defining, and combating microaggressions.

Holder et al. (2015) present a study exploring ten Black women's experiences and coping strategies in corporate leadership. These women recognize that microaggressions exist in the American workplace. The incidents included exclusion, invisibility, stereotypes, and assumptions rooted in racial microaggressions (Holder el al., 2015). The findings reported that these senior leaders used the following coping approaches: “religion and spirituality, armoring, shifting, support network, sponsorship and mentorship, and self-care” (Holder el al., 2015, p. 171). Examples of these strategies include implementing prayer and meditation, creating protective affirmations and validations, shifting focus away from racial and ethnic variances, enacting a community of advisors, establishing a mentee-mentor relationship, and participating in exercise/spending time with family (Holder el al., 2015, pp. 173-174). Therefore, a limitation of this study is that it explores a minuscule sector of people of color who hold leadership positions in corporate American (Holder el al., 2015), excluding higher education leaders’ experiences with microaggressions. These women navigate through hindrances, limitations, and microaggressions to reach professional excellence (Holder el al., 2015). More significantly, this study reveals that marginalized individuals of color are not “immune to persistent experiences and consequences of racial microaggressions” (Holder el al., 2015, p. 174). This factor reveals that further investigation into leadership in higher education can support the experience that marginalized people of color who hold leadership positions are invulnerable to microaggression occurrences and impacts. Although there is limited literature on the effects microaggressions

have on the experience of MIOCs who hold leadership positions, numerous leading researchers and scholars are pushing to increase the literature on microaggressions.

LEADING LITERATURE AND STUDIES ON MICROAGGRESSIONS

OVERVIEW

The concept of microaggression is credited to Chester Pierce, an African American psychiatrist who coined it in 1970 (Williams et al., 2021a; Sue & Spanierman, 2020; Douds Wyndham & Hout, 2020; Griffith, 2016). Pierce was an exceptional Harvard University professor in public health, medicine, and education (Griffith, 2016). As he explored the influence of media and television on depictions and relationships on race, Pierce proclaimed that microaggressions were daily occurrences (Pierce et al., 1978). The definition he established about microaggressions is that they "are subtle, stunning, often automatic, and nonverbal exchanges which are 'put downs' of blacks by offenders" (Pierce et al., 1978). Psychiatrist Pierce was an astonishing viewer of interactions between Black and Whites in America comparable to W.E.B. Du Bois (Griffith, 2016). Although he has numerous exceptional works on race issues like *Race and Excellence: My Dialogue with Chester Pierce*, which launched attention to subtle but harmful actions, this section of the literature review is focused on the individuals that contributed and strengthened the study of microaggressions. The survey of microaggressions can be complex and intricate, so understanding this concept requires an extensive literature review. Therefore, this exploration includes various publications focused on microaggressions, not only those specifically on leadership in higher education.

DERALD WING SUE, PH.D.

As one of the leading researchers, "psychologist Derald Wing Sue and colleagues' recent work has reinvigorated the study of microaggressions and sought to classify further different

types of microaggressions" (Douds Wyndham & Hout, 2020, p. 529). Other researchers credit Chester Pierce for setting the foundation for Derald W. Sue and his contemporaries (Williams et al., 2021a). Sue, a Chinese American, is an accomplished and regarded professor of psychology and education at Columbia University, whose literary contribution began in the early 1970s (D.W. Sue, personal communication, October 13, 2022). The area of interest his publications include are:

1. Microaggression Theory
2. Psychology of Racism and Anti-Racism
3. The Psychology of Racial Dialogues
4. Multicultural Counseling and Psychotherapy
5. Cultural Competence
6. Cultural Diversity Training (D.W. Sue, personal communication, October 13, 2022).

His impact and influence on microaggression literature are profound as he has over 150 publications, including journal articles (85), chapters (44), and books (25), along with media productions (20) and presentations, symposiums, and workshops (213) (D.W. Sue, personal communication, October 13, 2022). As a scholar researching microaggressions, the exploration of Sue's extensive contribution provided an understanding of the intricacy of the concept and its impacts on marginalized people of color (Table 3).

Table 3. Derald W. Sue's Contribution to Microaggressions Scholarship

PUBLICATION INFORMATION	CONTRIBUTION	LIMITATION
et al., (2021). *Microintervention Strategies: What You Can Do to Disarm and Dismantle Individual and Systemic Racism and Bias*	• Establish a call to action for scholars and educators to research and address microaggressions. • Defines and explains microinterventions/forms. • Provides barriers for eliminating microaggressions	• Addresses leaders/leadership in advocating they enact action against microaggressions. • Fails to explore the experience of MIOCs with microaggression. • Provides general connections between microaggressions and

PUBLICATION INFORMATION	CONTRIBUTION	LIMITATION
	• Offers approaches to disarming microaggressions • Establishes anti-racist benefits and the cost of inaction	higher education • Serves as an informative text— lacks empirical data, study, or case study elements
(2015). *Race Talk and The Conspiracy of Silence: Understanding and Facilitating Difficult Dialogues on Race*	• Establish and explains Race Talk and dialogue • Provides narratives that reveal racism and microaggressions • Offers narratives and counter-narratives (White versus Black perspectives) • Develops nonracist and anti-racist identities • Compares empirical reality versus experiential reality	• Offers limited inclusion of higher education issues • Provides minimum connection to Asian Americans and leadership skills in the corporate sector • Serves as an informative text— lacks empirical data, study, or case study elements
et al., (2008a). Racial Microaggressions Against Black Americans: Implications for Counseling. *Journal of Counseling and Development*	• Presents a qualitative study that investigates the experience of 13 Black Americans (men/women) with microaggressions • Participants were recruited from Black student organizations, and they believed microaggressions occur in America • The research team was diverse (including Asian Americans, White Americans, and one Latino) • Data was collected through a demographic questionnaire, and then participants were assigned to focus groups. • Results established six instrumental themes: assumptions of intellectual inferiority, second-class citizenship, assumptions of criminality, assumptions of inferior status, assumed universality of Black American Experience, and assumed superiority of White cultural values (pp. 333-334)	• Includes a low number of participants, which can limit the validity of a general experience for Black Americans • Excludes the experience of other marginalized individuals (Native Americans, Latinas/os, or Asian Americans) • Fails to provide quantitative or descriptive measurable data • Discounts the experience of MIOCs in leadership at higher education institutions
et al., (2008b). Racial Microaggressions In the	• Designs a qualitative study that explores the experience of	• Includes a low number of participants, which can limit

PUBLICATION INFORMATION	CONTRIBUTION	LIMITATION
Life Experience of Black Americans. Professional Psychology: Research and Practice	thirteen Black Americans by evaluating "perceptions, reactions, and interpretation of microaggressions, as well as… cumulative consequences" (p. 330). • Participants included men and women; nine participants were counseling psychology graduate students, and four were higher education employees (p. 330) • Data was collected through the use of a demographic questionnaire; questions were open-ended, and then they were placed in focus groups • Results provided five domains: "incident, perception, reaction, interpretation, and consequence" (p. 331). • Subcategories of the domains are inferiority, powerlessness, invisibility, and lack of trust. • Develops significant impacts and influences experienced by people of color	the validity of a general experience for Black Americans • Excludes the experience of other marginalized individuals (Native Americans, Latinas/os, or Asian Americans) • Fails to provide quantitative or descriptive measurable data • Discounts the experience of MIOCs in leadership at higher education institutions • Demographic data limits the experience of individuals living in New York City

Note. Since Derald W. Sue's contribution is expansive, this is a snapshot of writings that resonated with the researcher and influenced the design and framework of the study.

KEVIN L. NADAL, PH.D.

Counseling psychologist Kevin L. Nadal, Ph.D., is a leading researcher "on understanding [the] impacts of microaggressions" (John Jay College of Criminal Justice, 2022, "Bio," para. 1). Nadal, an openly gay Filipino American, has extensive research in the areas of multicultural in psychology, LBTQIA+, Filipino American, microaggressions, and intersectional identities issues (John Jay College of Criminal Justice, 2022, "Research Summary"). He has about fifty reference journal articles, eleven scholarly books, sixty book chapters and

encyclopedia articles, and over forty keynote presentations (John Jay College of Criminal Justice, 2022, "Download C.V"). Furthermore, Nadal has collaborated in over seven publications with Dr. Derald Sue, exploring Microaggression Theory, microaggressions against Black Americans, microaggressions in everyday life, and microaggressions against Asian Americans (John Jay College of Criminal Justice, 2022, "Download C.V"). Through his empirical research, Nadal aspires to improve the lives of "Filipino Americans, people of color, LGBTQ people (especially queer and trans youth of color) and all oppressed groups whose voices are often not heard" (KevinNadal, n.d., "Historical Background," para. 15). Construing and analyzing his research and scholarship is instrumental to understanding microaggressions impacts on marginalized groups (Table 4).

Table 4. Kevin L. Nadal's Contribution to Microaggressions Scholarship

PUBLICATION INFORMATION	CONTRIBUTION	LIMITATION
(2019). Measuring LGBTQ Microaggressions: The Sexual Orientation Microaggressions Scale (SOMS) and the Gender Identity Microaggressions Scale (GIMS). *Journal of Homosexuality*	• Designs two quantitative studies that explore the experience of 266/140 LGBTQIA+ members with heterosexist and transphobic microaggressions • Participants included men, women, transgender, and nonbinary; the demographics were Asian Americans, White Americans, Black Americans, and Latinx Americans; regions include Michigan, Washington, Florida, George, California, and Texas (p. 1406, 1407) • Data was collected through the use of a demographic questionnaire; the instrument is the Sexual Orientation Microaggression Scale (SOMS)/Gender Identity Microaggression Scale (GIMS) • SOMS includes 50 questions (used different categories)/GIMS includes 24 questions; uses a scale of 1 (yes) and 0 (no) (p. 1406); responding to	• Provides a general population and demographic (students and individuals from Texas were recruited but are not distinguished in the study) • Fails to evaluate microaggressions between the different populations/regions • Fails to provide a qualitative perspective • Discounts the experience of MIOCs in leadership at higher education institutions or education in general •

PUBLICATION INFORMATION	CONTRIBUTION	LIMITATION
	statements, and then adds a scale response • Inclusion of a quantitative study is significant because most microaggression research is qualitative (p. 1404)	
et al., (2015). *A Qualitative Approach to Intersectional Microaggressions: Understanding Influences of Race, Ethnicity, Gender, Sexuality, And Religion. Qualitative Psychology*	• Designs a study that uses Qualitative Secondary Analysis and Consensual Qualitative Research to explore intersectional microaggressions (race, gender, religion, sexuality, and ethnicity) • Analysis of the data from six previous qualitative studies • Includes participants who identify as LGBT, women, multiracial people, Filipino Americans, and Muslim • Data was collected through the use of a demographic questionnaire; individuals were placed in focus groups • Results provided seven microaggression themes: " domains: "(a) Exoticization of Women of Color, (b) Gender-Based Stereotypes for Lesbians and Gay Men, (c) Disapproval of LGBT Identity by Racial, Ethnic, and Religious Groups, (d) Assumption of Inferior Status of Women of Color, (e) Invisibility and Desexualization of Asian Men, (f) Assumptions of Inferiority or Criminality of Men of Color, (g) Gender-Based Stereotypes of Muslim Men and Women, and (h) Women of Color as Spokespersons" (p. 152) • Inclusion of intersectionality is significant because most microaggression research focuses on singular identities (p. 147)	• Excludes the experience of other marginalized individuals (Native Americans, Latinas/os, or African Americans) • Fails to provide quantitative or descriptive measurable data • Discounts the experience of MIOCs in leadership at higher education institutions or education in general
(2014c). The Adverse Impact of Racial Microaggressions on College Students'	• Designs a qualitative study that explores the relationship between microaggressions and self-esteem in students	• Fails to provide qualitative or narrative data • Discounts the experience of MIOCs in leadership at higher

PUBLICATION INFORMATION	CONTRIBUTION	LIMITATION
Self-Esteem. *Journal of College Student Development*	• Participants included 226 undergraduate students, men and women; Latina/os, Black Americans, White Americans, and multiracial individuals • Data was collected through the use of a demographic questionnaire; then responded to 45 items using the Racial and Ethnic Microaggression Scale (REMS), including six subscales • Results revealed that Black, Asian, and Latino students experience more microaggressions; Latinas experience more exoticization; Asians experience more environmental microaggressions than Black participants (p. 467) • Inclusion of a quantitative study is significant because most microaggression research is qualitative	education institutions • Demographic data limits the experience of individuals living in the Northeast in predominantly urban settings

Note. Kevin Nadal's contribution is expansive, and this is a snapshot of writings that resonated with the researcher and influenced the study's design and framework.

MONNICA T. WILLIAMS, PH.D.

Board-certified and licensed clinical psychologist Monnica T. Williams is an exceptional scholar and has extensively researched trauma from racism, increasing representation of marginalized people of color, Black people coping with discrimination, racial barriers, and microaggressions (Monnicawilliams, n.d., "CV"). The 150 journals and book chapters published by Williams focus on various ethnic groups:

> Multiple ethnic groups (69), Black people (45), primarily White samples (26), Black/White differences (17), Hispanic Americans (5), and Asian groups (5), and Indigenous people (1). Over one hundred (102) are empirical, with over three-quarters (78%) of these using data collected by Dr. Williams and her lab (Monnicawilliams, n.d., "Publications & Scholarly Works," para. 2).

Williams, an African American woman, has provided empirical literature on race and microaggression issues from a psychological lens. Her research clarifies the complexity and disagreement on microaggression occurrences and impacts (Table 5).

Table 5. Monnica T. Williams' Contribution to Microaggressions Scholarship

PUBLICATION INFORMATION	CONTRIBUTION	LIMITATION
Et al., (2021b). Understanding Aggression and Microaggressions By and Against People of Colour. *Cognitive Behaviour Therapist*	• Designs a quantitative study that explores the "relationships among anti-Black racial microaggressions, aggression, negative affect, and ethnic identity among different groups of colour" (p. 5). • Participants included 356 individuals who identified as African American, Latino/Hispanic, or Asian American • Data was collected through the use of a demographic questionnaire; then responded to 20 items with four subscales, using the Cultural Cognition and Action Scale • Results evaluate demographics, microaggression acceptability, and predicting microaggressions • Findings expose that interventions to eliminate or decrease microaggressions are required because "microaggressions maybe committed by people from any racial or ethnic group" (p. 15)	• Fails to provide qualitative or narrative data • Discounts the experience of MIOCs in leadership at higher education institutions
et al., (2020). A Qualitative Study of Microaggressions Against African Americans On Predominantly White Campuses. *BMC Psychology*	• Designs a qualitative study that explores the phenomenological experience of thirty-six undergraduate and graduate students • Participants included men and women, predominantly African Americans (84.4%) • Data was collected through the use of online screening and the use of semi-structured interviews • Developed themes and compared them to Sue's taxonomy • Explored fifteen categories of microaggressions, including Assumptions About Intelligence,	• Includes a low number of participants, which can limit the validity of a general experience for Black Americans • Excludes the experience of other marginalized individuals (Native Americans, Latinas/os, or Asian Americans) • Fails to provide quantitative or descriptive measurable data • Discounts the experience of MIOCs in leadership at

PUBLICATION INFORMATION	CONTRIBUTION	LIMITATION
	Competence, or Status 4 False Colorblindness / Invalidating Racial or Ethnic Identity, Myth of Meritocracy, and Environmental Exclusion (p. 4). • Results validated that students of color experience microaggressions on campus, causing emotional and mental health issues	higher education institutions •

Note. Monnica T. Williams' contribution is expansive, and this is a snapshot of writings that resonated with the researcher and influenced the study's design and framework.

Sue, Nadal, and Williams' extensive research have advanced the scholarship on microaggressions, providing a significant understanding of the direct influence microaggressions have on marginalized individuals of color. These experts are from the psychology sector, emphasizing psychological aspects and interpretations. Also, these scholars are highly focused on the general population's experience but include students' and faculty's experiences. Therefore, there is a need to increase the literature and research conducted by higher education leaders and specialists, increasing the depth of microaggression literature and research focused on students, faculty, and leaders in higher education.

MICROAGGRESSIONS IN LITERATURE AND RESEARCH

Although this is an exploration of the impacts microaggressions have on leaders of color, it is instrumental in examining microaggression literature focused on students and faculty as it provides a design of research for understanding microaggressions against leaders in higher education. Also, this investigation offers further support that there are limitations and gaps in the current literature focused on microaggressions, leadership, and higher education (Chance, 2021; Tchoumi, 2020; Townsend, 2020; Richardson Fraser, 2017; Syler, 2014; Eagly & Chin, 2010;

Bartol et al., 1978). Researchers and educational leaders have sought to study and explore microaggressions as they impact marginalized individuals of color (students, staff, faculty, and leaders) to understand their experiences and the structures used to eliminate these hindrances.

MIOCs— Students in Higher Education

Higher education institutions shifted towards implementing desegregation at their colleges by increasing the enrollment of students of color. Including staff, faculty, and leaders of color was a slower and more challenging process (Harris, 2021). Moreover, American higher education institutions have sought policies that promote "educational equity for African American, Latinx, Native American, Pacific Islander, and other racially minoritized students" (Ching et al., 2020, p. 820). Ching et al. (2020) explain that institutions have pushed for reforms that increase inclusion and equity for decades. However, this has provided an environment for the development of microaggressions. Therefore, microaggression research and literature focused on students prevail over all other higher education members, including staff, faculty, and administrators (Tchoumi, 2020). The sociology, psychiatry, psychology, and education sectors provide the leading research and literature on microaggressions (Douds Wyndham & Hout, 2020).

Furthermore, the groups used in these studies range from Latinx, Black, Asian, Native, and multiracial Americans (Douds Wyndham & Hout, 2020; Tchoumi, 2020; Lewis et al., 2021). In fact, a simple search in EBSCOhost proves that the literature focused on microaggressions and race or ethnicity results in about 65% on Black and African Americans, 25% on Latino and Hispanic, and 10% or less on Asians and other races and ethnicities. Evaluating literature on student and faculty research is vital to understanding the strength and limitations of exploration focused on microaggressions experienced by leaders. Lewis et al. (2021) explore the parallels

and connections between students of color, microaggressions, and a sense of belonging at historically White colleges and universities (HWCUs). The study included students from the African American, Latinx, Asian American, and multiracial groups; the data collected was through convergent mixed methods, "applying Critical Race Theory (CRT) to racial microaggressions" (Lewis et al., 2021, p. 1051). CRT explores the scholarship of education, psychology, and sociology sectors (Lewis et al., 2021). The researchers used this approach to allow the students to express their perceptions and experiences with microaggressions through a survey and open-ended questions (Lewis et al., 2021). Additionally, Lewis et al. (2021) reveal that although HWCUs have increased the enrollment of students of color, these institutions still exist within polarized spaces that harbor inequity, racism, and discrimination. These experiences with microaggressions occur throughout different aspects of an institution, including classrooms, dorms, social spaces, and campus resource offices (Lewis et al., 2021). The students of color revealed numerous negative interactions with White counterparts who viewed them as intellectually inferior and incapable of providing educational insight to projects, presentations, and discourse (Lewis et al., 2021). Lewis et al. (2021) expressed that Black, Latinx, and Asian students' sense of belonging was directly connected to microaggressions; however, only Black and Latinx students articulated that intellectual inferiority microaggressions contributed to their ability to belong.

Morales (2021) presents that Black students are constantly "negotiating racial microaggressions— subtle, racialized offenses— at historically White colleges and universities" (p. 72). More significantly, these students must educate and address microaggressions, which can burden them (Morales, 2021). The study focused on the student's ability to counter the microaggressions by emphasizing their value and that of the Black existence by concentrating on

intellectual merit, culture, history, perspective, and experiences (Morales, 2021). The microaggressions experienced by Black students were often connected to ideas of the ghetto, violence, anger, inane, and uncivilized (Morales, 2021). The research used qualitative interviews to explore the lived experiences of sixty-two Black undergraduate students, including men and women (Morales, 2021). This study exposed a need for further research on these institutions' efforts to decrease microaggressions throughout the various sectors of employees (staff, faculty, and administrators) as it directly impacts students (Morales, 2021). Godbolt et al. (2022) present a qualitative study that explores the impacts the label "Strong Black Woman" (SBW) can have on African American/Black women students. The research is focused on the physical and mental implications these students suffer due to sexist microaggressions that impact students throughout their education experiences (Godbolt et al., 2022). The study expressed that the SBW label has created "positive and negative connotations [that]…implies that Black women have no choice but to be fearless, ambitious, and hardworking" (p. 611). However, Godbolt et al. (2022) explain that this label exploits and burdens Black women with managing racism and microaggressions. Miles et al. (2020) reiterate that constant exposure to microaggressions can influence Black students' mental and academic outcomes, particularly in engineering doctoral programs. This qualitative study focused on "environmental, behavioral, and verbal racial microaggressions of 33 Black doctoral students and postdocs, with a focus on their interactions with non-Black peers" (Miles et al., 2020, p. 1608). Miles et al. (2020) explain that Black faculty in STEM and engineering departments make up less than 2.3%, while about 48% of institutions offering these programs have no faculty identifying as Black (p. 1610). Therefore, Black students at these institutions are difficult to recruit because their sense of inclusion is limited or hindered by microaggressions (Miles et al., 2020). Furthermore, the study establishes that representation is

not limited to student demographics but is based on other areas (Miles et al., 2020), such as staff, faculty, and leadership. Therefore, Miles et al. (2020) use the racial microaggressions theoretical framework as vital to understanding the influence microaggressions have on equality and identity.

Minikel-Lacocque (2013) presents a collective case study on microaggressions through the experience of Latino/a students who transfer to HWCUs, using a Critical Race Theory lens. The study explains that Latinos are the fastest-growing population, with completion rates below 14%, White students at 30.3%, and African American students at 19.8% (Minikel-Lacocque, 2013. p. 434). The researchers expressed that the low completion rates for Latinos from high school to college justify the vital need to study the correlation between microaggressions, sense of belonging, and HWCUs (Minikel-Lacocque, 2013). This qualitative study explores this population's experience because it is revealed that "that research that closely examines the perspectives of Latino/a students who begin college careers at selective, 4-year institutions is particularly rare" (Minikel-Lacocque, 2013, p. 435). Interestingly, this researcher expressed that Latino/a students are viewed from a deficit perspective, establishing the need for the Critical Race Theory framework to explore racial microaggressions (Minikel-Lacocque, 2013). Students in this study expressed that the low representation of Latino/a individuals throughout the university created a sense of isolation due to inadequate diversity and experiencing stereotypes (Minikel-Lacocque, 2013). However, this researcher argued that microaggressions are at times not so "micro" because some policies and misconceptions at the institutional level sustain institutional frameworks of racism (Minikel-Lacocque, 2013). Also, using the term "'micro,' which means 'small,' to identify this type of racism could be confusing at best and harmful at worst" (Minikel-Lacocque, 2013, p. 454). Minikel-Lacocque (2013) reiterates that it is essential

to note that to some individuals, the experience of microaggressions is not a minor or low-stakes experience. Microaggressions can have mental, physical, emotional, and other health impacts (Minikel-Lacocque, 2013; Lewis et al., 2021; Morales, 2021; Godbolt et al., 2022). Serrano (2020) presents a study on the experience of nineteen Black and Latino men at a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI) through a qualitative measure and a Critical Race Theory framework. The research is centered around racial microclimates and microaggressions to prove that the experience of people of color does vary based on race (Serrano, 2020). Understanding the experience of men of color at HSIs is significant as these types of institutions are increasing throughout America (Serrano, 2020). The results prove that diversity is interpreted differently based on the student's racial background and the percentage of representation on campus; therefore, Latino men felt their campus was diverse and welcoming, while Black students believed they were outsiders and unwanted (Serrano, 2020). Like other studies, this study addressed the correlation between faculty representation and a student's experience with microaggressions (Serrano, 2020). Serrano (2020) reiterated that "the lack of diversity of Black and Latinx faculty informed the Black and Latino men's perceptions of campus racial microclimates to the extent that some students have attempted to address the issue" (p. 10).

Yeo et al. (2019) explore the experience of Asian American students who are racially identified as international students perpetrating racial microaggressions. Furthermore, the study examined the experience of Asian international students with "US racial ideology, notions of Whiteness, and racial microaggressions on campus" (Yeo et al., 2019, p. 39). The research method used is a counter-storytelling (qualitative) approach that voices the experience of these students at predominantly White institutions. The results proved that Asian students experienced pressure to assimilate into White-dominant cultural behaviors to minimize their interactions with

microinsults, microinvalidations, and microassaults (Yeo et al., 2019). Yeo et al. (2019) establish seven significant vital themes from the findings:

1. Xenophobia
2. English Accents, Asian Language Mockery, and Intelligence Ascription
3. Overt Expressions of Microassaults Toward Asian Americans and Asian International Students
4. Being Alienated in Their Own Land
5. Stereotypes/Assumptions Based on Race
6. Homogenization
7. Monolithic Categorization of Asian American and Asian International Students (pp. 50-56).

This study provides an exceptional understanding that White domestic student populations believe they are the real Americans and that systems and frameworks in higher education should reflect their experiences and needs (Yeo et al., 2019). However, scholars express that the silence of students and the elimination of microaggressions fall on the responsibility of faculty members (Oberg, 2019). Oberg (2019) reinforces that teacher leaders are vital to social justice reform, particularly when the administration refuses to take that responsibility.

MIOCs— Faculty in Higher Education

Ro and Villarreal (2021) address microaggressions in healthcare education and academia, and the researchers expressed that this approach has never been discussed in this context. Ro and Villarreal (2021) reiterate that microaggressions can cause physical outcomes and that inclusion and equity discrepancies continue to be experienced by faculty members. This racial inequity correlates with the fact that "minority faculty in the United States is represented at levels well below population averages and even well below student body averages" (Ro & Villarreal, 2021,

p. 120). In fact, “minority professors represent 17.5% of all full-time faculty in the US, with African Americans accounting for only 4.9%” (Siegel et al., 2015), and Black men encompass about 2.7 while Black women comprise about 2.6% (Payton et al., 2018). This exploration solidifies that continuous experiences with microaggressions can create a sense of not belonging, invisibility, and otherness for faculty (Ro & Villarreal, 2021). Furthermore, these researchers expressed that “understanding the impact of subtle but significant microaggressions” (Ro & Villarreal, 2020, p. 121) is required for institutions to take accountability for their students and faculty.

Stanley (2006) presents a qualitative study illustrating the experience of twenty-seven faculty members of color who teach at predominantly White colleges and universities (PWCUs). This study included faculty identifying as Native Pacific Islanders, South African, Latino/a, Asian American, Asian, African American, and American Indian (Stanley, 2006). Stanley’s (2006) study presents that scholarship and research on the experience of faculty of color at PWCUs lack rigor by traditional White scholars. This study explored the themes of campus life and climate, tenure, promotion, mentoring, identity, discrimination, and teaching (Stanley, 2006, pp. 703-706). Also, the researcher used Critical Race Theory to explore the narratives of these faculty of color because it is “paramount to…understanding [the] individual, institutional, and societal racism, sexism, xenophobia, and homophobia” (Stanley, 2006, p. 708). This research presented several recommendations to administrators: support faculty of color burdened with teaching multicultural courses, survey faculty of color on their experiences on campus, and finance initiatives that promote social justice learning and teaching (Stanley, 2006, pp. 726-727).

Louis et al. (2016) present a study on four Black faculty members at predominantly White research universities. The researchers used the Critical Race Theory framework, including several tenets that relate to CRT:

1. Racism is ordinary, commonplace, and is an aspect of everyday life
2. Racism involves issues like 'interest convergence' and 'material determination'
3. Race is a social construction
4. Evaluates how racial groups experience differential racialization (Louis et al., 2016, p. 460).

The study's use of scholarly personal narratives and Critical Race Theory to explore microaggressions allows researchers to examine and challenge forms of racism and subornation (Louis et al., 2016, p. 462). This study provided four themes: "common occurrence, futile to approach aggressors, stress, and resiliency in a white-dominant field" (Louis et al., 2016, pp. 465- 468). Louis et al. (2016) establish that faculty members expressed that they would be validated if microaggressions were acknowledged and addressed by administrators. This fact is instrumental because the microaggressions experienced by individuals of color can hinder or prolong their advancement to full-time professorships or tenure (Payton et al., 2018). Furthermore, microaggressions shared by faculty members of color can evolve into macro influences. Leadership can eliminate these experiences through cultural climate, improving the physical, mental, and advancement of minority scholars (Payton et al., 2018).

Martinez and Welton (2017) present a study that explored the experience of twelve faculty of color in the sector of educational leaders who work in predominantly White departments. Participants included men and women from three demographics: Black, Latino, and Asian groups, including the two authors (Martinez & Welton, 2017). Like most fields and departments, this study reiterated that faculty of color comprises 7.6% Black or African

American, 2.6% Hispanic or Latino/a, 1.5% Asian, and .08% American Indian or Alaska Native (Martinez & Welton, 2017, p. 124). This study explored the double-consciousness culture of these individuals and their experience with microaggressions (Martinez & Welton, 2017). These participants explained the complexity of traversing the structures created for and by White men while holding to their complex identities (Martinez & Welton, 2017). Martinez and Welton (2017) implored the phenomenological approach to explore these participants' lived experiences, allowing the researcher to interpret and describe their stories. These educational programs are vital to preparing students to understand the hindrances of microaggressions in educational leadership.

The exploration of literature and scholarship focused on the experience of students and faculty of color with microaggressions within spaces dominated by White counterparts is significant as students can move toward teaching positions (Vue, 2021). Furthermore, these students and faculty members of color who experience microaggressions can become leaders in higher education (Vue, 2021). These individuals will enter a realm with predisposed experiences with microaggressions, influencing their journey in leadership and facing these challenges with limited support and structures.

MIOCs— Leaders in Higher Education (and Other Sectors)

Bleich et al. (2019) present data that reveals that Black Americans experience disparities in all public and private life sectors, including employment, education, healthcare, housing, political participation, and police and courts (p. 1402). Over 90% of Blacks in America believe that discrimination and microaggressions exist (Bleich et al., 2019). Their findings proved that while 19% of Whites expressed experiencing microaggressions, about 52% of Black Americans revealed that in their everyday experiences, they faced microaggressions (Bleich et al., 2019, p.

1402). This general exploration of the experience of people of color is vital to investigate the literature and research focused on the interactions of leaders with microaggressions in higher education. Williams (2016) expresses that higher education must advance and support "young men and women of all races to prepare to have a sense of justice and respect for each person, no matter who they are" (p. A10). Increasing diversity in leadership positions is vital because this role is instrumental in higher education (Wallace et al., 2014). Richardson Fraser (2017) reiterates that the low number of people of color in higher education reveals the practice of microaggressions because minority applicants for administrative positions are not lacking (p. 167). Although diversity in leadership has increased, there is an underrepresentation of women and ethnic minorities in these roles, demanding an explanation for this inequity and exclusion (Syler, 2014; Eagly & Chin, 2010). The low number of minorities in leadership positions has limited and hindered scholarly research. Literature focused on promoting leadership among minority groups of color and their experiences with the path to leadership is limited (Chance, 2021; Tchoumi, 2020; Townsend, 2020; Richardson Fraser, 2017; Syler, 2014; Eagly & Chin, 2010; Bartol et al., 1978) as there is more focus on student and faculty experiences.

Moreover, Tchoumi (2020) explains that the experience of these groups is often isolated and not used in a comprehensive understanding. Eagly & Chin (2010) restate that there needs to be an elimination of the "intellectual segregation of the considerations of gender, race, ethnicity, sexuality, and culture" (p. 221) in theory and research. Once this desegregation of research occurs, understanding the causes of inequity and microaggressions can occur, eliminating assumptions of groups with diversity, equity, and inclusion—the experience of leaders from Black, Latino, or White backgrounds varies drastically based on their intersectionalities. Bartol et al. (1978) warned that it was detrimental and dangerous to assume that "black and white

employees react similarly to work stimuli in white-dominated organizations…and that additional research on ethical factors affecting black managers" (p. 293) was vital to understanding the shift in leadership. It is significant to note that historical and contemporary research on microaggressions and leadership is highly focused on the experience of Black or African Americans, particularly women. However, the data and analysis on African Americans in executive-level administration roles are minimal (Jackson, 2004). Jackson (2004) echoes that most extensive data and research is focused on lower to mid-level positions. The research on African American and Black leaders often focuses on equity, representation (Jackson 2004), and, even more recently, microaggressions. Astonishingly, "From an empirical perspective, little is known about what happens to African American administrators once they reach executive-level administrative positions. Yet, these position allocation decisions can be as important to the pursuit of equity and administration" (Jackson, 2004). Furthermore, there is extensive research on African Americans in secondary-level leadership positions (principals and assistant principals) because these positions have increased more rapidly than those in higher education.

Weiner et al. (2021) present a microaggression framework with qualitative research that details the experience of ten Black female leaders (principals and assistant principals) with microaggressions and discrimination. The study explained that administration positions remain predominantly White (Weiner et al., 2021). The research focused on administrative programs' role in preparing leaders for issues correlating with "aspects of identity, and gender and racial discrimination in the field" (Weiner et al., 2021). Weiner et al. (2021) explained that a literature review exposed the lack of empirical studies on administration preparation and microaggressions. The researchers incorporated a phenomenological approach because they believe this allows the exploration of the participants' lived experiences with microaggression

through “descriptions, stories, and narratives” (Weiner et al., 2021, p. 10). This approach is uncommon when exploring people of color's experience with microaggressions (Weiner et al., 2021). Although this research was not centered around higher education leaders, it found that women of color experienced “environmental microaggressions, microinvalidations, silencing and tokenizing, and white privilege” (Weiner et al., 2021, pp. 13- 18). Weiner et al. (2021) repeat that a limitation of their study was that they focused only on the experience of Black women and that a broader exploration of a range of intersectionalities and ethnicities could improve the research. Cyr et al. (2021) present a qualitative case study on the phenomenological experience of ten Black women principals and their experiences with microaggressions. The research highlighted microaggressions’ impact on the participants’ careers, leadership, and interactions with those in their organization (Cyr et al., 2021). The investigators explained that women of color must navigate microaggressions from intersectionalities (gender and race) while navigating White-male dominant spaces (Cyr et al., 2021). Cyr et al. (2021) emphasize that their case study exposes the need to change the limited research and literature focused on the experience of people of color with discrimination. Furthermore, researchers and scholars demand a shift in the demographics of leaders and more robust programs and support that prepare people of color to navigate identity, discrimination, and microaggressions (Weiner et al., 2021; Cyr et al., 2021).

Chance (2021) presents a phenomenological study focused on nine Black women in higher education (presidents and vice presidents) navigating obstacles with intersectionality and microaggressions. The researcher explained that Black women increasingly emerge as leaders in various organizations, including academia (Chance, 2021). The data in this study reveals that out of the 30% of presidents who were women in 2012, only about 9% were Black women, while over 80% were White women (Chance, 2021). Additional data reveals that the president

demographics are White 85.1% (men 85.3 and women 83.9%), African American 10 % (men 9.9% and women 10.2%), and Hispanic 1.7% (men 1.4% and women 2.9%) (Wallace et al., 2014, p. 84). Furthermore, a qualitative approach was used as the investigators believed it allowed for describing these individuals' experiences with microaggressions and tokenism (Chance, 2021). The study developed some vital themes: navigation -isms, belonging, diversity, and identity (Chance, 2021). Chance (2021) states that a limitation of this study was that it only focused on the lived experiences of one gender and race—Black women. Therefore, this experience cannot explore the generalized impact of microaggressions on leaders of color (Chance, 2021). Townsend (2020) presents a study centered around the experience of five African American administrators in higher education. This phenomenological qualitative research used the Critical Race Theory (CRT) framework because this lens "lends a voice to often-times silenced narratives" (Townsend, 2020, p. 3). The interview participants were an associate, a vice chancellor, an associate vice president, and three directors from student affairs. The study revealed that participants left positions in higher education because microaggressions and isolation were prevalent (Townsend, 2020). As the participants recalled their experiences with microaggressions, their body language revealed the impacts and devastation microaggressions could cause on their ability to succeed (Townsend, 2020). Moreover, this study showed that Black women outnumber Black males in leadership roles; therefore, research on their experiences seems more prevalent (Townsend, 2020). Richardson Fraser (2017) established phenomenological research on the experiences of six Black executive administrators in higher education. The qualitative study used the Critical Race Theory lens to identify the relationship between microaggressions and systematic and structural problems Black Americans face (Richardson Fraser, 2017). The study revealed that participants believe minority employees are

limited or hindered from upward mobility to mid-level administrative positions (Richardson Fraser, 2017). People of color (POC) struggle in predominantly White spaces due to racial comfort; POC are tasked with ensuring that White individuals experience comfort with non-White identity (Carbado & Gulati, 2009, pp. 241-242). Therefore, once in leadership positions, they must navigate the structures based on Whiteness and attempt to overcome microaggression criticisms from their White counterparts (Richardson Fraser, 2017). The research provided several themes: "(a) the importance of a mentor; (b) the perplexities of a racial experience; (c) gender vs. race; (d) organizational expectations as a tool for success; (e) view of the world in relation to an administrative position; (f) playing the game; (g) showing teeth; (h) leadership expression; (i) decision to stay in higher education; and (j) words of advice to the BA (Black administrators)" (Richardson Fraser, 2017, pp. 156-157). These themes exposed that institutional structures sustain biases and microaggressions even when the institutions claim to push for diversity and equity (Richardson Fraser, 2017). These men and women of color expressed a sense of isolation and lack of support from their institutions, which failed to remove structures centered around Whiteness.

Pitcan et al. (2018) presented a study that explored the experiences of twelve Black or African American men who are professionals at predominantly White organizations. Participant positions included journalists, lawyers, financial analysts, intelligence developers, military officers, and bankers (Pitcan et al., 2018, p. 303). The research aimed to explore the participants' experience with microaggressions at work (Pitcan et al., 2018). The researchers used a survey to gather the demographics of the participants and then conducted semi-structured interviews; furthermore, the questions focused on participants' experiences within the domains of personal experiences of microaggressions, methods of coping, advice for others, and change on a broader

level" (Pitcan et al., 2018, p. 303). The authors included the professional and personal connections between the researchers and the instrument, creating a connection between them and the purpose of the study (Pitcan et al., 2018). Similarly to other microaggression research, the phenomenological methodology was used to add depth to the experience of the participants (Pitcan et al., 2018). The results proved that participants expressed racial microaggressions that caused psychological costs "ranging from mild emotional distress to depressive symptoms and anxiety" (Pitcan et al., 2018, p. 308). The researchers explained that including only men participants hindered the level of vulnerability in the narratives because men fear emotional expression (Pitcan et al., 2018). Pitcan et al. (2018) expressed that examining whether age or experience can influence a person's interactions with microaggressions is needed; researchers and organizations must explore the impacts microaggressions have on people of color.

Hotchkins and Dancy (2015) designed a qualitative sociological case study that explores the experience of African American males at predominantly White institutions (PWIs). Their study explored the experience of seven Black males holding leadership positions using a semi-structured interview (Hotchkins and Dancy, 2015). The participant roles range from vice president, historian, and chaplain to president, and the researcher used purposeful criterion sampling to ensure participants meet the criteria (Hotchkins and Dancy, 2015). The instrument used was interviews: three face-to-face and one follow-up interview in six weeks, resulting in eight emerging themes (Hotchkins and Dancy, 2015). The researchers addressed marginalization, the endurance of microaggressions, and battle fatigue (Hotchkins and Dancy, 2015). Although the study addressed these concepts, it is more centered on the ability of Black males to embody excellence in higher education; however, the researchers did explore the role of intersectionality in leadership (Hotchkins and Dancy, 2015). Turner and Grauerholz (2017) emphasize that the

limited presence of Black male professionals in higher education who hold leadership positions must be addressed if equity and social justice prevail at institutions. Furthermore, their study aids in filling the gaps in the research of these individuals (Turner & Grauerholz, 2017). The study employed a qualitative approach that used interviews to describe the experience of ten Black men in higher education (Turner & Grauerholz, 2017). The interviews used open-ended questions that permitted the individuals to use their language, perspectives, and meaning in their stories with racial attitudes (Turner & Grauerholz, 2017). The participants included six administrative staff, two faculty members, and two administrators, ranging in age from twenties to seventies (Turner & Grauerholz, 2017, p. 216). Due to the nature of the study and the low participation, the researchers did not identify the names of the individuals as questions dealt with sensitive topics (Turner & Grauerholz, 2017). The participants often felt isolated, ignored, questioned, and experienced tokenism and cultural taxation (Turner & Grauerholz, 2017, p. 216). Turner & Grauerholz (2017) proclaim that "marginalization and institutional racism exist unchecked in part because of the profound lack of black male senior-level professionals in the higher education workplace" (p. 220). The researchers did not explicitly state that these experiences' impacts correlated with microaggressions; however, they discussed unequal treatment, racism, disrespect, inadequate recognition, and tokenism (Turner & Grauerholz, 2017, p. 217). Furthermore, the researchers explained that the study's approach and methodology could be insufficient. They compared it to an additional study on Asian Americans using mixed methods incorporating a survey and interviews (Turner & Grauerholz, 2017). Sims et al. (2021) presented a cross-sectional study using survey methodology that spanned two years, resulting in 362 usable participant responses. The survey included eleven different identities that included "Black Male (36.5%), Black Female (36.5%), White Male (21.2%), and White Female (4.9%);

the remainder were women and men who identified as Hispanic/Latinx, Asian, Native American, and other (4.6%)" (Sims et al., 2021). The survey included about forty-one questions; twenty-three used a five-point scale with statements like strongly agree and strongly disagree (Sims et al., 2021). Other point scales (seven-point and six-point) were used with other survey sections that measured experiences with microaggressions (Sims et al., 2021). The analysis of the findings used descriptive statistics as it illustrated the parallels between microaggressions and the participants' experiences (Sims et al., 2021). The findings revealed that Black men experienced more microaggressions than their White counterparts (Sims et al., 2021). Sims et al. emphasize that "a mixed methods study would have provided richer data and made visible the voices of Black men in the workplace" (p. 374). Using a blend of qualitative and quantitative approaches can reveal environmental and social factors that impact the experience of people of color in leadership positions. Sparkman (2021) designed a qualitative and phenomenological exploration of the experience of ten Black men leaders in executive positions at predominantly White institutions (p. 271). The leaders held positions ranging from the president, vice president, dean, and department chair (Sparkman, 2021). The theories used in the study provided a structured lens that described a critical analysis view of microaggressions (Sparkman, 2021). The use of the qualitative approach in this study allowed the researcher to expose the lived experiences of Black leaders in higher education (Sparkman, 2021). The analysis proves that Black male leaders believe their leadership is associated with biases, assumptions, and microaggressions (Sparkman, 2021). The research explained that using Human resource development was inadequate and that scholars must explore other intersecting theories to understand "the complexity of leadership for leaders who present intersecting identity traits" (Sparkman, 2021). Sparkman (2021) reiterates

that exploring the lived experiences of people not represented in the research and literature can eliminate existing gaps.

Nadal et al. (2014b) developed an examination of microaggressions experienced by three hundred and eleven Latinas/os, considering if intersectionality (gender, ethnicity, and nativity) played a role in their experience. The study asserts that their methodology provides evidence that these individuals experience microaggressions in various sectors, including work, school, and the public (Nadal et al., 2014b). Furthermore, these researchers claim that empirical research on Latinas/os or Hispanics is limited and requires further investigation (Nadal et al., 2014b). The participants' ethnic backgrounds included Dominican (28.6%), Mexican (9.6%), Puerto Rican (23.2%), and various others (Columbian, Ecuadorian, Salvadoran, Honduran, and Peruvian) (Nadal et al., 2014b). The participants completed a survey online or in person, including demographic and microaggressions questions (Nadal et al., 2014b). The survey included forty-five questions that addressed six subscales of microaggressions, using statements that the participants used a scale of 0 for no and 1 for yes to answer (Nadal et al., 2014b). The results proved that women experienced more microaggressions at work and school than men; Mexicans were less likely to report microaggressions than Dominicans (Nadal et al., 2014b, p. 72). Nadal et al. (2014b) proclaim that further research is required to determine the impact variables and intersectionality have on the experience of people of color with microaggressions. Nadal et al. (2014b) also state that further research is required to examine microaggressions' ramifications on individuals of color as they have numerous negative impacts. A limitation of this study was that the researchers did not differ the experience of the Latinas/os based on their skin complexion (dark skin versus light skin) (Nadal et al., 2014b). Another limitation of this study is that it does

not directly address the impact microaggressions have on Latinas/os leaders in higher education; it simply provides a broad experience with microaggressions at work.

Sue et al. (2007c) designed a phenomenological qualitative method study that explores the experience of ten Asian Americans with microaggressions. The researchers used two focused groups to observe the depth of the experiences of these individuals. The researchers used this methodology to understand, describe, and compare the experience of subtle racism directed at Asian Americans (Sue et al., 2007c). The participants were Chinese, Filipino, Korean, Japanese/German, and Asian Indian/European, primarily students and two professionals (Sue et al., 2007c). Sue et al. (2007c) explain that with qualitative research, the researcher must identify their values, assumptions, and biases and ensure "that the contributions to the research setting, methodology, analysis, and interpretation can be useful rather than detrimental" (p. 74). The study used a demographic questionnaire and interviews, using open-ended questions that could provide personal examples of microaggressions (Sue et al., 2007c). This study provided several valuable themes: the ascription of intelligence, denial of racial reality, second-class citizens, and invisibility (pp. 76-77). Sue et al. (2007c) believe that using a survey with scales that allow for supplemental (or quantitative data) can increase the research on the experiences Asian Americans have with microaggressions. The study is limited as it focuses on the general experience with microaggressions and not specifically on higher education or leadership.

It is essential to understand that the literature and research on microaggressions, leadership, and people of color are limited (Chance, 2021; Tchoumi, 2020; Townsend, 2020; Richardson Fraser, 2017; Syler, 2014; Eagly & Chin, 2010; Bartol et al., 1978). Therefore, some of the research, literature, and case studies were broad to include higher education and other sectors of professional experiences with bias, racism, stereotypes, tokenism, and discrimination.

Furthermore, with the limited research on Latina/os and Asian Americans in higher education leadership, it was vital to introduce data that supports that these groups experience microaggressions at work and school (Nadal et al., 2014b; Sue et al., 2007c). Although there is more research on the experience of African American women and men with microaggressions than other groups, there is limited literature on the intersectionality of leadership in higher education. Furthermore, examining literature focused on theoretical and methodology constructs used to design the study of microaggressions is instrumental.

THEORETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL CONSTRUCTS FOR THE STUDY

THEORETICAL CONSTRUCTS

Scholarly research should include a theoretical framework that strengthens the purpose of the study and analysis of the data, establishing a foundation for the methodology (Kivunja, 2018). A theory "is a generalized statement of abstractions or ideas that asserts, explains or predicts relationships or connections between or among phenomena, within the limits of critical bounding assumptions that the theory explicitly makes" (Kivunja, 2018, p. 45). The literature reviewed establishes that selecting these theories increases the credibility and validity of the qualitative and quantitative data (Kivunja, 2018, p. 48). Therefore, to explore the influence of microaggression on leaders of color, this study included Microaggression Theory (MT), Critical Race Theory, and Identity-Neutral Leadership (associated with Identity Leadership).

Microaggression Theory

Incorporating Microaggression Theory allows a researcher to analyze the phenomena centered around racism, which originates in the psychology sector; moreover, Pierce and Sue are regarded as founders of microaggression theory research (Baker, 2017). It is essential to understand that it is not until recently that other disciplines have opted to use this theory for

academic development (Baker, 2017), including higher education. Baker (2017) emphasizes that the usage of the Microaggression Theory in research study allows for the demonstration that "traditional forms of racism, based on explicit beliefs in white superiority" (p. 365) have shifted toward new and subtle forms of racism. MT allows researchers to determine if participants experience more emotional, physical, and psychological outcomes than traditional and overt racism (Baker, 2017). Baker (2017) restates that MT permits the representation that discrimination still impacts people of color (p. 366), even though White individuals believe it is no longer a factor.

Nishi (2021) incorporated the Microaggression Theory to explore the experience of Black women who hold senior and executive leadership positions at California Community Colleges to investigate the influence microaggressions have on their career progress (p. 5). Using MT provides the opportunity to "frame contemporary discrimination in the United States" (Nishi, 2021, p. 43). Microaggression Theory allows the researcher to explore "themes, impacts, and responses" (p.43) to microaggressions that people of color experience (Latina/os, African Americans, Asian Americans, Native Americans, and other marginalized groups) (Nishi, 2021, p. 43-44). Through this theory, a researcher can explore microaggressions, such as microassaults, microinsults, and microinvalidations (Nishi, 2021).

More significantly, Microaggression Theory permits the investigator to examine the intersectionality of an individual with multiple marginalized sectors (Torino et al., 2019). Torino et al. (2019) implore that Microaggression Theory and intersectionality research are more prevalent in sociology, psychology, and law (p. 25). Furthermore, intersectionality scholarship is centered around the experience of African American women (Torino et al., 2019), but there is a shift toward including other marginalized people of color. The value of using the

Microaggression Theory is that it assists individuals, regardless of generation, in understanding microaggression acts and their impact on marginalized groups (Torino et al., 2019).

Critical Race Theory

The use of Critical Race Theory (CRT) is "used to interrogate the racism and white racial dominance embedded throughout the US educational pipeline" (Harris, 2017, p. 1059). CRT establishes that racism thrives in structural and organizational frameworks (Harris, 2017; Crenshaw et al., 1995), harboring an environment for microaggressions to thrive. CRT scholars and activists study and research "the relationship among race, racism, and power" (Delgado and Stefancic, 2017, p 3) to transform structures and frameworks that foster racism and microaggressions (Crenshaw et al., 1995). Harris (2017) incorporated the CRT theory and method into the experience of twenty-four multiracial professionals in higher education. Even though the participants are multiracial, Harris (2017) believes this research exposed that marginalized individuals of color experience challenges with microaggressions that impact their personal and professional sectors. Using CRT, the investigator focused on three areas: support systems, commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion, and the impact identity has on the professionals' experience with colleagues (Harris, 2017). Harris (2017) echoes that CRT can provoke difficult conversations about dismantling White ideologies that create racial categories.

Furthermore, that institution's policies and practices must acknowledge, support, and recognize the experience of marginalized individuals of color (Harris, 2017). Minikel-Lacocque (2013) incorporated CRT to examine the experience of six Latino/a students who attend predominately White universities; the scholar claims this theory could guide the research to a more vital understanding of racial microaggressions, particularly in higher education. Using this theory, the author connected to the elements of racial microaggressions (microinsult,

microassault, and microinvalidations) and environmental microaggressions (ascription of intelligence, second-class citizen, assumption of criminal status, color blindness, and the myth of meritocracy) by using CRT and the experience of people of color in higher education (Minikel-Lacocque, 2013). Moreover, CRT can "refute ideologies regarding schooling that treat racial minorities as 'other' and deficient" (Minikel-Lacocque, 2013). This CRT lens allows the researcher to explore and interpret the microaggression experiences participants had while navigating through higher education structures and frameworks (Delgado and Stefancic, 2017).

Yosso et al. (2009) explain that Critical Race Theory connects back to the exploration of race conflicts by W.E.B DuBois and evolved from law studies. CRT was initially focused on the tumultuous relationship between Black and White groups but slowly shifted to include other races and ethnic groups (Latina/os, Asian Americans, Native Americans, and Pacific Islanders) (Delgado and Stefancic, 2017; Yosso et al., 2009). These researchers used CRT to understand and analyze the experience of Latina/o students with racial climates in higher education (Yosso et al., 2009). The research questions focused on identifying the types of microaggressions experienced and the effects and responses to these situations (Yosso et al., 2009). The study led the researchers to "uncover racial microaggressions as a consistent theme surfacing in the experience" (Yosso et al., 2009, p. 666) of the participants. Even more, the data and analysis told that the participants believed relationships between them and their White counterparts were vulnerable due to their continuous experience with microaggressions (Yosso et al., 2009). Yosso et al. (2009) confirm that the CRT lens strengthened their findings that marginalized individuals must navigate microaggressions as they move through higher education structures and policies. Researchers using CRT aspire to illustrate through scholarly literature that "issues of racial ideology and power continue to matter in American life" (Crenshaw, 1995, p. xxxii), and this

affects students, faculty, and leaders of color who exist in institutions with structures rooted in White traditions and expectations.

Leadership Identity Theory

Marchiondo et al. (2015) explain that leadership identity theory explores how individuals are viewed and perceived as leaders (p. 892). This theory has shifted from focusing on hierarchical status to relationship-centered because scholars recognize that individuals' interpersonal and intersectionality sectors impact leadership (Marchiondo et al., 2017). Marchiondo et al. (2017) concluded several studies using this ILT lens to explore the role relational perspective had on the perception of leadership identity, using professional and student participants. The investigators' "findings reveal that leadership identity construction and its effects on perceived leadership have important implications for observer decision-making" (Marchiondo et a., 2017, p. 904). Steffens et al. (2014) add that ILT research establishes that leaders must create and sustain "a sense of us" (p. 1002); the leader should be perceived as belonging to the follower's sectors which can include numerous sectors (Haslam et al., 2017). Steffens et al. (2014) conducted studies to prove that leaders who developed shared interests and values have increased influence. This theoretical lens can explain the factors that influence a leader's ability to employ the fellowship of others (Steffens et al., 2014). Weiner et al. (2021) reiterate that leadership programs (as their study of ten Black female administrators) revealed that leadership theory is often disconnected from the influences of gender and race, creating a sense of identity-neutral leadership. Weiner et al. (2014) established a subcategory of leadership identity as 'identity-neutral' leadership. Their study explored microaggressions and leadership theory's influence on Black leaders who navigate traditional leadership structures. However, new empirical scholarship intends to explore the various aspects that influence leadership (Haslam et

al., 2017); therefore, studying leadership identity and microaggression frameworks can increase the analysis and understanding of leadership experiences for marginalized individuals of color (Weiner et al., 2014).

METHODOLOGY APPLICATION

It is vital to review mixed methods studies that explore the influence of microaggressions on marginalized individuals or leaders of color to understand the data analysis and interpretation of results. Torres et al. (2010) used a mixed methods approach to explore the impact racial microaggressions had on the mental health of African American doctoral and graduate students. The researchers identified the types of microaggressions experienced and their influence on these participants; ninety-seven for the qualitative analysis and 174 for the quantitative analysis (Torres et al., 2010). The mixed methods process required that these measures be completed on a secure website, including an open-ended question and online questionnaire (Torres et al., 2010). The quantitative measure used a scale that included a range of statements "from 1 (never) to 6 (once a week or more)" (Torres et al., 2010) to demonstrate the occurrence and influence of microaggressions. The qualitative findings exposed three themes associated with microaggressions, "including Assumption of Criminality/Second-Class Citizen, Underestimation of Personal Ability, and Cultural/Racial Isolation" (Torres et al., 2010, p. 1074). Furthermore, the quantitative analysis presented that participants experienced more significant stress and depressive symptoms after encountering microaggressions (Torres et al., 2010).

Another study examined microaggressions' impact on Black women in Milwaukee using mixed methods (Colburn and de St. Aubin, 2020). The researchers expressed that this approach was necessary to "understand the mechanisms underlying the relationship between marginalized identities and substantial health disparities" (Colburn and de St. Aubin, 2020, p. 82). Colburn

and de St. Aubin (2020) engaged participants through interviews and surveys. The online survey measured experiences with microaggressions and the stress and trauma they brought on the participant, including copying approaches (Colburn and de St. Aubin, 2020). This mixed methods approach focused on microaggressions and individuals of marginalized groups decreases the gaps and limitations in the current literature (Colburn and de St. Aubin, 2020).

Lui et al. (2020) presented a mixed methods study that included people of color (POC) and White participants (undergraduate and graduate students) to gain an understanding of the negative impacts microaggressions have on health and social relationships. The participants engaged in an interview with five vignettes to explore forms of microaggressions, including microassault, microinsult, and microinvalidation scenarios which they scored using a scale (Lui et al., 2020). Lui et al. (2020) provided results that established three themes: "the meaning of microaggression incidents is determined by [the] receivers' perceived harm" (p. 11), "the meaning of microaggressions can be affected by the deliverer's intent," (p. 14), and "context matters in how microaggressions are experienced and evaluated" (p. 16). The quantitative results paralleled the findings of the themes and the interview discussions, validating this approach's use to explore the understanding of microaggressions between POC and White individuals.

Bean (2021) designed a mixed methods study that explored the experience of women leaders in higher education leadership roles. The participants included deans, directors, vice presidents, executive directors, and presidents at community colleges and universities (Bean, 2021, p. 53). This study (interview and survey) investigated the challenges women face, challenges experienced by African American women, and the role intersectionality has in leadership advancement (Bean, 2021, p. 5). The quantitative data (survey) was used to establish descriptive analysis from participants' objective and subjective reflections (Bean, 2021). The

survey included demographic data (questions 1-12), perceptions of leadership (questions 13-17), and their challenges, barriers, and influences (questions 18-22); furthermore, it used a "six-point Likert scale: Strongly Agree, Agree, Somewhat Agree, Somewhat Disagree, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree" (Bean, 2021, p. 55). Bean (2021) reiterated that using the mixed methods approach provided the opportunity for a more in-depth understanding of the microaggression phenomenon faced by people of color.

CONCLUSION

The literature review illustrated the scholarship focused on microaggressions and their impact on marginalized individuals of color. However, leading scholars reiterate that most studies are qualitative design, concentrated on singular intersections, centered around the student and faculty experience. The limitations of qualitative data are that they create a sense that microaggressions are not measurable or valid. Moreover, scholars' failure to validate or recognize that MLOCs are an influential group whose experiences with microaggression should be measured develop a form of exclusion and limitation in the literature. Furthermore, this chapter's presentation validates the need for phenomenological mixed methods inquiry that focuses on the experience of leaders of color who hold positions in higher education. Chapter Three (the next section) addresses the purpose of the study, selection of participants, instrumentation, data collection, and data analysis, along with the supporting subcategories, to explain the mixed methods phenomenological approach of the study.

Chapter Three: Methodology

INTRODUCTION

This chapter establishes the research methodology and design of a mixed methods inquiry. The research uses the mixed methods form for investigation because the essential postulation is that incorporating qualitative and quantitative data produces understanding beyond the information either of these forms can provide (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The convergent mixed methods method allowed for exploring microaggressions, incorporating quantitative and qualitative phenomenological research approaches (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). This study aims to describe the numerical and lived experiences to which microaggressions directly impact the marginalized individuals of color (MIOCs) who hold leadership positions at a Texas higher education institution. Due to the nature of the study and the inclusion of human subjects, the researcher obtained Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval, ensuring the protection and safety of participants (see Appendix A). The chapter illustrates (a) the purpose of the study, (b) the selection of participants, (c) instrumentation, (d) data collection, and (e) data analysis, along with the supporting subcategories, to explain the mixed methods phenomenological approach of the study.

RATIONALE FOR A MIXED METHODS APPROACH

The convergent mixed methods approach explains microaggressions' influence on higher education leaders from MIOCs populations. Using the survey research approach provided a vital need to quantitively examine the impact of microaggressions because it provided statistical

analysis and interpretation of the data (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Through the cross-sectional study, the researcher demonstrated the phenomenon of microaggressions in a cross-section of an entire group (Lunenburg & Irby, 2008). The quantitative data revealed and described the direct influence microaggressions have in evoking or sustaining diversity, equity, and inclusion progress within leadership positions in higher education institutions in Texas. Survey research "provides a quantitative description of trends, attitudes, or opinions of a population by studying a sample of the population" (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 251), while phenomenological research offers a qualitative description "of human experiences about a phenomenon as described by the participants" (Creswell & Creswell, 2018 p. 249).

Moreover, convergent mixed methods (quantitative and qualitative) research validates microaggressions as data-driven experiences rather than pure personal recounts. This duality in research inquiry strengthens the experiences lived by MIOCs. Through phenomenological study, the qualitative method trusts the narrative description of an individual's experience with microaggressions; this approach encourages further research to address the context, interpretation, patterns, and themes woven in the reports (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Through a qualitative lens, the study explores the personal perspectives and expressed experiences of MIOCs, serving as reliable knowledge and data. Descriptive research explains the "basic information, actions, behaviors, and changes of phenomena" (Lunenburg & Irby, 2008, p. 31) from the participants' experiences. Therefore, the convergent mixed methods approach provides a more cohesive understanding of the impacts of microaggressions on leaders who navigate through their ranks in higher education institutions while facing microaggressions.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The information gathered ~~r~~eveals the perceptions and behaviors of marginalized individuals of color who experience microaggressions at institutions that may or may not pursue a culture of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI). As institutions hire more nonwhite leaders, they must determine if this "shift [is] meaningful, and will it last" (Lederman, 2022, Introduction section). Institutional leaders can use the information from this study to improve practices and approaches enacted to assess, implement, and sustain DEI initiatives that impact leaders and other employees. However, at the least, institutions and leaders can recognize, understand, and address the phenomenon of microaggressions as experienced by marginalized leaders of color (MLOCs) at their institutions.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The research aimed to identify and describe the occurrences, types, and impacts of microaggressions and the responses/approaches MIOCs implement to address them. Black (2002) emphasizes that the "design structure of any study should be logically consistent with research questions" (p. 7). The study is centered around one primary question and five secondary-level questions that assist in identifying occurrences, types, impacts, and responses/approaches. The researcher focused on identifying, assessing, and exploring the components of microaggressions to understand the quantitative and qualitative data of the survey and phenomenological approach that aimed to describe the impacts microaggressions have on MLOCs who navigate academia in the contemporary era. This mixed methods study's established primary and secondary-level research questions are:

- *Primary Question*:

    1. What are the occurrences, types, and impacts of microaggressions experienced by marginalized individuals of color who hold a leadership position in a Texas higher

education institution, and what responses and approaches do they use to acknowledge, address, or eliminate microaggression incidents?

- *Secondary-Level Research Questions*:

    1. What are the leadership positions MIOCs hold while still experiencing microaggressions?

    2. Are microaggression occurrences, types, impacts, and responses/approaches different for MIOCs once they navigate toward leadership positions in higher education?

    3. Do intersectionalities influence the occurrences, types, impacts, or responses/approaches?

    4. What is a leader's understanding of their institution's attempt to acknowledge, address, or eliminate microaggressions committed against leaders who are marginalized individuals of color?

    5. What advice do MLOCs give to other MIOCs aspiring to become leaders who might experience microaggressions?

SELECTION OF PARTICIPANTS

The researcher used multiple sampling strategies to explore the convergent mixed methods approach. It combined the survey and phenomenological approaches to examine microaggressions and their influence on the experience of marginalized individuals of color (MIOCs). This study used the non-probability sampling method because it aimed "not to test a hypothesis about a broad population, but to develop an initial understanding of a small or under-researched population" (McCombes, 2022, Non-probability Sampling Methods section, para. 3). This approach is vital to exploring and understanding the experience of MIOCs as they navigate specific leadership positions in a higher education institution in Texas. Furthermore, the particular sample techniques used were purposive and snowball sampling. Using purposive sampling, the researcher identified specific organizations based on an explicit criterion to determine phenomenon information (McCombes, 2022). Snowball sampling was used when the researcher posted the survey on a professional social media website, and individuals began to

share the post with individuals who met the criteria (McCombes, 2022). Participants from the six regions of Texas (Panhandle, North, West, Central, East, and South) were invited to participate in this study. However, the study did not use specific measures to create cluster sampling, which requires the researcher to divide the population into subgroups (McCombes, 2022). Including participants from different Texas geographical regions allowed MIOCs from these regions and leadership positions to participate, as microaggressions exist in multiple environments, settings, and statuses. Moreover, the sample size was 50 participants, which provided an understanding of microaggressions from these different regions, creating the potential for full description and interpretation. This study required inviting participants (prospective) and data analysis (retrospective) to describe a more detailed observation and description of the phenomenon.

STUDY PARTICIPANTS DEMOGRAPHICS

The participants (primary and secondary recruitment groups) were individuals from different genders, ages, and minoritized groups. Minoritized groups are classified as individuals who identify as a person of color. Moreover, the race identification categories included: 1) American Indian or Alaska Native, 2) Asian, 3) Black or African American, 4) Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, 5) Hispanic or Latino, and 6) Other (with the opportunity to specify). These categories were selected because there is increased inclusion of these races and ethnicities in higher education leadership positions. Lederman (2022) explains that:

> Of the 336 presidents hired from June 1, 2020, through Nov. 30, 2021, 25.3% were Black, and 6.8% were Latino. Fewer than two-thirds (64.6%) were white, a marked decrease from the 78% in the previous 18 months and the 83% of all presidents employed by colleges and universities in 2017. (Beyond the Anecdotal section, para. 4)

Participants were from leadership positions, such as president, vice president (not academic affairs), provost (academic affairs), executive director, and director at a Texas higher education institution. Participants' years of experience varied from less than one year to more

than twenty years. Also, participants were employed by either two-year community colleges or four-year universities. These institutions were small (less than 5,000 students), middle (between 5,000-15,000), and large (more than 15,000); moreover, the participants were from various generations (Table 6).

Table 6. Generation Age Brackets

GENERATION	TIMELINE
G. I Generation	Born 1901-1926
Silent	Born 1927-1945
Boomers	Born 1946-1964
Generation X	Born 1965-1980
Millennials	Born 1981-1996
Generation Z	Born 1997-2012

Note. *This timeline was based on the researcher's understanding of the general acceptance of birth dates for generations; however, it is essential to note that different sources present these categories based on their criteria.*

PRIMARY RECRUITMENT

With the primary-recruitment group, the researcher contacted professional organizations with MIOCs members who hold higher education leadership positions in Texas. The researcher established contact and participation agreements with the organization's executive directors. Then the organization distributed the survey link to their members for participation from July – August 2022. The organization agreed to distribute the survey information 2-4 times during the research window, soliciting participation in the survey via email. The email included the study's purpose, goals, and participant demographics. Organizations that agreed to distribute the survey submitted a signed Site Collaboration Acknowledgment Letter. The researcher did not directly contact or gain personal contact information from these participants. Manandhar and Joshi (2020) clarify that "consent is a research process of information exchange between the researcher and the human participant" (p. 89). The researcher provided a consent form to the organization's

executive directors, who agreed to the study's expectations by signing the document, therefore, agreeing to give this information to the participants via digital communication.

Furthermore, the consent form received by the organizations explained the survey's purpose, goals, expectations, demographic and criteria required for participation, and essential terms and definitions. The participants consented to the study by agreeing to complete the survey when emailed by the organization. The participants did not engage with the researcher directly; however, survey questions and answers were discussed between the organization's executive director and the researcher. When the participants agreed to participate, after reading the information provided by the organization's email, the individual clicked on the Survey Monkey link to complete the Microaggression Climate Survey (see Appendix B). The participating organizations were the Texas Community Colleges Teachers Association (TCCTA) and National Community College Hispanic Council (NCCHC). TCCTA, one of the largest postsecondary organizations, is "comprised of educators from every teaching discipline, as well as counselors, librarians, and administrators; the Texas Community College Teachers Association's members come from all public and independent two-year colleges in Texas" (TCCTA, n.d., About TCCTA section, para. 1). Moreover, NCCHC is a leadership fellow program whose members are Hispanic leaders in community colleges in America (NCCHC, 2021). These primary recruitment groups were from organizations with incredible and diverse members; moreover, they have relationships and partnerships that permitted the appropriate recruitment for this study.

SECONDARY AND THIRD RECRUITMENT

The secondary recruitment group of participants met the same study participant demographics. However, these participants were recruited through the professional social media platform— LinkedIn. Social media recruiting has become increasingly valuable as more

professionals interact on LinkedIn and organize online, allowing the researcher to reach individuals who meet the population criteria. The research incorporated this platform because "using LinkedIn significantly increase[s] informational benefits" (Utz, 2015, p. 9) and has "a strong professional focus" (Utz, 2015, p. 13). An invitation to participate in the survey was posted on the researcher's professional LinkedIn account. The post provided the participant criteria, the time required for survey completion, the purpose of study, and the Survey Monkey link. The researcher's post encouraged other professionals to share the post with others who meet the criteria. The post was shared multiple times by various professionals, and it received over four hundred impressions. Impressions on LinkedIn "represent the total number of times [a] posts [is seen]" (Barnhart, 2020, Company Updates section, para. 8). The researcher did not have direct access or contact information from the primary and secondary-recruitment groups. However, the third recruitment process included the researcher using public information, emails, and demographic data to contact MLOCs; these participants were invited to complete the survey via an email invitation. The researcher provided these participants with the same information as the primary and secondary recruitment groups, but these individuals did have access to the researcher. The secondary and third recruitment relied on snowball sampling for convenience because "this approach is most useful when a study is carried on in a setting in which possible participants are scattered or not found in clusters" (Lunenburg & Irby, 2008, p. 176). Moreover, all three recruitments merged convenience and snowballing respondent participation, reaching a large sample of participants that meet the researcher's demographics.

INSTRUMENTATION

The instrumentation implemented in this mixed methods approach was a Survey Monkey survey comprising thirty-five multiple-choice and two open-ended questions. There was an implementation of a pilot before the administration of the Microaggression Climate Survey.

PILOT

The pilot study assessed the survey's process and accessibility, length, understanding, language, and perception of the research questions. The researcher used their network with acquaintances, colleagues, and dissertation committee members to identify 4-6 individuals who understood microaggressions, higher education, and leadership. These individuals completed the survey and provided feedback. This pilot did not serve as data collection but rather to identify "where the weaknesses lie" (Black, 2002) in the survey instrument. The researcher used this process to improve the questions' structure, presentation, and comprehension of the survey design. The researcher implemented the required adjustments but did not alter the research questions' purpose, focus, or categories.

SURVEY

The survey included an initial message that addressed the study's purpose, the demographic, the time commitment required, and definitions (see Appendix B). This information allowed participants to determine if they agreed to contribute to this study. There were screening questions to determine whether the respondent was qualified to participate in the survey. The screening questions were:

1. Do you identify as a MIOC (marginalized individual of color)?
2. Do you hold one of the following leadership positions (president, vice president, provost, executive director, or director)?
3. Do you hold a leadership position at a Texas higher education institution?

Participants who did not meet this criterion were thanked for their time, and the survey ended. Participants who met the requirements were allowed to enter the survey, which was divided into six categories (Table 7). These categories were used to simplify the researcher's process during data collection (see Appendix B). Furthermore, the survey incorporated two measuring scales: *Measurement of Microaggression Statement Scale 1* (MOMSS-1) and *Measurement of Microaggression Statement Scale 2* (MOMSS-2); these scales enhanced data analysis and discussion.

Table 7. Microaggression Climate Survey Sections

SURVEY CATEGORIES	NUMBER OF QUESTIONS
Demographic Details	8
Occurrence of Microaggressions	6
Type of Microaggressions	12
Impact of Microaggression	6
Response to Microaggressions	3
Open-Ended Questions	2

DATA COLLECTION METHODS

The data collection method describes the researcher's process of collecting information and provides steps for replication (Black, 2002). The participants gained access and exposure to the Microaggressions Climate Survey (with Survey Monkey) through professional organizations, social media networking, or email invitation. Then the participant read the Survey Consent Form and, by clicking the link, agreed that they met the criteria to participate in this research. Participation was voluntary, and the participants were not forced to participate (Manandhar & Joshi, 2020). The researcher only maintained contact with the organization's leadership to ensure the survey was provided throughout the research window for the primary recruitment group. Once the survey was completed, the participant completed their process step. Then the researcher

gathered all the data after closing the research window (October 31, 2022) and began the analysis process.

DATA COLLECTION

Microaggressions and leadership structures in higher education are complex concepts; therefore, the researcher incorporated preliminary research. This step required reading existing documents and literature on the experience of MIOCs who hold leadership positions at higher education institutions. This process clarified complex concepts, improving research design and data collection procedures (Axim & Pearce, 2006). Furthermore, the researcher designed a survey using the information collected on microaggressions and higher education leaders. The survey tool used was Survey Monkey because this provided the researcher with a reduction in time and cost and credible data collection and analysis (Radha, Mayank, & Trivedi, 2015). More significantly, although there are various other survey tools, Survey Monkey is recognized [as] one of the top survey online tools [and is] helpful for an academic research survey" (Radha, Mayank, & Trivedi, 2015).

Moreover, the researcher distributed the pilot test to higher education professionals familiar with microaggressions and leadership. Including "this type of pretest gives the investigator firsthand knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of the data collection plan" (Axim & Pearce, 2006, p. 38). The information gathered from the pilot was significant as it revealed misalignment between the questions and the goals of the study and researcher questions. Even more critical, the feedback exposed an ineffective benchmark quantity scale which required the design to shift toward a numerical range format to assist in calibrating results in a statistical form, resulting in the MOMSS-1 and MOMSS-2. This process was vital because the study collection included statistical and interpretive analysis. Axim and Pearce (2006) reiterate that

"combinations of data collection methods generate advantages that no one method can offer" (p. 13). Using this information, the researcher redesigned the pilot into a final survey product.

Furthermore, the Microaggression Climate Survey intended to collect data that described a social science and phenomenological concept, measuring "human behavior, human beliefs, or other aspects of the human population" (Axim & Pearce, 2006, p. 28). Participants were permitted to skip questions they were uncomfortable answering, so the researcher did not consider these submissions incomplete. The researcher explored complete and partially completed surveys as all data provided was beneficial to understanding the qualitative and quantitative findings. The research used categorized responses by stating "23 out of 25 respondents" answered question 4 to collect data and provided the number of respondents for statistical data. The data collected from the survey was centered around the occurrences, types, and impacts marginalized individuals of color experience throughout their leadership roles with microaggressions; furthermore, the responses and approaches they used to address or acknowledge these experiences were gathered. More importantly, through two open-ended questions, leaders were allowed to address their institution's efforts to recognize, address, and eliminate microaggressions. Also, the data collected offered insights into advice MLOCs gave to other MIOCs. The research collection period was from July 15th through October 31st, 2022. Finally, the data collected from the feedback and commentary for the quantitative questions led to the establishment of emerging concepts; moreover, the open-ended narrative descriptions allowed the researcher to create emerging themes.

DATA ACCESS, RISKS, AND BENEFITS

The discussion of microaggressions against leaders can be difficult for marginalized individuals of color; therefore, securing their identities and keeping their perspectives

confidential was essential. The data collection does not include identifiable markers to protect data access; the participants were not asked to provide any information that could directly or indirectly connect their responses to their identity. The survey information excludes the following:

1. First and Last Name
2. Institution Name
3. Specific Position Title
4. Contact Information (Phone, Email, Address)

The data collection and storage of survey information is computer-based and digital; however, the researcher did not collect participants' IP addresses. The information gathered was stored in a password-protected digital folder and can only be accessible by the researcher. The data will be stored and protected for three years from the end of the successful dissertation defense date.

As with any research, there are risks and benefits to participants of this study. The benefits are that participants gained an understanding of microaggressions. Also, they provided data that acknowledges, addresses, and eliminates microaggressions in the workforce, promoting and sustaining diversity, equity, and inclusion. The information these participants provided, directly and indirectly, benefits higher education communities. The community can acknowledge, address, and eliminate microaggressions throughout the relationships between the community and higher education institutions. The risks were minimal and internal; these were explained in the informed consent form (Pickard, 2007). Responding to questions on microaggressions forced participants to recount their emotional and psychological reactions to the initial event; however, participation in the survey was an extremely low risk as there were no direct indicators to identify them by outside parties. Finally, participants engaged in the survey

via the internet, so the researcher did not need to consider any contingency or safety measures to protect participants from the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic.

VARIABLES MEASURED

The nature of the phenomenon of microaggressions lends itself to the nonexperimental research design. This design conducted a convergent mixed methods approach in an environment where the researcher did not manipulate any variable in the study. However, variable one (microaggressions), variable two (occurrence of microaggressions), variable three (type of microaggressions), variable four (impact of microaggressions), and variable five (response/approach to microaggressions) were observed and described as they occurred naturally in the participant's environment. There were no evident independent or dependent variables. Using different variables in nonexperimental research is based on "the assumption behind this is that using different, independent measurements of the same phenomenon can provide a means of counterbalancing the weaknesses of one research method with the strengths of another" (Reio, 2016, p. 679). The nonexperimental approach was descriptive research, allowing the researcher to describe, analyze, and interpret the individual's experiences within the existing environment. Therefore, the researcher explored the phenomenon as it occurs in the role of MLOCs who navigate leadership in Texas higher education institutions.

DATA ANALYSIS METHODS

The research used a two-phase data analysis process that included quantitative and qualitative procedures. The first phase included a quantitative analysis of the survey's multiple-choice questions to develop descriptive statistics (Combs & Onwuegbuzie, 2010). The quantitative data guided the analysis that answered the primary and secondary-level questions 1, 2, and 3. Moreover, the researcher explored disaggregated data to deepen the answers to these

questions. The second phase includes the comments and feedback from the quantitative responses and the narratives from the open-ended questions. From the quantitative feedback, the researcher created emerging concepts. Moreover, the open-ended responses' descriptions provided emerging themes that answered the secondary-level questions 4 and 5. This analysis increased the descriptive perspective of the phenomenological method. The researcher considered the "priority or emphasis given to the analytical strands" (Combs & Onwuegbuzie, 2010, p. 5). Finally, the disaggregated data from the quantitative findings strengthened the qualitative data by providing the influence intersectionality plays in the experience of marginalized leaders of color.

DATA ANALYSIS

It was essential to use the quantitative and qualitative data to strengthen the analysis of each section of the study, ensuring that the primary and secondary research questions were addressed. Onwuegbuzie and Combs (2011) explain that using mixed methods requires four analysis phases. The four phases are:

1. Data transformation
2. Data correlation and comparison
3. Analysis for inquiry conclusions and inferences
4. Using aspects of the analytical framework of one methodological tradition within the analysis of data from another tradition (Onwuegbuzie and Combs, 2011, p.4).

The researcher reviewed all partially completed surveys and determined they provided sufficient data comparable to completed surveys. The researcher evaluated partially completed survey responses by implementing survey data cleaning and filter features to identify and remove responses that did not meet the required completeness for descriptive data analysis. Surveys that provided no answers were not included in the data analysis as they had no validity. However, all

completed and partially completed submissions that provided data were included as they strengthened the findings and the development of the statistical and phenomenological descriptions. Furthermore, Onwuegbuzie and Combs (2011) explain the seven steps of mixed analysis: The seven steps of mixed methods analysis considered in this process were:

1. Data reduction
2. Data display
3. Data transformation
4. Data correlation
5. Data consolidation
6. Data comparison
7. Data integration

Using these steps, the researcher explored the data provided by the qualitative and quantitative information. Then, the researcher entered the written responses from the open-ended and optional feedback from the quantitative questions into categories corresponding to questions four or five in a predesigned formula in Excel. Then the descriptive statistical and phenomenological data was divided into emerging concepts under the researched categories: demographics, occurrences, types, impacts, and responses/approaches. For the qualitative narratives, the responses were divided into the categories of the institution's commitment and the leader's advice, and then the researcher created themes from participants' common statements. Pickard (2013) explains that "phenomenological analysis is concerned with discovering the underlying structure of experiences" (p. 268). The researcher summarized ideas into secondary concepts that defined the shift in microaggressions, position types, approaches for prevention, addressing or eliminating microaggressions, and leadership advice.

Using open coding from data-driven descriptive statistics and thematic development, the researcher used inference to identify data that interpreted microaggressions experienced by the sampling population. These inferences were connected to the data provided by the multiple-choice and open-ended questions. It is important to note that comparing quantitative and qualitative information is not for comparison in outcomes but "to seek a detailed understanding of the phenomena under investigation as it is experienced by the individual" (Pickard, 2013, p. 268). The research design did not include nominal measurement that provides data for labels in demographics, occurrences, types, impacts, and approaches. This numerical scale was used to explain the severity an experience had on MIOCs with each category and question, not a comparison to other studies. Due to the nature of the study, the researcher did not incorporate inferential statistics or average the data from the calibration scale; instead, it deepened the description of the phenomenological study.

DATA VALIDITY

The researcher considered the study's validity because it measures "the degree to which a study accurately reflects or assesses the specific research question (Pickard, 2013, p. 327). It was challenging to monitor internal and external validity as microaggressions and their impacts were observed in the environment of each MIOCs. The study used two scale matrices (MOMSS-1 and MOMSS-2) to explain the level of impact experienced by MIOCs in the various categories of the research to avoid disparities in the interpretation of severity. However, internal factors of microaggressions may have influenced the external aspect of impacts related to understanding these experiences (Pickard, 2013). Also, it is possible that contemporary political, social, and economic factors and historical events threatened the study, as these conditions can influence the outcome of a phenomenal study by either heightening or minimizing microaggressions.

However, these external and internal factors did not eliminate the existence of microaggressions, emphasizing the study's validity. The number of participants may impact the study's validity, but the researcher included various categories to deepen the descriptions associated with the influence of microaggressions. Furthermore, the data collection and analysis focused on addressing and describing the information that answered the research questions.

CONCLUSION

This chapter explained the convergent mixed method approach, including using quantitative and qualitative data to increase the understanding of a phenomenological issue—microaggressions experienced by marginalized individuals of color in higher education institutions in Texas. The survey instrumentation, which included multiple choice and open-ended questions, provided depth in describing leaders' experiences with microaggressions. The researcher addressed the rationale for using a mixed-method process and provided the research design, including participant demographics, instrumentation, data collection, and data analysis. Furthermore, Chapter Four presents the results and findings of the quantitative and qualitative data, focusing on the primary and secondary research questions.

Chapter Four: Results and Analysis

INTRODUCTION

Chapter Four provides the descriptive data of the Microaggression Climate Survey (see Appendix B), which measured the occurrences, types, and impacts of microaggressions on higher education leaders of color and the responses and approaches they used when they experienced an incident of microaggression. Furthermore, the survey explored institutions' commitment and acknowledgment of microaggressions, ending with professional advice from marginalized leaders of color (MLOCs) on methods for handling experiences with microaggressions. The convergent mixed methods approach incorporated the quantitative method to provide a measurable description, establishing a qualifiable interpretation (Creswell & Poth, 2018). As this is phenomenological research, it was imperative to include the qualitative method because this gave voice to the first-hand perspectives and experiences of the participants. The qualitative data findings led to concepts and themes and an understanding of the phenomena (Lunenburg & Irby, 2008) of microaggressions. The dyad of the results and findings strengthened the experienced of marginalized individuals of color who engage with microaggressions as they advance in a higher education institution. Chapter Four includes the leading elements of (a) research questions, (b) quantitative results and findings (demographics), (c) quantitative results and findings (occurrences, types, impacts, and responses/approaches), (d) qualitative results and findings (emerging concepts), and (e) qualitative results and findings (emerging themes).

PURPOSE, IMPORTANCE, AND DESIGN OF THE STUDY

The study employed a phenomenological approach to describe the experience of marginalized leaders of color as they encounter incidents as they professionally advance in higher education, focusing on community colleges and universities in Texas. The mixed methods approach provides descriptive statistics and a narrative description of the phenomenon of microaggressions. Merging quantitative and qualitative research aspects expands and strengthens the results and findings in exploring this study and the contribution to the literature (Schoonenboom & Johnson, 2017). The significance of this mixed methods approach is that it increases the literature focused on the experience of higher education leaders, which relies heavily on qualitative data. It is essential to explore the experience with microaggressions that marginalized leaders of color encounter because there is a surge in their representation at higher education institutions. Furthermore, ethnic minority representation in 2016 was about 8% Blacks, 4% Hispanics, and 2% Asians (Espinoza et al., 2019). The researcher explored the results and findings using the Microaggression Theory, Critical Race Theory, Identity-Neutral Leadership, and Psychological Significance, answering the primary and secondary research questions with a mixed methods lens.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This convergent mixed method study used a phenomenological approach to address one primary and five secondary-level research questions. The Microaggression Climate Survey (see Appendix B) gathered data in response to these inquiries, providing descriptive results and findings of microaggressions' influence on MLOCs in higher education.

- *Primary Question*:

    1. What are the occurrences, types, and impacts of microaggressions experienced by marginalized individuals of color who hold a leadership position in a Texas higher

education institution, and what responses and approaches do they use to acknowledge, address, or eliminate microaggression incidents?

- *Secondary-Level Research Questions*:

    1. What are the leadership positions MIOCs hold while still experiencing microaggressions?

    2. Are microaggression occurrences, types, impacts, and responses/approaches different for MIOCs once they navigate toward leadership positions in higher education?

    3. Do intersectionalities influence the occurrences, types, impacts, or responses/approaches?

    4. What is a leader's understanding of their institution's attempt to acknowledge, address, or eliminate microaggressions committed against leaders who are marginalized individuals of color?

    5. What advice do MLOCs give to other MIOCs aspiring to become leaders who might experience microaggressions?

QUANTITATIVE RESULTS AND FINDINGS (DEMOGRAPHICS)

Through a collaboration with Texas Community Colleges Teachers Association (TCCTA) and National Community College Hispanic Council (NCCHC), participants were invited to engage in the survey. Participants were requested based on demographic backgrounds that meet the criteria; the criteria were:

- Do you identify as a MIOC (marginalized individual of color)?
- Do you hold one of the following leadership positions: president, vice president, provost, executive director, or director?
- Do you hold a leadership position at a Texas higher education institution?

Due to low participation from the first recruitment, the researcher invited secondary and third groups. These individuals were recruited through social media and snowball contacts; the researcher determined that participants met the demographic standards using public information and emails for the third group. It is important to note that fifty participants completed the Microaggression Climate Survey's prescreening demographic section even though hundreds

were invited to contribute. Nevertheless, participants began the survey with the prescreening process to ensure the individual identified with the predetermined criteria.

PRESCREENING DEMOGRAPHICS

The outcome of the prescreening determined that nineteen individuals could not continue beyond this research stage; in fact, some participants did not meet two or more of the criteria. About 18.0% of participants did not identify as a MIOC or did not hold a leadership position within the established position framework; a small percentage (8.0%) claimed that they did not hold a leadership position at a Texas higher education institution (Table 8).

Table 8. Prescreening Demographics

QUESTION	YES	NO	TOTAL
Do you identify as a MIOC (marginalized individual of color)?	41 82.0%	9 18.0%	50
Do you hold one of the following leadership positions: president, vice president, provost, executive director, or director?	41 82.0%	9 18.0%	50
Do you hold a leadership position at a Texas higher education institution?	46 92.0%	5 8.0%	50

Note. *Some participants answered "no" to several criteria questions, which accounts for the 23 "Nos" in the data; however, only 19 participants did not engage with the survey.*

Furthermore, the prescreening section of the survey advanced 31 participants into the Microaggression Climate Survey (Table 8), providing the demographic data.

DEMOGRAPHIC DETAILS

The participants provided data on the specific position of leadership and the years of leadership experience in higher education (Table 9). The results illustrated that about 45.2% of participants acknowledged holding the president (6 participants) or vice president (8 participants) position at their institution (Table 9). A low 6.5% (2 participants) held a provost position, while about 48.3% were a director (10 participants) or an executive director (5 participants) (Table 9).

Additionally, over 32.2% (10) of participants had sixteen or more years of experience as higher-education leaders (Table 9). In comparison, other individuals had 1-5 years (32.3%) or 6-15 years (35.5%) of leadership experience at a college or university (Table 9).

Table 9. Leadership Positions and Years of Leadership Experience in Higher Education

POSITION	RESPONSE # (%)
President	6 (19.4)
Vice President (not Academic/Instruction)	8 (25.8)
Provost (Academic VP)	2 (6.5)
Executive Director	5 (16.1)
Director	10 (32.3)
Total	31
YEARS OF EXPERIENCE	RESPONSE
Less than 1 Year	0 (0.0)
1-5 Years	10 (32.3)
6-10 Years	6 (19.4)
11-15 Years	5 (16.1)
16-20 Years	5 (16.1)
More than 20 Years	5 (16.1)
Total	31

Furthermore, the participants' sex identification resulted in 58.1% female and 42.9% male (Table 10). It is important to note that no participants selected 'other' in the sex identification demographic even though it was provided as an option. The participants' race and ethnicity measure included five groups; however, American Indian or Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander had no participant representation (Table 10). Moreover, the predominant representation came from individuals representing Black or African American (61.3%) and Hispanic or Latino (32.3%), while Asian participants had only 6.4% representation (Table 10). Although leaders in higher education may currently be represented predominantly by one specific generation, the researcher included the seven living generations to measure their

participation in the survey. Generation X (born between 1965 to 1980) encompassed 54.8%, and Baby Boomers (born between 1946 to 1964) made up 25.8% of the participants, while Millennials contained approximately 16.1% (Table 10). There was a 3.2% representation for the Silent generation, but no participants identified as G.I generation or Generation Z, potentially due to their age (Table 10).

Table 10. Gender, Race, and Generation (Age) Identification

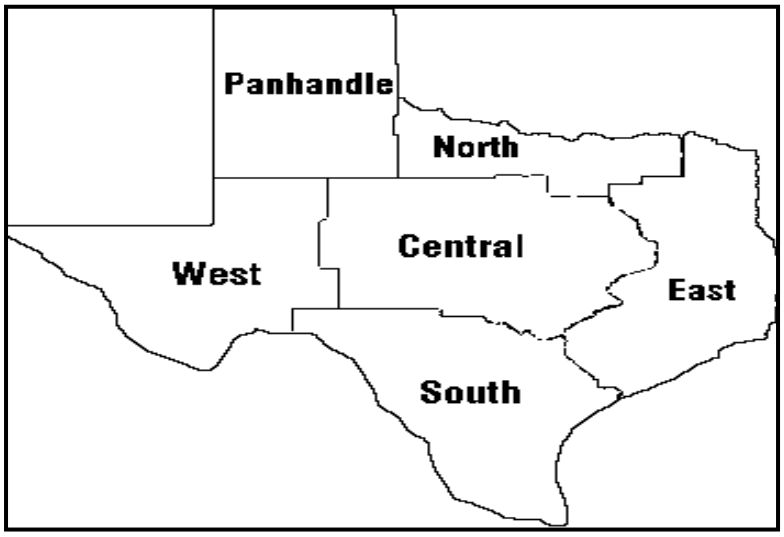
GENDER	RESPONSE # (%)
Female	18 (58.1)
Male	13 (41.9)
Total	31
RACE	RESPONSE # (%)
American Indian or Alaska Native	0 (0.0)
Asian	2 (6.4)
Black or African American	19 (61.3)
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	0 (0.0)
Hispanic or Latino	10 (32.3)
Other	0 (0.0)
Total	31
GENERATION (AGE)	RESPONSE # (%)
G.I. Generation (Born 1901-1926)	0 (0.0)
Silent (Born 1927-1945)	1 (3.2)
Baby Boomers (Born 1946-1964)	8 (25.8)
Generation X (Born 1965-1980)	17 (54.8)
Millennials (Born 1981-1996)	5 (16.1)
Generation Z (Born 1997- 2012)	0 (0.0)
Total	31

Note. *The Generation (age) timelines are based on the researcher's understanding of the general acceptance of birth dates for generations; however, different sources may alter these.*

The findings established that the participants held leadership positions throughout different system sizes, including small (less than 5,000 students), middle (between 5,000-

15,000), and large (more than 15,000). The researcher determined the size of each measure, and it may not correspond to other perspectives or studies. 67.7% of the intuitions recognized were large systems, and 29.0% were middle-size systems, with the remainder classified as small (3.2%). The survey included a measure to determine the representation of a leader and their institution based on regions in Texas. The region concepts included were Panhandle, North, West, Central, and South; furthermore, participants determined their region using Figure 1.

Figure 1. ***Regions of Texas Institutions***

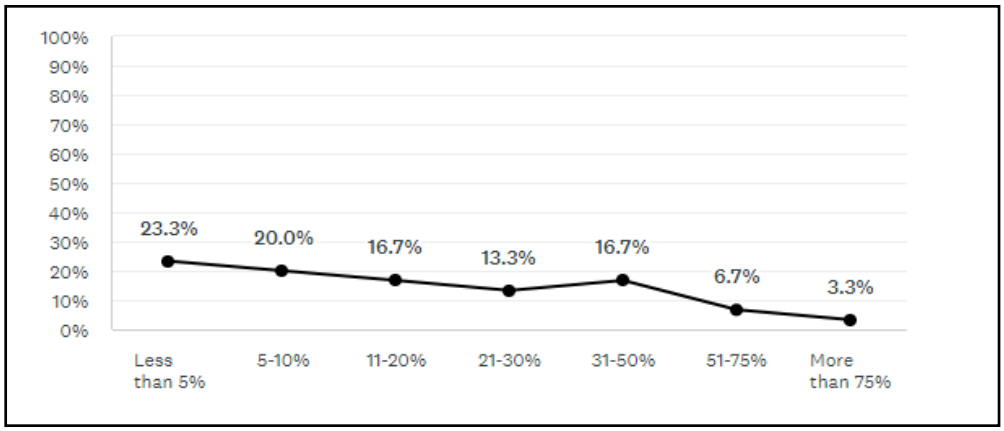


Although 31 participants responded to this question, there was no representation for the West region of Texas. Moreover, the region representation results and findings illustrated the following:

- South (38.7%), a total of 12 participants
- East (32.3%), a total of 10 participants
- Panhandle (12.9%), a total of 4 participants
- North (9.7%), a total of 3 participants
- Central (6.5%), a total of 2 participants

The final demographic focused on the percentage of leadership (president, vice president, provost, executive director, or director) at the participants' institution that classifies themselves as an individual of color (including Blacks, African Americans, Latinos, Asians, and Pacific Islanders, and other ethnic minorities). The results were that 23.3% of institutions in Texas have less than 5% of MIOCs in leadership positions, and 20.0% have between 5-10% of representation (Figure 2). Although about 30.0% of institutions have between 21-50%, about 10.0% have 51% or more of their leaders identify as a person of color (Figure 2).

Figure 2. ***The Percentage of Leadership that Identifies as a Person of Color***



This result and findings summarized the demographics of the participants who engaged in the Microaggression Climate Survey. The number of participants that completed the demographic section was 31. However, due to the nature and sensitivity of the remaining categories, participants were allowed to skip a statement. They were not required to respond if the phrase was distressing or problematic. Therefore, the number of participants is inconsistent throughout the survey. The following four sections of the survey focused on the occurrences (OC), types (TY), and impacts (IM) of microaggressions, plus responses and approaches (RA) used by marginalized leaders of color to address microaggressions.

QUANTITATIVE RESULTS AND FINDINGS (OC, TY, IM, AND RA)

In this section, MIOCs addressed their experience with microaggressions; therefore, participants were provided with a clear definition. Microaggressions are "subtle snubs, slights, and insults directed toward minorities, as well as to women and other historically stigmatized groups, that implicitly communicate" (Lilienfeld, 2017, p. 139) or produce hostility, exclusion, or divisiveness. The qualitative results and findings provided information on questions that surveyed the occurrence, types, and impacts that directly influence the experience MLOCs. Also, the responses and approaches used by marginalized individuals of color (MIOCs) were measured using the same understanding of microaggression terms.

OCCURRENCE OF MICROAGGRESSIONS

The first set of questions evaluated the occurrence of microaggressions using a structure that presented 'I' statements. The respondents then answered with either a simplified 'yes' or 'no' to indicate if they experienced the situation. The first statement, "I have experienced microaggressions while holding a leadership position in higher education," revealed that 85.7% of participants related to this assertion (Table 11). Also, 85.7% of participants witnessed microaggressions committed against other minoritized leaders on their campus (Table 11). Furthermore, two different statements focused on the influence of social and political relations and the role of the institution in acknowledging microaggressions:

- 55.6% of participants stated, 'No' to "the number of microaggressions I have experienced while holding a leadership position has increased when social and political relations in society become volatile" (Table 11).
- 44.4% of participants stated, "No' to "the institution where I currently hold a leadership position acknowledges that leaders of color experience microaggressions" (Table 11).

Table 11. Occurrence of Microaggression (Yes & No Statements)

STATEMENT	YES	NO	TOTAL
I have experienced microaggressions while holding a leadership position in higher education.	24 85.7%	4 14.3%	28
The number of microaggressions I have experienced while holding a leadership position has increased when social and political relations in society become volatile.	12 44.4%	15 55.6%	27
I have witnessed microaggressions committed against other minoritized leaders on my campus.	24 85.7%	4 14.3%	28
The institution where I currently hold a leadership position acknowledges that leaders of color experience microaggressions.	15 55.6%	12 44.4%	27

It is important to note that the number of participants changed by question (Table 11). The participants were allowed to skip through questions they were uncomfortable answering. After participants responded to their experience with enduring occurrences of microaggressions while holding a leadership position, they were asked who committed the microaggression against them the most often. The results prove that offenders of microaggressions against marginalized individuals of color were about 46.2% other leaders, 23.1% faculty, 11.5% staff, 11.5% community members, and 7.7% students. However, microaggressions committed by board members were at 0%; this percentage is discussed and analyzed further in Chapter Five.

In the occurrence portion, the final "I" statement incorporated the *Measurement of Microaggression Statement Scale 1* (MOMSS-1) to determine the magnitude of incidents participants identified as microaggressions throughout an academic semester. The scale provided the following measures:

- None (0 Per Semester)
- Very Low (1 Per Semester)
- Low (2 Per Semester)
- Moderate (3 Per Semester)
- High (4 Per Semester)

- Extremely High (5+ Per Semester)

The statement of a semester correlates with the traditional academic calendar year, including the fall, spring, and summer sessions at a community college or university. Moody (2021) emphasizes that a typical fall and spring semester is a 16-week timeframe. While a summer semester can vary dramatically between institutions (Moody, 2021), the traditional period is between 8-12 weeks for leaders. Therefore, the measurement scale is a familiar concept to higher education leaders. The statement was "the occurrence of microaggressions I have experienced while holding a leadership position in higher education is" (Table 12). The total number of participants that responded to this statement was twenty-eight. Participants exposed that over 32% experienced a microaggression level between High and Extremely High per semester, indicating an encounter range of four or more microaggressions per semester (Table 12). Additionally, 14.3% of leaders of color experienced a Moderate level of microaggressions per semester (Table 12). Only 14.3% (4 participants) exclaimed experiencing no microaggressions, producing a level of None (Table 12).

Table 12. Occurrence of Microaggression in Leadership

Measurement of Microaggression Statement Scale 1						
None (0 Per Semester)	Very Low (1 Per Semester)	Low (2 Per Semester)	Moderate (3 Per Semester)	High (4 Per Semester)	Extremely High (5+ Per Semester)	Total
Statement: The occurrence of microaggressions I have experienced while holding a leadership position in higher education is…						
4 14.3%	7 25.0%	4 14.3%	4 14.3%	4 14.3%	5 17.9%	28

Note. *A semester correlates with the traditional academic calendar year at a community college or university. The standard timeframe is 16 weeks for the fall and spring semesters and 8-12 weeks for the summer semester.*

The researcher measured the participants' experience with microaggression occurrences in this survey section. Moreover, the following area of the data is centered around the types of microaggressions leaders of color engage with at Texas institutions.

TYPE OF MICROAGGRESSIONS

The overall focus of this section of the survey was to identify the types of microaggressions leaders of color confront while navigating the structures and frameworks of their institution. The first subsection of the segment incorporated a statement. It allowed participants to respond by identifying an intersection used against them, such as social class, race/ethnicity, sex/gender, sexual orientation, and age. The researcher selected these intersectionality components because they are the most common to an individual's experience; however, there are various other options. The statement read: "the intersectionality used against me to commit microaggressions is mainly focused on." The marginalized leaders of color replied that the predominant intersectionalities used against them were 60.0% race/ethnicity, 20.0% sex/gender, and 20.0% age. This group of participants did not indicate sexual orientation or social class microaggressions, resulting in 0.0% for both categories.

The remaining three subsections of microaggressions were divided into (1) intersectionality, (2) microinsult, microassault, and microinvalidation, and (3) environmental, ascription of intelligence, color blindness, and meritocracy. The participants read a set of "I" statements and then used the *Measurement of Microaggression Statement Scale 1* (MOMSS-1) to determine the magnitude of each type of microaggression encountered. The scale measures include (None, Very Low, Low, Moderate, High, and Extremely High); the same as in Table 12. The intersectionality information gathered data on race/ethnicity, sex/gender, age, and sexual orientation (Table 13). 34.6% of higher education leaders stated that they experienced

race/ethnicity microaggressions at a Moderate to Extremely High scale (Table 13). About 15.4% experience a Moderate scale of sex/gender microaggressions, three encounters per semester (Table 13). Also, 26.9% of participants faced age microaggressions at a Moderate to Extremely High measure (Table 13); about 84.6% of participants experienced zero sexual orientation microaggressions per semester.

Table 13. Types of Microaggression (Intersectionality)

Measurement of Microaggression Statement Scale 1						
None (0 Per Semester)	Very Low (1 Per Semester)	Low (2 Per Semester)	Moderate (3 Per Semester)	High (4 Per Semester)	Extremely High (5+ Per Semester)	Total
Statement: I have experienced microaggressions centered around my race/ethnicity.						
3 11.5%	7 26.9%	7 26.9%	1 3.8%	4 15.4%	4 15.4%	26
Statement: I have experienced microaggressions centered around my sex/gender.						
8 30.8%	9 34.6%	3 11.5%	4 15.4%	1 3.8%	1 3.8%	26
Statement: I have experienced microaggressions centered around my age.						
6 23.1%	10 38.5%	3 11.5%	2 7.7%	4 15.4%	1 3.8%	26
Statement: I have experienced microaggressions centered around my sexual orientation.						
22 84.6%	4 15.4%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	26

Note. *A semester correlates with the traditional academic calendar year at a community college or university. The standard timeframe is 16 weeks for the fall and spring semesters and 8-12 weeks for the summer semester.*

The next set of "I" statements measured for microinsults, microassaults, and microinvalidations, and the definitions of these terms were provided in Table 2 (Chapter One). The findings concluded that 34.6% of MIOCs in leadership experience a Moderate to Extremely High level of microinsults in a semester, ranging from three or more encounters (Table 14).

However, about 84.5% of participants revealed that they experience between 0-2 occurrences of microassaults per semester (None to Low) (Table 14). Microinvalidations measured about 69.2% in the None to Low scale (0-2 per semester) (Table 14).

Table 14. Types of Microaggression (Microinsult, Microassault, and Microinvalidation)

Measurement of Microaggression Statement Scale 1						
None (0 Per Semester)	Very Low (1 Per Semester)	Low (2 Per Semester)	Moderate (3 Per Semester)	High (4 Per Semester)	Extremely High (5+ Per Semester)	Total
Statement: I have seen behaviors or heard verbal comments that were rude, insensitive, and demeaning towards another person's race/ethnicity or sex/gender. (*Microinsult*)						
3 11.5%	7 26.9%	7 26.9%	2 7.7%	1 3.8%	6 23.1%	26
Statement: I have explicitly experienced a violent verbal or nonverbal attack meant to hurt through name-calling, avoidant behavior, or purposeful discriminatory actions. *(Microassault)*						
14 53.8%	5 19.2%	3 11.5%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	15 15.4%	26
Statement: I have experienced verbal comments or behaviors that exclude, negate, or nullify the thoughts, emotions, or reality of a person of color. (*Microinvalidation)*						
7 26.9%	7 26.9%	4 15.4%	3 11.5%	0 0.0%	5 19.2%	26

Note. *A semester correlates with the traditional academic calendar year at a community college or university. The standard timeframe is 16 weeks for the fall and spring semesters and 8-12 weeks for the summer semester. The microaggression terms and definitions are directly from Sue et al. (2007b) Racial Microaggressions in Everyday Life: Implications for Clinical Practice. The terms and definitions are provided in Figure 1, Categories of and Relationships Among Racial Microaggressions (Table 2).*

The final subset of statements in the types of microaggressions measured the level of encounters with an environmental, ascription of intelligence, color blindness, and meritocracy microaggressions. The definitions of these terms are provided in Table 2 (Chapter One). The results illustrate that about 26.9% of participants experienced zero environmental microaggressions, while over 73.1% experienced at least one encounter with this type of aggression per semester (Table 15). Additionally, about 30.7% of the leaders revealed that they

experienced a Moderate to Extremely High number of occurrences (three or more per semester) with the ascription of intelligence (Table 15). Finally, the results recognized that color blindness and meritocracy microaggressions were experienced by 100% of the participants, ranging from Very Low to Extremely High (at least one encounter per semester) (Table 15).

Table 15. Types of Microaggression (Environmental, Ascription of Intelligence, Color Blindness, and Meritocracy)

Measurement of Microaggression Statement Scale 1						
None (0 Per Semester)	Very Low (1 Per Semester)	Low (2 Per Semester)	Moderate (3 Per Semester)	High (4 Per Semester)	Extremely High (5+ Per Semester)	Total
Statement: I have experienced insults or invalidations manifest from a systemic or environmental level. (*Environmental Microaggression*)						
7 26.9%	7 26.9%	4 15.4%	2 7.7%	0 0.0%	6 23.1%	26
Statement: I have been assigned a degree of intelligence based on my race/ethnicity or sex/gender. *(Ascription of Intelligence)*						
9 34.6%	4 15.4%	5 19.2%	1 3.8%	3 11.5%	4 15.4%	26
Statement: I have heard non-people of color state they do not see color or race. (*Color Blindness*)						
0 0.0%	7 26.9%	3 11.5%	8 30.8%	3 11.5%	5 19.2%	26
Statement: I have heard non-people of color state that race plays a minor role in success—everyone can be successful if they work hard. (*Meritocracy*)						
0 0.0%	6 23.1%	7 26.9%	3 11.5%	4 15.4%	6 23.1%	26

Note. *A semester correlates with the traditional academic calendar year at a community college or university. The standard timeframe is 16 weeks for the fall and spring semesters and 8-12 weeks for the summer semester. The microaggression terms and definitions are directly from Sue et al. (2007b) Racial Microaggressions in Everyday Life: Implications for Clinical Practice. The terms and definitions are provided in Figure 1, Categories of and Relationships Among Racial Microaggressions (Table 2).*

Section two of the survey explored the general occurrence of microaggressions, and then section three dove deeper into exploring the types of microaggressions experienced by the

participants. Also, the MOMSS-1 was used to measure the number of encounters per semester. The fourth section of the survey illustrated the impacts of microaggressions on leaders of color.

IMPACT OF MICROAGGRESSIONS

This survey segment focused on three predominant impacts: emotional, physiological, and psychological, and three secondary impacts: relationships, commitment and loyalty, and Covid. The researcher used the *Measurement of Microaggression Statement Scale 2* (MOMSS-2), giving the participants statements and allowing them to use the scale to determine their level of impact. The scale provided the following measures:

- None (0)
- Very Low (1)
- Low (2)
- Moderate (3)
- High (4)
- Extremely High (5)

The MOMSS-2 does not measure per semester as impacts do not occur in a measurable time frame but rather on a level of impression. The findings disclosed that 16.0% (emotional), 32.0% (physiological), and 28.0% (psychological) of participants stated they did not experience any impacts from incidents with microaggressions (Table 16). However, 28.0% of the leaders said they experienced Moderate (3) or Extremely High (5) levels of emotional impacts due to occurrences of microaggressions (Table 16). In addition, 28.0% of the participants expressed that they suffered a Moderate (2) to Extremely High (5) level of psychological impacts from microaggression incidents (Table 16).

Table 16. Impacts of Microaggression (Emotional, Physiological, and Psychological)

Measurement of Microaggression Statement Scale 2						
None (0)	Very Low (1)	Low (2)	Moderate (3)	High (4)	Extremely High (5)	Total
Statement: Microaggressions have impacted me emotionally.						
4 16.0%	13 52.0%	1 4.0%	3 12.0%	0 0.0%	4 16.0%	25
Statement: Microaggressions have impacted me physiologically.						
8 32/0%	10 40.0%	3 12.0%	0 0.0%	1 4.0%	3 12.0%	25
Statement: Microaggressions have impacted me psychologically.						
7 28.0%	9 36.0%	2 8.0%	2 8.0%	2 8.0%	3 12.0%	25

The relationship statement was "Microaggressions have impacted my ability to build relationships and collaborations on campus," to which 44.0% of the leaders of color stated it was None (0). In comparison, 16.0% revealed it had an Extremely High (5) impact (Table 17). The following statement, "microaggressions have impacted my commitment and loyalty to the institution," resulted in 56.0% of MIOCs revealing that they acknowledge between Very Low (1) to Extremely High (5) impact on their commitment and loyalty due to events with microaggressions (Table 17). The final statement was "microaggressions committed against me during the Covid-19 pandemic (2020-present) have increased" (Table 17). The findings displayed that 50.0% of participants had no increase in microaggression impacts from events brought on by Covid-19 (Table 17). However, the remaining 50.0% expressed some effect or increase in microaggressions incidents associated with Covid-19 (Table 17).

Table 17. Impacts of Microaggression (Relationships, Commitment and Loyalty, and Covid)

Measurement of Microaggression Statement Scale 2						
None (0)	Very Low (1)	Low (2)	Moderate (3)	High (4)	Extremely High (5)	Total
Statement: Microaggressions have impacted my ability to build relationships and collaborations on campus.						
11 44.0%	7 28.0%	3 12.0%	0 0.0%	1 4.0%	3 12.0%	25
Statement: Microaggressions have impacted my commitment and loyalty to the institution.						
11 44.0%	7 28.0%	1 4.0%	3 12.0%	0 0.0%	3 12.0%	25
Statement: Microaggressions committed against me during the Covid-19 pandemic (2020-present) have increased.						
12 50.0%	5 20.8%	0 0.0%	4 16.7%	1 4.2%	2 8.3%	24

The remainder of the survey did not integrate the MOMSS-1 or MOMSS-2. The final quantitative section of the survey examined the responses and approaches used by leaders when faced with microaggressions.

Response and Approach to Microaggressions

After exploring the occurrences, types, and impacts of microaggressions, the research examined the responses and approaches used to address, contest, or eliminate incidents of microaggressions. The section provided one question and two "I" statements to identify this information. The question read: "I am comfortable addressing microaggressions committed against me." The 25 participants responded with 84.0% "Yes" and 16.0% "No." The first statement was "When I have experienced a microaggression, my response is to," and there were five possible responses Ignore It (16.0%), Let it Go (16.0%), Respond Immediately (32.0%),

Respond Later (20.0%), and Other 16.0%) (Table 18). There were four other comments provided which are:

- "I typically think it through and later discuss it with my peers."
- "It depends on who [the microaggression] is coming from."
- "One must evaluate the circumstances to determine that it is a microaggression or someone having a bad day. If it is overt and by design, one must discuss the issue."
- "Engage in construction communication."

The final statement was, "When I have addressed microaggressions, the outcome was," and there were seven possible responses. The participants' responses were "that the microaggression addressed was explained as a misunderstanding" (24.0%), that "the misbehavior was identified and addressed" (44.0%), or "that no action or consequences were taken" (16.0%) (Table 18).

Table 18. Response and Approach to Microaggression

STATEMENT: WHEN I HAVE EXPERIENCED A MICROAGGRESSION, MY RESPONSE IS TO…		
RESPONSE/APPROACH CHOICE	NUMBER	PERCENT
Ignore It	4	16.0
Let it Go	4	16.0
Respond Immediately	8	32.0
Respond Later	5	20.0
Other (please specify in the comment section)	4	16.0
Total	**25**	

STATEMENT: WHEN I HAVE ADDRESSED MICROAGGRESSIONS, THE OUTCOME WAS…		
RESPONSE/APPROACH CHOICE	NUMBER	PERCENT
Consequences were executed on the person committing the microaggression(s)	2	8.0
The misbehavior was identified and addressed	11	44.0
That the microaggression addressed was explained as a misunderstanding	6	24.0
That there were further microaggressions or exclusions experienced	0	0.0

STATEMENT: WHEN I HAVE ADDRESSED MICROAGGRESSIONS, THE OUTCOME WAS…		
RESPONSE/APPROACH CHOICE	NUMBER	PERCENT
That no action or consequences were taken	4	16.0
None of the above	2	8.0
Other (please specify in the comment section)	0	0.0
Total	**25**	

Sections one, two, three, four, and five explored the influence of microaggressions through a quantitative lens that provided measurable findings and results for demographics, occurrences, types, impacts, and responses/approaches. However, the final section of the survey provided a qualitative approach, offering results and findings that presented emerging concepts and themes.

QUALITATIVE RESULTS AND FINDINGS (EMERGING CONCEPTS)

Throughout the Microaggression Climate Survey, the participants were given opportunities to offer examples or context to their responses. Although this information was gathered as part of the quantitative section, the additional feedback served as the secondary level of the qualitative results. These responses guided the researcher toward finding and establishing emerging concepts divided into occurrences, types, impacts, and approaches. The researcher illustrated these concepts in this section as a list; however, the analysis and first-hand comments and examples are described in Chapter Five. Moreover, some concepts intersect through various areas of analysis; however, they are clarified in connection to each measure (occurrence, types, impacts, or responses/approaches).

OCCURRENCE OF MICROAGGRESSIONS

1. Political and Social Focus Incident
2. Tone/Language/Treatment Incident
3. MIOCs vs. MIOCs Incident

4. The Role of DEI and External Factors Incident

TYPE OF MICROAGGRESSIONS

Intersectionality (Race, Gender, and Age)

1. Question Experience and Ability
2. Speckled Treatment Impression

Microinsult, Microassault, and Microinvalidation

1. Private and Power Interactions

Ascription of Intelligence, Color Blindness, and Meritocracy

1. Denial of Intelligence and Recognition
2. Common Expectancy

IMPACT OF MICROAGGRESSIONS

Emotional, Physiological, and Psychological Impacts

1. Doubt, Stress, and Anxiety Outcome
2. Accept and Resilience Outcome

Relationship Building/Collaboration, Commitment/Loyalty, and Covid Impacts

1. Empowerment Attitude versus Defeated Attitude

RESPONSE AND APPROACH TO MICROAGGRESSIONS

Responses

1. Fear of Power and Privilege
2. Power of Reflection
3. Lost in Translation

Approaches

1. Equipped Background
2. Allyship and Empowerment

These emerging concepts provided additional context to the complexity of understanding microaggressions' role in the experience of marginalized individuals of color who hold leadership positions. Also, these concepts established the supporting foundation for the primary research question and the quantitative results and findings. This data supports the secondary questions, but emerging themes support questions 4 and 5.

QUALITATIVE RESULTS AND FINDINGS (EMERGING THEMES)

The primary qualitative data of the survey is derived from two open-ended inquiries; participants provided details and examples to clarify their experience with the microaggression question presented. The first query focused on an institution's commitment: "What is your institution's commitment to acknowledging, addressing, and eliminating microaggressions committed against leaders who are marginalized individuals of color?" Moreover, the second question focused on the leaders' advice: "What advice would you give to marginalized individuals of color aspiring to be leaders who might experience microaggressions?" The participant responses and feedback created three emerging themes per focus.

INSTITUTION'S COMMITMENT

1. DEI Integration Approach
2. Mission and Vision Approach
3. Ambiguous, Ineffective, or Absent Approach

ADVICE FROM LEADERS

1. Empowerment, Value, and Pride Advice
2. Speak-up, Speak Out, Resilience, and Accountability Advice
3. Allyship and Epitome Advice

These specific comments and examples are established in Chapter Five, supporting the analysis of primary and secondary questions and the phenomenon of microaggressions. These emerging themes illustrate the experience of marginalized leaders of color who encounter microaggressions as they navigate through higher education.

CONCLUSION

Chapter Four presented a mixed methods study that explored quantitative and qualitative data, analyzing the primary and secondary research questions. The Microaggression Climate Survey (see Appendix B) provided descriptive results and findings on the phenomenological experience of higher education leaders of color employed at a Texas institution. The quantitative data established the foundation for answering the influence microaggression occurrences, types, and impacts have on MIOCs. It explored responses and approaches used by them to address these interactions. Furthermore, the quantitative and qualitative analysis offered evidence to examine if microaggression occurrences, types, impacts, and approaches are different for MIOCs who are leaders. Also, the data clarified which leadership positions experience microaggressions and the strategies they use to acknowledge, address, and eliminate microaggressions. The qualitative data guided the development of various emerging concepts and themes. Finally, the two open-ended questions offered the emergent themes, exploring an institution's attempt to acknowledge, address, and eliminate microaggressions committed against leaders of color. Also, it examined the advice MLOCs gave to other MIOCs who might experience microaggressions at a higher education institution is analyzed. Chapter Five presents an analysis and discussion of the results and findings to answer the research questions, an explanation of the emerging concepts and themes, and merges the literature review and the investigation of this study.

Chapter Five: Analysis and Discussion

INTRODUCTION

Using a mixed methods phenomenological approach, the researcher sought to explore the experience of marginalized individuals of color with microaggressions while holding a leadership position at a Texas institution of higher education. The mixed methods approach allowed for analyzing and discussing the results and findings through two lenses. This chapter examines and deliberates the quantitative and qualitative data to answer the primary and secondary questions from the study using information collected from the Microaggression Climate Survey (see Appendix B). Although 50 participants completed the survey, only 31 individuals met the criteria. The survey dives into complex and challenging topics, so participants were allowed to skip questions; therefore, the number of participant responses varies from twenty-four to thirty-one. However, this does not impact or alter the significance of the analysis and discussion. The researcher used the literature review from Chapter Two, along with the general and intersectionality findings and results from Chapter Four, to conceptualize an investigation and discussion that validates the importance of this study.

The chapter is organized into two major sections: (a) quantitative analysis and discussion and (b) qualitative analysis and discussion. The quantitative analysis and discussion segment addressed the primary question and secondary-level questions 1, 2, and 3 through the development of subcategories: occurrence, type, impact, and response/approach. The examination explored the statistical information to answer the research questions. Furthermore,

the qualitative analysis and discussion answered the primary question and secondary-level questions 4 and 5. The quantitative section divided the primary question into four subcategories (occurrence, type, impact, and response/approach). This section also used subcategories to explain emerging concepts developed from participant comments and examples. Also, the researcher used the written descriptions from leaders for questions 4 and 5 to explore emerging themes.

QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

OVERVIEW

The incredible significance of analyzing the prescreening demographics and demographic details influences the study's validity. Although participants invited to complete the survey were selected because they were identified as a person of color, held a leadership position, and were employed at a Texas institution of higher education, nineteen individuals did not pass beyond the prescreening section of the survey (see Table 8). The first question asked if participants identified as marginalized individuals of color; however, several participants proclaimed that they had never been marginalized despite being a person of color. This data revealed a variant interpretation of the term 'marginalized' among ethnic minorities, predominantly Hispanics/ Latinos. Ukaegbu (2017) defends that words like marginalization are "diminishing, belittling, and discriminating." Furthermore, the term can imply that a person of color is inadequate (Ukaegbu, 2017) and requires the oppressor's assistance to succeed. Others believe words like marginalization, people of color, and minorities must be changed for equity and social justice (Cooper, 2016). However, to other minorities, the term marginalization represents a shared experience of microaggressions and a reflection of the offender's behaviors, not the person of color. Interestingly, the other ineligible participants believed they did not hold a leadership

position from the list provided or were not employed by an institution in Texas (see Table 8). It is possible that the specification of leadership positions deterred participants from finding a parallel with their position. Unfortunately, this disqualified these leaders from continuing with the survey. Therefore, this validates the use of a prescreening questionnaire process in demographic data collection (Sue, 2015; Sue, 2008a; Nadal, 2019; Nadal, 2015; Williams, 2021a) because even though these individuals were selected purposefully, the participant must perceive that they are demographically qualified to contribute to a given research, validating the results and findings, and strengthening an analysis.

The 31 participants who contributed to the results and findings are from diverse regions, including Panhandle, North, Central, and South (see Figure 1). It was essential to include the different regions of Texas to allow for institutional representation. This inclusion adds an understanding of microaggressions from leaders in various areas. Five different leadership positions were invited to participate in this survey. The details revealed that the participant demographic included 19.4% presidents, 25.8% vice presidents (not academic/instruction), 32.3% directors, 6.5% provosts (academic VP), and 16.1% executive leaders (see Table 9). Although representation is more substantial with some leaders, the power in this data illustrates a representation for each leadership position. More interestingly, all leaders have at least one to more than 20 years of leadership experience, which provided an array of perceptions and understandings of microaggressions experiences (see Table 9). Participants represent male (41.9%), female (58.1%), Black or African (61.3%), Hispanic or Latino (32.3%), and Asian (6.4%); unfortunately, there was no representation for other races/ethnic categories (see Table 10). However, the literature and scholarship prove that this study's racial/ethnic demographic among leaders is standard and expected (Chance, 2021). Furthermore, the most significant

generational representation was from Generation X (born between 1965-1980) at almost 54.8%, with the Baby Boomers (born between 1946-1964) at 25.8% (Table 10). This demographic detail is essential to understanding the paradigm shifts towards diversity, equity, and inclusion in the past decade; as the Silent and older Baby Boomers retire (Helyer & Lee, 2012), leadership dynamics have curved towards exploring social justice and equality. Finally, 60.0% of the participants revealed that their institutions held 20.0% or less of leaders who identify as a person of color (including Blacks, African Americans, Latinos, Asians, Pacific Islanders, and other ethnic minorities). The demographic information is vital to the analysis and exploration of the subcategories: occurrence, type, impact, and response/approach as the researcher answers the primary and secondary-level questions:

- *Primary Question*: What are the occurrences, types, and impacts of microaggressions experienced by marginalized individuals of color who hold a leadership position in a Texas higher education institution, and what responses and approaches do they use to acknowledge, address, or eliminate microaggression incidents?
- *Secondary-Level Research Questions*: 1) What are the leadership positions MIOCs hold while still experiencing microaggressions? 2) Are microaggression occurrences, types, impacts, and responses/approaches different for MIOCs once they navigate toward leadership positions in higher education? and 3) Do intersectionalities influence the occurrences, types, impacts, or responses/approaches?

The use of intersectionality and disaggregated data was incorporated throughout the analysis to answer the questions; microaggressions are associated with different intersections, including gender, race, and age (Sue & Spanierman, 2020). While the general findings from Chapter Four focused on answering the primary question, including these forms of data strengthened the analysis of the primary question and answered the secondary questions. Moreover, the study includes the measures established by the *Measurement of Microaggression Statement Scale 1* (MOMSS-1) and *Measurement of Microaggression Statement Scale 2* (MOMSS-2):

MOMSS-1

- None (0 Per Semester)
- Very Low (1 Per Semester)
- Low (2 Per Semester)
- Moderate (3 Per Semester)
- High (4 Per Semester)
- Extremely High (5+ Per Semester)

MOMSS-2

- None (0)
- Very Low (1)
- Low (2)
- Moderate (3)
- High (4)
- Extremely High (5)

MOMSS-1 is used to analyze and discuss occurrences and types, while MOMSS-2 is used in the impacts. Nadal (2019) incorporated SOMS and GIMS to create a scale and measurable understanding of microaggressions; therefore, the MOMSS-1 and MOMSS-2 are formatted similarly and allow participants to respond to statements. Understanding the role microaggression occurrences played in the professional lives of marginalized leaders of color was imperative to answer all other aspects of this study.

OCCURRENCE OF MICROAGGRESSIONS

Microaggressions are "subtle snubs, slights, and insults directed toward minorities, as well as to women and other historically stigmatized groups, that implicitly communicate" (Lilienfeld, 2017, p. 139) or produce hostility, exclusion, or divisiveness. Also, microaggressions

can be unintentional or intentional, impacting marginalized people of color in their everyday environment (Tao et al., 2017; Wilson et al., 2017; Sue et al., 2007a; Sue et al., 2007b). With this definition as a measure, the data proved that 85.7% of higher education leaders experience microaggression occurrences while holding a leadership position (see Table 11). Therefore, to understand the circumstances experienced by leaders of color, the study focused on four general concepts: social and political relations, witness and bystander interaction, supreme offender, and institutional acknowledgment. Except for executive directors, all other positions had individuals who believed that microaggression against them increased when social and political relationships became volatile (see Table 11).

The percentages among these leaders were between 42.0% to 60.0%, with presidents being the most impacted who believe microaggressions are linked to political and social changes. The president's role requires them to engage with the community, board members, stakeholders, and partnerships, so the influence of political and social shifts on their interactions with microaggressions seems imminent. Considering further intersectionality, 63.0% of Hispanic or Latinos and 41.0% of Black or African American leaders believe the intensity of microaggressions committed against them increased with a chaotic political and social climate.

Kim et al. (2020) parallel these findings by asserting that a shift in the political and social sectors can impact subtle microaggressions, even turning them into overt and brutal racism. The Silent (100%), Baby Boomers (62.0%), Generation X (33.0%), and Millennials (33.0%) believe that the intensity of microaggressions is connected to political and social relationships; moreover, the older the leader, the stronger they believe this fact to be actual. Generational perspectives and traits may influence the connection between social and political relationships and microaggression occurrences. Also, political and social topics and issues can impact

different races at different moments (Kim et al., 2020), such as 9/11 on Middle Eastern groups, build the wall propaganda on Hispanics and Latinos, the murder of George Floyd on Blacks or African Americans, and Covid-19 on Asians groups.

Furthermore, leaders were asked if they had witnessed microaggressions committed against others, and 85.7% responded with "yes" (see Table 11). Although these participants hold some of the highest leadership positions, they experienced bystander interactions with microaggression occurrences. A deeper analysis of the witness and bystander interaction was explored in the qualitative section. The detailed demographics of these responses were presidents, vice presidents (not academic/instruction), and provosts (academic VP) at 100%. It also included Blacks or African Americans at 94.0%, Hispanics or Latinos at nearly 89.0%, women at 94.0%, and men at 73.0%. Ogunyemi et al. (2020) reiterate that microaggression occurrences are not decreasing in higher education; therefore, the increase in percentages in witnessing situations is validated. Although the statistical data is relatively comparable among race and gender, Black women experienced the highest encounter with bystander experiences (Chance, 2021). Generation details demonstrated that the Silent and Millennial generations at 100%, Generation X at about 87.0%, and Baby Boomers at the lowest with 75.0% witness microaggressions against others. The statistical parallelism between the Silent and Millennial generations is an interesting fact that might be explained by the engagement of these groups with social justice and a culture of protest. This data is significant as the top executive leaders, regardless of gender, race, or generation, have first-hand witnessed microaggressions committed against others at their institutions at a significant percentage. This fact supports the presumption that others (whether White or a person of color) do not value the authority of ethnic leaders or

believe leaders of color are privileged to have a leadership position and must disregard microaggression incidents (Young et al., 2015).

Leaders disclosed that the most significant offender of microaggressions against them was other leaders (46.2%), followed by faculty (23.1%), staff (11.5%), community members (11.5%), and students (7.7%). Interestingly, the statistical data verified that 0% of leaders believe that board members committed microaggressions against them; however, the qualitative analysis of written feedback proved that board members have an incredible influence on microaggression occurrences, contradicting the quantitative finding. Lewis et al. (2021) demonstrated that microaggressions exist throughout the various sectors of an institution, such as housing, social spaces, resource offices, and classrooms, as they addressed incidents against students. However, the research must include administrative environments and conference rooms to this list, as leaders experienced the same microaggressions. Moreover, the intersectional data illustrated that presidents (66.0%), vice presidents (42.0%), provosts (100%), Black or African American (37.0%), Hispanic or Latino (66.0%), Silent generation (100%), and Generation X (about 54.0%) had the most significant encounter of microaggressions with other leaders. Once these internalities overlapped with each leader, it is evident that Black and Latino top leaders have endured microaggression incidents from other leaders.

This finding indicates that leaders of color need to navigate the structures of their institutions based on archaic and traditional Whiteness (Richardson Fraser, 2017). This occurrence could have the most damaging influence on a leader of color as they engage with other leaders more often in daily interactions. The last occurrence is centered around institutional acknowledgment. Leaders were asked if their institutions recognized that microaggressions occur against people of color; the regional data brought exciting awareness. Nearly 67.0% (North) and

63.0% (South) of leaders stated that institutions do not acknowledge that leaders of color experience microaggressions. Harris (2021) emphasizes that historical structures and frameworks were centered around Whiteness; therefore, American colleges have been inequitable. These institutions struggle to acknowledge microaggressions and the lived experiences of their leaders of color. Furthermore, about 56.0% of leaders from the South believe that microaggressions experiences are High to Extremely High, and 63.0% of these leaders believe the occurrence is focused on the intersection of race/ethnicity. Therefore, ethnic minority leaders in the South experienced four or more microaggressions per semester at institutions that failed to recognize that these incidents were a concern or reality for their leaders. This comparison brings to light the complexity of implementing diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives at organizations that fail to recognize the lived experience of leaders of color with microaggressions (Ellsworth et al., 2022).

Astonishingly, 100% of presidents, 100% of provosts (academic VP), 90.0% of directors, and nearly 86.0% of vice presidents (not academic/instruction) deal with occurrences of microaggressions. Although this unequivocally proved (among this sampling of leaders) that most executive leadership positions continue to experience microaggressions, about 67.0% of executive directors revealed they had not experienced microaggressions as leaders. However, it is crucial to recognize that executive leaders were the second smallest sample size, with three participants, nine directors, six presidents, and vice presidents. Also, 83.0% of presidents and 28.0% of vice presidents (not academic/instruction) expressed that they experienced microaggressions at a Moderate to High level. Therefore, marginalized individuals of color experienced microaggressions at the highest levels of leadership— the presidency and vice-presidency, proving that an incredibly high percentage of leaders of color experienced 3 to 4

microaggression occurrences per semester. It is essential to establish that 100% of Provosts proclaimed their level of occurrences was None to Very low (0-1 encounter per semester); moreover, the president and vice president positions experienced higher rates of microaggressions because of the demand and perception of their role. Considering the intersectionality of race and gender, the researchers discovered that 100% of Black or African American and nearly 78.0% of Hispanic or Latino leaders faced microaggressions.

In comparison, Black students are constantly negotiating incidents of microaggressions (Morales, 2021); therefore, Black leaders experience the same level of subtle offenses as Black students at institutions of higher learning. Also, 100% of Asian leaders stated not to have experienced microaggressions while holding a leadership position. The juxtaposition between Black and Latinos against the Asian population experience serves to support the model minority myth. The myth establishes that Asians are successful compared to Black and Brown populations because they are assiduous and unrestricted and that their success validates that racism does not exist (Matriano et al., 2021). The belief is that Black and Brown people limit themselves due to inadequate effort and hard work (Matriano et al., 2021).

Additionally, women (about 88.0%) and men (81.0%) experienced microaggressions which were not statistically different for leaders based on gender. However, 45.0% of men experienced High to Extremely High levels, while only 25.0% of women experienced the same level of occurrences, resulting in men of color facing more obstacles in leadership positions. Townsend (2020) and Sparkman (2021) explained that Black women outnumber Black males in leadership positions; therefore, the data connected to the literature validates that more women of color hold leadership positions than men, decreasing men's representation and support in higher

education. This lack of representation can lead to higher levels of microaggressions due to misguided perceptions and assumptions by offenders.

Moreover, leaders from the Silent generation expressed 100% of Extremely High levels of microaggression per semester, with Generation X at 46.0% (High to Extremely High) and Millennials at 25.0% (High). Thomas et al. (2019) reiterate that older individuals experience a sense of exacerbation when an incident of microaggressions occurs. Remarkably, Baby Boomers were at about 63.0% of Very Low to Low in the level of experiences per semester with microaggression occurrences. The perception of Baby Boomers may result from their generation's interaction with social and political issues from the 1950s to 1970s (Harris, 2021). After establishing that marginalized leaders of color continue to experience microaggressions while navigating leadership positions in higher education, it was essential to explore the type of microaggressions used against them.

TYPE OF MICROAGGRESSIONS

The type of microaggressions was divided into three sections: (1) intersectionality (Smith et al., 2016; Young et al., 2015), (2) microinsult, microassault, and microinvalidation (Sue & Spanierman, 2020; Tao et al., 2017; Wilson et al., 2017; Smith et al., 2016; Sue et al., 2007a; Sue et al., 2007b), and (3) environmental, ascription of intelligence, color blindness, and meritocracy (Sue et al., 2007a; Sue et al., 2007b). The marginalized leaders of color acknowledged that the most common intersectionality used against them was race/ethnicity (60.0%), with sex/gender and age at 20.0%. Also, while men were nearly 89.0% centered on race/ethnicity, the remainder focused on age. The statistics on women and intersectionality were more distributed; 44.0% focused on race/ethnicity, about 32.0% on sex/gender, and 25.0% on age (Chance, 2021). The age or gender of a marginalized leader, particularly women, seemed to impact their experience,

but the microaggression most used to hinder their leadership was race/ethnicity. Sue and Spanierman (2020) established that intersectionality could reveal the different ways microaggressions influence the experience of marginalized individuals of color. Therefore, it is crucial to recognize that individuals exist within all their intersectionalities, particularly those evident to an observer or offender, like race, gender, and age (Aker, 2006; Eagly & Chin, 2010). Although sexual orientation was not used against leaders in a previous question, in a latter question, about 15.0% of participants expressed having experienced microaggressions centered around their sexual orientation; therefore, it is possible to assume that about 85.0% of participants identify as heterosexual. The intersectional data was that 80.0% of presidents and nearly 43.0% of vice presidents acknowledged that race was commonly used against them by offenders. Also, Black or African American (about 63.0%) and Hispanic or Latino (about 56.0%) experienced racial/ethnic microaggressions, impacting Blacks slightly higher. Bleich et al. (2019) found that over 90.0% of Blacks in America believe that microaggressions and discrimination exist; therefore, their recognition of racial microaggressions is evident in the data. Moreover, the Silent Generation (100%) and Baby Boomers (nearly 72.0%) understand that race and ethnicity are used to commit microaggressions. These groups are among the oldest generations in the contemporary leadership realm, and these individuals lived through the aftermath of eliminating Jim Crow laws, desegregation, and the Civil Rights Movement (Harris, 2021; Chun & Feagin, 2020). Therefore, their observation of racial and ethnic microaggressions is strongly associated with the experience of overt racism, which other generations might not recognize. Generation X experienced about 54.0% of race/ethnicity and 31.0% of sex/gender microaggression, producing the highest percentage of microaggressions focused on gender. This finding may be linked to having more female participants from this generation. Cyr et al. (2021)

provided results that validate this finding; the investigators found that women of color navigate microaggressions from multiple intersectionalities (race, gender, and age). Also, Millennials were statistically split between race/ethnicity and age, with 50.0% for each intersectional. This generation is the youngest in the leadership workforce, and with this population, various assumptions and misconceptions are associated with them (Smith & Garriety, 2020).

The general data revealed that leaders experience Microinsults (34.6%), Microinvalidation (30.7%), and Microassaults (15.4%) at a Moderate to Extremely High level (see Table 14). Although the types of microaggressions incidents vary, these leaders interact with these forms from three or more encounters per semester. Sue et al. (2007a) explain that microinsults communicate "rudeness and insensitivity and demean a person's racial heritage or identity" (p. 274). With microinvalidations, marginalized individuals are seen as foreigners in their own country, or it negates the experiences of people of color "as racial/cultural beings" (Sue et al., 2007a). It is possible the occurrence of microassaults was low because, socially, these are viewed as traditional racist acts (Sue et al., 2007a). The intersectionality details revealed that provosts (academic VP) experienced 50% of Extremely High levels of microinsults and microinvalidations, and nearly 33.0% of directors engaged with Extremely High levels of microassaults. Young et al. (2015) explain that "employees, much like students, experience varying degrees of power and privilege on college campuses," creating hierarchical microaggression. Although not explicitly measured, these findings can validate this experience by provosts and directors. Furthermore, Hispanic or Latinos (about 34.0%) and Black or African American (about 19.0%) experienced an Extremely High level of microinsults. At the same time, microassaults and microinvalidations remained the same for Black leaders, and they drastically dropped for Hispanics (11.0% microassaults and 22.0% microinvalidations). When considering

the Moderate to Extremely High levels, which is three or more encounters per semester, women experienced more occurrences of these types of microaggressions than men (Cyr et al., 2021).

To conclude, leader responses proved that environmental (23.1%) and meritocracy microaggressions (23.1%) were experienced at an Extremely High level with color blindness (19.2%) and ascription of intelligence (15.4%) with a lower percentage but the same MOMSS-1 level (see Table 15). Statistically, Black and Latinos experienced similar levels of environmental microaggression but differed in other areas. Environmental microaggressions are evident at the systemic level and are woven into the institution's culture and climate (Sue et al., 2007b). Considering High to Extremely High levels, the intersectionality data proved that 31.0% of Blacks and 22.0% of Latinos experienced ascription of intelligence microaggressions. Sue et al. (2007b) explain that the ascription of intelligence microaggressions develops assumptions and misconceptions of intelligence based on race. Latinos (44.0%) and Blacks (25.0%) have encountered color blindness microaggressions, and 31.0% of Blacks and 44.0% of Latinos experienced meritocracy microaggressions. Also, meritocracy microaggressions devalue the racial/ethnic existence of people of color, and offenders believe race plays no significance in success; furthermore, color blindness is the belief that a person does not acknowledge race (Sue et al., 2007b). When considering the Moderate to Extremely High levels, women and men experienced about 30.0% of environmental and ascription of intelligence. However, women experienced more color blindness microaggressions (75.0%) while men about 40.0%; men experienced 60.0% of meritocracy microaggression, and women about 44.0%. The occurrence and type of microaggressions are essential, but understanding their impact on leaders and their interactions with their professional community is necessary.

IMPACT OF MICROAGGRESSIONS

The impact section has two sections of measures (1) emotional, physical, and psychological (Sue & Spanierman, 2020; Williams, 2020) and (2) relationships, commitment and loyalty, and Covid-19 (see Table 16 and Table 17). Considering the Moderate to Extremely High measures, participants responded that emotional and psychological impacts were both 28.0% and physiological 16.0% (Sue & Spanierman, 2020; Williams, 2020). Although the effects on participants seemed low, it is essential to note that the literature proves that minorities might not recognize these impacts due to cultural stigmatization. A researcher must understand that not "all microaggressions are offensive to all people of color at all times" (Williams, 2020, p.11). The intersectionality statistics are Blacks (about 27.0%) and Latinos (about 33.0%) emotional, but Blacks (20.0%) experienced more physical impacts than Latinos (11.0%), and psychological effects were Blacks (33.0%) and Latinos (22.0%). Since Black leaders experienced higher rates of microaggressions in various measures, they likely experienced higher psychological impacts. This data parallels that of faculty members of color who experience microaggressions. Payton et al. (2018) believe leaders can eliminate these experiences by improving the culture climate and advancing minorities. Also, this shift can improve faculty leaders' mental and physical experience (Payton et al., 2018); however, executive leaders must manage their own experiences with microaggressions before sustainable DEI initiatives bring social justice. Furthermore, women had more Moderate to Extremely High impact in all three areas than men; this can be linked to women's ability to be more vulnerable in voicing these impacts than the opposite sex.

Furthermore, about 66.0% of leaders stated that microaggressions impacted their ability to build relationships and collaborate on campus, with 16.0% saying it had a High to Extremely High impact (see Table 17). It is devastating to illustrate that microaggressions directly influence

and hinder the relationship leaders of color establish with others at their institutions (Wilson, 2017). Regardless of the level, these individuals advocate for innovation and DEI in organizations that claim to be shifting toward social justice. Williams (2020) reiterates that microaggressions leave individuals with a sense of hopelessness, fear, anxiety, and withdrawal. Therefore, if leaders of color are negatively impacted, this paradigm shift towards DEI will be slow, leaving damaged MIOCs behind. The intersectionality data indicates that women (68.0%) were more affected than men (33.0%), Hispanics (66.0%), and Blacks (53.0%). Female leaders of color seem to directly link their ability to establish relationships and collaborations on campus with the level and intensity of microaggressions they experience, while men are more likely to continue with these relations, regardless of impact. Pitcan et al. (2018) reiterate that research only focused on male participants can hinder findings as men often fear demonstrating vulnerability or consequences from microaggressions; therefore, these findings indicate the incredible gap between the female and male perspectives on effects. This concept is further analyzed in the qualitative section of this chapter. Also, 100% of presidents proclaimed that microaggression directly influences their ability to build relationships and collaborations on campus; however, 100% of executive directors stated they had no impact.

This contrasting statistic on a leader's ability to establish relationships when faced with microaggressions is supported by the previous and following observations that measured the intensity and level of occurrence between presidents and executive directors in higher education. The statistics among other leaders were statistically comparable: vice presidents (57.0%), provosts (50.0%), and directors (66.0%). Although these percentages are lower than the president's position, this statistical information demonstrated that 50.0% or more of other leaders limit their relationships within the institution when microaggressions occur. This data is

imperative as these leaders must collaborate to implement and sustain DEI initiatives with individuals who commit microaggression offenses against them and other leaders (Lederman, 2022). The impact on individuals based on generation was Silent (100%), Millennials (50.0%), Generation X (46.0%), and Baby Boomers (29.0%). It is important to note that the traits of the Baby Boomers validate their statistically higher willingness to continue building relationships and collaborations regardless of their experience with microaggressions. The generational perspective variances proved that further examination of whether age influences a person's interactions with microaggression is vital (Pitcan et al., 2018).

Also, 50% of leaders who encounter microaggressions stated it impacted their commitment and loyalty to the institution (see Table 17). Suppose a leader lacks commitment and dedication to an institution that fosters microaggressions against them. In that case, they cannot establish effective relationships and collaborations, creating a statistical parallel between these impacts. The intersectionality figures illustrate that microaggressions do not impact 66.0% of men's commitment and loyalty to an institution, but women are only about 31.0% likely not to be affected. Similarly, the assurance and allegiance of Black leaders (53.0%) and only 22.0% of Latinos sustains when microaggressions are experienced. Therefore, the statistics revealed that a Black male from the Baby Boomer generation is likelier to continue loyalty to the institution than a Millennial Latino woman. Astonishingly, 100% of presidents and about 66.0% of directors stated microaggressions directly had some influence on their commitment and loyalty to an institution. However, vice presidents (71.0%), provosts (50.0%), and executive directors (67.0%) believed that microaggressions did not influence this aspect of their interactions. It is a complex finding that the highest leadership position is impacted while their supporting team is dramatically less affected by microaggressions because this impacts the various leadership

sectors. Also, the Silent (0.0%) and Millennial (50.0%) generations expressed a commitment to an institution even when microaggressions were part of their interactions, which is comparable and aligned with their level to establish relationships. Also, 43.0% of Baby Boomers and 39.0% of Generation X leaders believed that microaggressions do not impact their commitment and loyalty to the institution. The commitment and loyalty leaders may hold to an institution are connected to their impact on students, faculty, and the serving community.

Finally, when participants were asked if Covid-19 had impacted the number of microaggressions experienced, it was 50.0% no increase, and 50.0% had some impact (see Table 17). 42.0% of Blacks and 66.0% of Latinos experienced the increased effect of microaggressions during Covid-19. Microaggressions committed against women (56.0%) were higher than men (about 38.0%). During Covid-19, institutions pushed toward increasing inclusion efforts to combat the increase of microaggressions in the community and campus (Lederman, 2022). Covid-19 had the most significant impact on Asian groups (Kim et al., 2020); however, that population was underrepresented in this study, so the data is ineffective for this demographic. The final observation of the analysis is on the responses and approaches used by marginalized leaders of color to address or eliminate microaggressions.

Response and Approach to Microaggressions

Analyzing and understanding marginalized leaders' approaches to acknowledging, addressing, or eliminating microaggressions is essential. 84.0% of MIOCs quantified they were comfortable approaching an incident. About 75.0% of presidents were willing to acknowledge a microaggression occurrence, but only 50.0% of provosts were confident in doing the same. This statistical result can be related to a president having higher perceived authority than a provost. Black leaders were more comfortable than Latinos in acknowledging or addressing

microaggressions. Godbolt et al. (2022) enforce this finding as Black individuals, particularly women, must be resilient and fearless when confronted with microaggressions. Silent and Millennial generations were 100% confident in addressing microaggressions committed against them. Similarly, 100% of men were willing to approach a situation involving microaggression, while women were only 75.0% sure. Sims et al. (2021) found that Black men understand that leadership positions are associated with assumptions and microaggressions towards them and are prepared to address incidents against them.

Sue et al. (2019) explain that MIOCs must identify the outcomes of addressing microaggression incidents and determine if a microaggression should be addressed or ignored. Moreover, the leaders' most common retort to microaggressions committed against them was to respond immediately (32.0%), followed by responding later (20.0%) (see Table 18). Only 50.0% of presidents would reply, with the other 25.0% ignoring it and 25.0% letting it go. It is important to restate that a leader's approach to microaggressions has a direct impact on the experience of students, faculty, and other leaders of color; in fact, faculty voiced that it would increase morale and validation if leaders recognized and addressed microaggressions (Louis et al., 2016). The fact that presidents are willing to ignore or let go of a microaggression may have severe ramifications for the president and all MIOCs. Verkuyten et al. (2020) illustrated that tolerating microaggressions or harmful acts could burden a marginalized community. Black leaders were less likely to ignore it (13.0%) or let it go (7.0%) than Hispanics, who ignored it at about 22.0% and let go at a 33.0% rate. Millennials refused to ignore microaggressions and would respond later (50.0%) or immediately (25.0%) but would let an encounter with microaggressions go 25.0% of the time. Baby Boomers had the highest percentage of ignoring it and letting it go at 29.0%. Generation X had the highest response rate at 46.0% and the second

lowest of letting it go (about 8.0%). Understanding the standard traits of generations can provide more substantial clarification for why Baby Boomers have the highest rate of ignoring a microaggression, while Millennials would not. Men were more likely to respond immediately than women, and women were more likely to let an occurrence of microaggressions committed against them go.

Lastly, leaders were asked to assess the outcome of addressing a microaggression interaction, and 44.0% stated the microaggression occurrence was identified and addressed (Table 18). However, 31.0% of women were told the microaggression was a misunderstanding; only 11.0% of men experienced the same outcome. This statistical difference between men and women might be linked to the stereotypes associated with gender and perception. The victim has to validate and determine if a microaggression was used against them, which devalues their experience (Perez-Gomez, 2022). Comparable, about 27.0% of African American leaders were told an incident was a misunderstanding, and only 22.0% of Hispanics experienced this outcome. With the history of racism Blacks have endured, the validation of their experience with microaggressions is constant with generational oppression. Therefore, it is imperative to understand the experience of Black leaders, particularly males who have a limited presence, in higher education leadership roles if equity and social justice are an institution's objective (Turner & Grauerholz, 2017). About 50.0% of presidents were told microaggression incidents were a misunderstanding, followed by about 34.0% of directors who said the same. This statistic is significant because if presidents are told they are incapable of identifying microaggressions, then the viability of others to bring acknowledgment to these incidents is limited (Perez-Gomez, 2022). This quantitative lens provided descriptive statistics to validate the experience of marginalized individuals of color who hold leadership positions. Furthermore, exploring

qualitative analysis and discussion of narration from these leaders provided a more human and personable understanding of a complex phenomenon— microaggressions.

QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

OVERVIEW

The qualitative data is derived from the Microaggression Climate Survey. Participants were allowed to provide specific examples or clarification on the areas of occurrences, types, impacts, and responses/approaches in the quantitative section of the data. However, the qualitative analysis and discussion analyze the specific comments and clarifications. These narrations expand comprehension of the role microaggressions have on leaders of color by examining emerging concepts that address the *Primary Question*:

1. What are the occurrences, types, and impacts of microaggressions experienced by marginalized individuals of color who hold a leadership position in a Texas higher education institution, and what responses and approaches do they use to acknowledge, address, or eliminate microaggression incidents?

The narrations and comments from participants in this section resulted in the following emerging concepts:

1. *Occurrence* (Political and Social Focus Incident, Tone/Language/Treatment Incident, MIOCs vs. MIOCs Incident, and The Role of DEI and External Factors Incident).
2. *Type* (Question Experience and Ability, Speckled Treatment Impression, Private and Power Interactions, Denial of Intelligence and Recognition, and Common Expectancy).
3. *Impact* (Doubt, Stress, Anxiety Outcomes, Accept and Resilience Outcomes, and Empowerment Attitude versus Defeated Attitude).
4. *Response/Approach* (Fear of Power and Privilege, Power of Reflection, Lost in Translation, Equipped Background, and Allyship and Empowerment).

Furthermore, two open-ended questions provide a description not addressed or discussed in the quantitative findings or analysis. The written responses from the marginalized leaders of

color established three emerging themes for each focus (Institution's Commitment and Advice from Leaders). The research explores two secondary-level questions:

1. *Institution's Commitment* - What is a leader's understanding of their institution's attempt to acknowledge, address, or eliminate microaggressions committed against leaders who are marginalized individuals of color?

2. *Advice from Leaders* - What advice do MLOCs give to other MIOCs aspiring to become leaders who might experience microaggressions?

The emerging themes are divided into two subcategories: *the institution's commitment* (DEI Integration Approach, Mission and Vision Approach, and Ambiguous, Ineffective, or Absent Approach) and *advice from leaders* (Empowerment, Value, and Pride Advice, Speak-up, Speak Out, Resilience, and Accountability Advice, and Allyship and Epitome Advice). Through quantitative analysis and discussion, descriptive statistics are implored to understand the phenomenon of microaggressions as it is lived by marginalized leaders of color in higher education. The exploration of themes is vital, but the researcher believes the emerging concepts provide incredible insights supported by the quantitative data and the contemporary microaggression literature.

EMERGING CONCEPTS

The area of occurrence presents four concepts that arose from participants' written feedback. Moreover, the areas of type, impact, and response/approach include subcategories to dissect the depth of description and experience these marginalized leaders of color provide. The occurrence of microaggressions evaluated various aspects of a leader's interaction with microaggressions, resulting in four concepts.

Occurrence of Microaggressions

The emerging concepts in this area are Political and Social Focus Incident, Tone/Language/Treatment Incident, MIOCs vs. MIOCs Incident, The Role of DEI, and External

Incident. Participants were asked to comment on various situations dealing with occurrences. The qualitative analysis and discussion structure include the concept, explanation of the question(s)'s focus, and direct comments from participants with significant intersectionality data.

Political and Social Focus Incident

Participants explored the role social and political relationships have on the number of microaggressions they experienced while holding a leadership position. The most relevant and clear comments are included in each emerging concept:

- The idea of verbal slights, whether intentional or unintentional, is higher because there is a sense of comfort level because of the increased social and political volatility.

The comment from a Black vice president immediately established that leaders of color are impacted by the chaos or unstable divisiveness of political and social issues (Kim et al., 2020). Furthermore, when social and political leaders establish an acceptance of microaggressions or racist perspectives, offenders are more confident in implementing their oppressive acts against people of color (Yan et al., 2022). The following comment from a Hispanic vice president solidified the previous observation:

- As I have taken a strong and open stance to be an antiracist and to support my college in being an antiracist, I have had to endure microaggressions as well as aggression from top leaders and others. An example of a microaggression was when I was told, by a white leader, that I could not be an ally for our black employees and students because I am not black.

This occurrence almost reinforces the 'us versus them' ideology that Blacks and Latinos are not allies and partners in combating microaggressions and racism. Or that Latinos experience entirely different social and political experiences. However, this leader understands that when Black employees and students are limited due to social and political issues, it is the responsibility of other ethnic minorities to eliminate those oppressive barriers as they impact all marginalized individuals. Williams (2020) supports the notion that marginalized individuals' intersectionalities

can influence the severity of a microaggression, revealing that Black and Hispanic Americans experience microaggressions at high levels. Furthermore, some White individuals implement colorism to value and devalue minorities, creating a divisive attitude between White and dark skin Latinos. Moreover, two Black directors provided additional insight into the direct impact social and political relationships have on their experience with microaggressions:

- Black Lives Matter events were discussed in a negative way so that I could hear what was said.
- Intentionally omitted from meetings during election periods.

On the surface, these types of experiences might either seem like harmless situations or a misunderstanding. However, to these Black leaders, critical and harsh discussions on Black issues invalidated their experience or the experience of their loved ones; furthermore, the culture and dynamics of an institution make it clear to a marginalized leader of color that they are explicitly excluded because others presume to know that a Black leader would not share the same political views, particularly to ones established on the oppression of minorities. Some institutions attempted to combat racial microaggressions against Blacks and African Americans by increasing representation in leadership positions (Lederman, 2022). However, these occurrences are more difficult to justify as microaggressions to those who have not lived the experience of a marginalized individual of color or at institutions that view the Black Lives Matter movement as pejorative.

Tone/Language/Treatment Incident

Participants explored their experience as a witness of microaggressions committed against other minoritized leaders and their institution's commitment toward acknowledging microaggressions committed against leaders of color. The most relevant and clear comments are included in each emerging concept; furthermore, comments can provide a merge response from

both questions. A Black vice president expressed that they had witnessed microaggressions committed against women:

- Examples include the difference of tone and interaction of some when addressing females of color versus that of the tone and interaction with male peers.

It is imperative to note that for a marginalized individual, particularly one that relates to the victim of a microaggression, a simple variation in tone can immediately highlight a microaggression. These interactions explain the complexity of microaggressions as tone can be subtle to those from the male or White groups. However, this top leader recognized that microaggressions were committed against other leaders of color. Furthermore, a Hispanic vice president commented on using language to curtail ethnic leaders:

- A top leader told a black colleague, in front of other top leaders, that she did not like it when she used the phrase "on tomorrow" or "on today." She said it was wrong and that she should not speak that way. She told her to only say tomorrow or today in the future and to stop putting the word "on" in front of those words.

Language has historically been used to vilify people of color, particularly Blacks and Latinos. The usage of specific phrases or words is often connected to a person's cultural or regional background: "on tomorrow" is associated with the South or informal in academic writing. Furthermore, in public spaces and educational settings, language can be weaponized against MIOC. For example, "Spanish was a 'bad' language, not allowed to be spoken" (Solorzano & Perez-Huber, 2020, p. 93) in education environments, rendering it offensive or derogatory. Minorities work to remove accents and regional diction to move toward Whiteness and avoid discrimination (Solorzano & Perez-Huber, 2020, p. 93). However, this aggressive interaction validates that people of color are ridiculed public to empower the acceptable English standard associated with White America. Also, institutional frameworks can lead to leaders recognizing disparities between White and black individuals:

- No consideration was given when work schedules were determined. Work assignments were least desirable for minorities.

This Black director witnessed and lived through microaggressions that provided advancement opportunities for White leaders while limiting or hindering the advancement of ethnic minorities. This outcome is possible at institutions that fail to recognize that microaggression actions are embedded throughout the various sectors of an ineffective organization.

MIOCs vs. MIOCs Incident

Participants explored their experience as witnesses of microaggressions committed against other minoritized leaders. The most relevant and clear comments are included in each emerging concept. The following statements were included to discuss the complexity of microaggressions:

- I was called racist towards Hispanic students.

This comment from a Black director sets a tone that implies that a Black person cannot be racist toward other minorities. There is a belief that Blacks cannot be racist towards others in the way Whites are because they represent historical power and privilege. However, another Black director's feedback contradicted the previous perspective.

- It's also minoritized leaders that commit microaggressions against other minoritized leaders.

These statements recognize the exploration of microaggressions committed between MIOCs. There are various reasons ethnic minorities can provoke microaggressions against each other, particularly when intersectionality and colorism are placed into the equation (Wechsler & Diner, 2021).

The Role of DEI and External Factors Incident.

Participants explored their institution's ability to acknowledge microaggressions committed against leaders of color and the role external factors play in this commitment. The most relevant and clear comments are included in each emerging concept.

- Our newly formed DEI division has been very intentional about microaggressions and how to identify and address them.
- It is a part of the institution's DEI initiatives— DEI has been implemented and is now a part of the Strategic Plan 2022-2027.

A vice president and a director provided these comments. These comments established that institutions attempt to combat microaggressions and social injustice by enacting DEI into their structures and frameworks. Although comments supported an institution's commitment to recognizing microaggressions, a more complex discussion on their effort to acknowledge, address, or eliminate is developed in the emerging themes. Furthermore, even though institutions recognize that microaggressions exist at their institutions, leaders realize that external factors impact this progress. The following statements are linked to the role of district leaders, board members, and community members:

- Most of the microaggressions I receive and witness are not at our college, though they do exist. Most are from our district leaders who do not work for our college.

This Hispanic vice president leader seemed to declare that although the institution recognized microaggressions, which deter acts on campus, leaders experienced microaggressions with external relationships. These microaggression occurrences increased the difficulty of identifying incidents committed against marginalized leaders of color. Further solidifying this reality is a declaration by a Hispanic president:

- The board does not acknowledge instances of microaggressions, racism, or any other "ism."

This executive leader understands that even implementing diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives to increase social injustices, this advancement is directly limited by board members' inability to accept that microaggressions or any isms exist at their intuitions (Chun & Feagin, 2020). This finding is perhaps the greatest microaggression committed against leaders of color. Finally, the Black director revealed that microaggressions are not tolerated and are recognized but exist in the private sector:

- It has been privately acknowledged that certain individuals have demonstrated their disdain towards minorities in certain leadership positions.

These private and privileged interactions revealed microaggressions and racism against leaders of color are multifaceted. Although these board members or community representatives privately express dissatisfaction with leaders of color in certain positions, this sentiment reaches marginalized leaders (Chun & Feagin, 2020). This concept of private and privilege is further discussed in the type of microaggressions section. These concepts provide a more robust analysis of the occurrences of microaggressions leaders experience, and the specific types are explored subsequently.

Type of Microaggressions

This section is divided into microaggressions categories: Intersectionality, Microinsult, Microassault, and Microinvalidation, and Ascription of Intelligence, Color Blindness, and Meritocracy (Sue & Spanierman, 2020). Furthermore, within these categories, emerging concepts explore and analyze the perspectives and experiences of leaders with different types of microaggressions.

Intersectionality (Race, Gender, and Age)

The following concepts are rooted around questions that asked participants to explain or provide commentary on the various intersectionalities, such as race/ethnicity, sex/gender, and

age, that influenced the microaggression experience. The most relevant and clear comments are included in each emerging concept.

Question Experience and Ability. Intersectionalities create microaggressions that question the experience and ability of leaders who deviate from the traditional traits of leaders in higher education. A Black female provost (academic VP) expressed an example of a microaggression focused on gender and race:

- A parent walked into my office and stated: "I remember when white males held this position."

This parent proclamation revealed the racist and biased misconception that White men are more equipped for leadership positions. Patriarchal and White supremacy have indoctrinated society to believe that an effective leader is a White man in a suit who deserves respect and validation and that ethnic minorities represent inferiority and unqualified (Preskill & Brookfield, 2009). That women or people of color lack the professional knowledge or aptitude to navigate the rigorous demands of leadership. Also, a Black female director expressed that it is difficult for a minority with various intersectionalities to distinguish the particular microaggression used against them. She also described that being from a low-social economic class and background further intensified her experiences:

- I was tasked with writing a $1.5M grant (I was managing the grant, and my professional background includes grant writing). I informed the district personnel that I was working to help obtain research students (grant-funded). District personnel came to my office, proclaiming, "That's a large grant. Do you even have any experience writing grants?"

When responsibilities and tasks are considered grand scale, marginalized women and men of color must continuously prove that their experience and ability are comparable to their White counterparts. They are unjustly questioned about their professional or academic accomplishments, whereas White leaders are presumed to be suitable and equipped without

evidence (Sue & Spanierman, 2020). Furthermore, a Hispanic female vice president expressed the role age microaggressions have had in her leadership experience:

- How long has it been since you were a student?
- Students today are not at all like they were when you were a student.
- Are you thinking about retiring?
- Wow, you are really good with technology.
- I am surprised you could read the memo without glasses because I am younger than you and could barely read it.

The sheer number of microaggression comments this leader has experienced is overwhelming to read. This Generation Xer's ability to recall these remarks illustrates the role age has on the experience of female leaders. Although these comments are rooted around the leader's age, they question the leader's expertise and ability to navigate practical leadership demands. Furthermore, men can experience age microaggressions:

- Early in my career, I took a leadership position (as defined by this survey) at 35, so I was younger than most. There were definitely a lot of comments about my ability and qualification based on my age.

This Black male president's feedback solidified that intersectionalities impact the type of microaggressions used against them (Sparkman, 2021). Moreover, if a marginalized leader of color is not probed about their experience and ability based on race, then gender or age can influence microaggression incidents.

Speckled Treatment Impression. As participants explored their experiences with sex/gender and race/ethnicity microaggressions, the research recognized a variation in the treatment experienced by marginalized leaders of color. A commentary from a Hispanic female vice president and a Black male director demonstrated the complex role race/gender play on leaders:

- Men are offered top-paying jobs or are asked to interim in top-paying jobs when women are more qualified.
- As a male, this is not an issue in most cases for me.

In this cross-examination of perspectives, women of color believed their experiences differed from those of men of color. They are overlooked because they are women, and their qualifications are less significant than their gender. Furthermore, the male leader confidently expresses that gender has virtually no impact on his leadership experience. Leaders with multiple intersectionalities understand that they can be used to treat MIOCs differently under the guise of advancement:

- I am the only college executive cabinet member of color. I experience microaggressions regularly, such as since you are our only Latina, or it would be great if you could x, y, or z since you are a Latina.

This vice president presented speckled treatment woven into a burden on marginalized leaders. Those who are marginalized are expected to be the primary advocates of DEI, even when there are no White allies. The assumption is that those who are different are the sole activist for populations they are presumed to belong to, removing any responsibility from heterosexual White leaders.

Microinsult, Microassault, and Microinvalidation

The following concepts are aligned with microinsults, microassaults, and microinvalidations. The most relevant and clear comments are included in each emerging concept.

Private and Power Interactions. As participants shared their experiences with these microaggressions, it was evident that private and power interactions influence the experience of marginalized leaders of color. The emerging concept of Private and Power Interactions is a

microaggression tactic that resonates with Black and Hispanic leaders from the Panhandle, East, and South institutions:

- Very prevalent during private meetings. (microinsult)
- This tactic would never be seen in an open forum. (microassault)
- Not seen in a public forum. Only in private meetings of selected cohorts. (microinvalidation)

These comments were observed by leaders who recognize that in private sectors, those in power contradict the initiatives implemented towards enacting diversity, equity, and inclusion. Although these interactions are intimate, some MIOCs are privy to this information, or White allies reveal this to others. These insights validate the experience of leaders with microinvalidations as it is understood that a group of leaders make verbal comments that are rude, insensitive, and demeaning towards MIOCs based on race or gender. Further, even though microassaults and microinvalidation are a tactic that is not used openly, they exist in the private sector among those who hold the highest power. Although these MIOCs believe these microaggressions are prevalent only in a private setting, some have witnessed them in an open forum. A director expressed that she witnessed other leaders using microassaults towards others to hurt others through name-calling:

- Leaders talking about someone's tattoos, piercings, and hair.
- You weren't hired because you're cute.
- She can't be a cheerleader with four kids and her stomach hanging.

These comments demonstrate that leaders' experiences with these microaggressions vary depending on their intersectionality and the institution's culture. This experience further proved that power empowers leaders to integrate microaggressions against those they may perceive as powerless. The final feedback reinforced that privilege resonates with those in power:

- I have witnessed members of the Board who have made insensitive comments based on a person's race/ethnicity and sex/gender.

This president exposed the reoccurring reality that board members contradict the DEI practices implemented at institutions, which directly hinders the advancement of social justice for everyone who engages with their college system. Board members possess the power and privilege to enact microinsults based on ethnicity/race or sex/gender, even in the presence of a leader whose intersectional may overlap with those comments. This president's experience proved that these microaggressions could simultaneously be implemented privately and openly, particularly when MIOCs are burdened with witnessing these incidents and lacking measurable evidence.

Ascription of Intelligence, Color Blindness, and Meritocracy

The following concepts are aligned with the Ascription of Intelligence, Color Blindness, and Meritocracy microaggressions. The most relevant and clear comments are included in each emerging concept.

Denial of Intelligence and Recognition. The following comments from a male and female Black director from the Panhandle and South encapsulated the experience of leaders with the ascription of intelligence eloquently. The most relevant and clear comments are included in each emerging concept. The female director explained that as she worked on a significant project, an executive leader asked her to add special features to a document. This request was a minimal task for this leader, who holds a computer science background and is highly skilled in computer science. This leader responded to the executive leader's request with intellectual confidence. The dialogue interaction explained the microaggression incident:

- MIOC: I will take of that. Executive Leader: Are you sure about that? Because I don't think you can? MIOC: Haven't I always completed the tasks you requested? Executive Leader: Get it done and send it right away!

This microaggression incident revealed the denial of a person of color while simultaneously failing to recognize previous accomplishments (Sue & Spanierman, 2020). This behavior enforces the mindset that MIOCs must continue to validate and prove that they are suited for their position. Interestingly, this leader stated that the offender of this microaggression was another minoritized individual. However, the specific intersectionalities were not provided, limiting comprehension and analysis of this microaggression between MIOCs. Another leader proclaims that an institution's failure to support or acknowledge leaders of color's contributions reinforces the denial of intelligence and recognition.

- The problem is receiving acknowledgments, credit, promotions, or salary adjustments for your accomplishments. In most cases, your immediate superior takes the credit.

This director identified the value recognition has on a MIOC; devaluing involvement and accomplishments from marginalized leaders of color are detrimental to the advancement of the college system, discrediting their intellectual potential.

Common Expectancy. Color blindness and meritocracy microaggression were viewed as more common and expected for leaders of color. The most relevant and clear comments are included in each emerging concept. Black leaders recognized that color blindness is rooted in the idea that not seeing color or race is positive or revolutionary (Sue & Spanierman, 2020).

- This is a common response to issues where justifications are needed. (color blindness)
- A shared statement when dealing with race issues. (meritocracy)

In microaggressions focused on race or ethnicity, an offender deflects the situation by proclaiming that color does not affect their treatment of others. However, to most ethnic minorities, this phrase indicates the devaluation of their experience as a person of color. Furthermore, meritocracy is the belief that anyone can succeed regardless of race and that assiduousness is the key to progress. Similarly, this microaggression dismisses the experience of

marginalized leaders of color who faced obstacles and limitations (Sue & Spanierman, 2020) because of their race, gender, social class, and other intersectionalities. When individuals presume that everyone is equal, they disregard systemic oppression.

Impact of Microaggressions

This section is divided into two categories of microaggression: (1) Emotional, Physiological, and Psychological Impacts and (2) Relationship Building/Collaboration, Commitment/Loyalty, and Covid Impacts. Within these categories, emerging concepts explore and analyze leaders' perspectives on the different impacts they endure because of interactions with microaggressions.

Emotional, Physiological, and Psychological Impacts

The quantitative data and analysis prove that most of the marginalized leaders of color in this study experienced emotional, physiological, and psychological impacts (Minikel-Lacocque, 2013; Lewis et al., 2021; Morales, 2021; Godbolt et al., 2022); therefore, the most relevant and clear comments guide the emerging concepts.

Doubt, Stress, and Anxiety Outcome. These impacts have created doubt, stress, and anxiety for the participants (Perez-Gomez, 2022). These impacts can overlap, affecting a marginalized leader simultaneously. The literature proved that participants of color experience impacts that include “emotional distress to depressive symptoms and anxiety” (Pitcan et al., 2018, p. 308). The impact microaggressions have on leaders is depicted in a Black director’s emotional narration:

- I have moments when I question my worth and just cry because I simply do not understand why I have to experience all of this, especially when it seems like I always carry the extra load and go beyond what is expected to make it easier for others. I push through it daily, but doubt is always in the back of my mind.

This woman demonstrated the devastating impact emotional, physiological, and psychological outcomes have on the experience of people of color, even those perceived to have reached reputable leadership positions. She experienced doubt, stress, and anxiety daily because microaggressions are dominant and insidiously force her to question her ability to navigate leadership. The response from a Latino vice president and president from an East and South region institution further emphasized the impact of microaggressions.

- It has been extremely hostile and stressful.
- They have led to stress reactions and created high levels of anxiety.

These executive-level leaders endure microaggressions centered around their race and gender. The leader from the South proclaimed that volatile environments foster situations that increase stress and aggression for leaders of color. The president of an East region institution reiterated that these interactions provoke high stress and anxiety levels. Marginalized leaders of color are not immune from exclusion or injustice as they move toward leadership positions; close-minded individuals perceive them as threatening tradition. Even more complex is that to eliminate microaggressions, these leaders must prove their experiences with measurable evidence, creating an additional layer of doubt, burden, and anxiety (Perez-Gomez, 2022).

Accept and Resilience Outcome. Microaggressions impact some leaders, but they use an acceptance and resilience attitude to counter the devastation these incidents can cause. A Black director's narration exposed the reality that microaggressions have various impacts on people of color:

- Many of us have learned to expect this in the workplace, thereby understanding how to deal with the impacts. One learns how to process this treatment in a positive and move forward because microaggressions exist.

Exploring this leader's perspective brings up historical attitudes of marginalized individuals who understand that racism exists. Still, incidents can motivate them to work harder

to prove they deserve to navigate a given realm (Sparkman, 2021). Furthermore, the responsibility to move on is placed on the victim of microaggressions, and it is perceived that an offender does not influence this interaction. Also, a Hispanic president provided a complex and contradicting reality:

Microaggressions have increased my self-confidence and feelings of imposter syndrome.

Similar to the previous leader, this leader believed that microaggressions had improved her confidence; however, she simultaneously proclaimed her feelings of imposter syndrome had amplified. The imposter syndrome creates feelings that a highly qualified person of color is fraudulent and incompetent, creating an environment that forces them to work harder them most to prove they are worthy of the position. Although these leaders are using microaggressions occurrences as a means of resilience (Chance, 2021), the acceptance of these acts as unrelenting has created invisible hindrances and adverse outcomes.

Relationship Building/Collaboration, Commitment/Loyalty, and Covid Impacts

Leaders were asked to explore the impact microaggressions had on their ability to establish relationships and collaborations and their commitment and loyalty to organizations where microaggressions are evident. Finally, they explored the consequences Covid-19 had on their encounters with microaggressions. However, it is crucial to recognize that even though the quantitative data on the effect of Covid-19 was vital, the qualitative feedback was insufficient and excluded from this analysis. Exploring the most relevant and clear comments focused on the other two aspects guide the emerging concept in this section.

Empowered Attitude versus Defeated Attitude. The comments from two Black directors provided the duality leaders experience when determining their ability to establish relationships and commitment at an institution where they experience microaggressions:

- An individual must learn not to focus on microaggressions. But instead, find the positive to proceed in developing future goals. A microaggression is not evident; therefore, one should not concentrate on it.
- I only interact with someone on a need-to basis because the situation can improve; however, I have considered resigning several times.

The male leader from a South region institution tackled the complexity of proving microaggressions as measurable experiences and asserted it is more beneficial to focus on the benefits of holding a leadership position. However, accepting or tolerating microaggressions can further contribute to inequality and social injustice (Verkuyten et al., 2020). This positive attitude encouraged the leader to establish and sustain relationships and collaborations with others who might exhibit microaggressions. However, the leader from a Panhandle region institution acknowledged that not only are microaggressions impacting her ability to establish relationships and her commitment and loyalty. She also often considered resignation due to the culture and environment of exclusion. Townsend (2020) presented a study that strengthens this leader's experience as the participants revealed that they left positions in higher education due to prevalent incidents of microaggressions.

Responses and Approaches to Microaggressions

This section is divided into two categories: (1) response and (2) approach to microaggressions. Furthermore, within these categories, emerging concepts explore and analyze leaders' responses and strategies to microaggression experiences.

Responses.

The responses from leaders and an institution are explored here to understand the various factors influencing this focus.

Fear of Power and Privilege. Using the feedback from executive leaders revealed that fear is evident in real power and privilege.

- It is difficult to combat microaggressions against people of privilege, specifically those who supervise me as part of the Board.

This president recognized that even though microaggressions are presented as necessary for the advancement of an institution, behind-the-scenes board members hinder this process. Their privilege allows them to sustain an environment of exclusion and limitation.

- I am extremely comfortable having crucial conversations about microaggressions at my college. However, I am not comfortable at the district level due to a lack of trust and see what occurs to people who speak up. I choose to let it go when I witness district leaders, though there are times when I must speak up due to the severity of the microaggression.

This vice president presented several hindering realities. When top leaders are afraid to combat microaggressions in realms of power and privilege because of retaliation, diversity, equity, and inclusion, practices, policies, and initiatives cannot eliminate social injustice at higher education institutions. These narrations supported that, at moments, leaders are compelled to shut up and lead to sustain their professional advancements.

Power of Reflection. A leader's ability to become critically reflective allows them the opportunity to make "informed leadership actions" that can "be explained and justified" (Preskill & Brookfield, 2009, p. 45). Some leaders do not respond to microaggressions immediately but rather enact reflection to determine the best method for engaging in an incident. Two Black directors offered an understanding of this concept.

- Sometimes I Respond later —if needed—after I self-Reflect.
- Almost always respond later to process exactly my frustration to fully address it with that individual and ensure I don't respond emotionally.

These leaders understand that addressing microaggressions is connected to the victim's ability to process the incident and react professionally, responsibly, and emotionlessly. An emotional or immediate reaction cannot create a tone of an angry or irrational ethnic minority because that leads to additional conflict and stereotypes. Preskill and Brookfield (2009) believe

reflection can guide a leader through obstacles, “external cultural inhibitions, internal self-doubt, political opposition, and a sense of being alone” (p. 45). Therefore, the power of reflection protects the victim from further persecution.

Lost in Translation. When leaders respond to microaggressions, the messaging can be translated from different lenses. The feedback from three Black directors from various regions demonstrated this fact:

- Once identified, administrations would address the matter.
- I have had experiences of both being advised the incident was a misunderstanding, and it was identified and addressed to prevent future interactions.
- How can you confirm that it is a microaggression and not a perception?

The complexity and unpredictability of intuitional reactions to microaggressions can directly influence a leader’s decision to respond or acknowledge the incident. Using references like misunderstanding or perception devalues the intellect and ability of a leader to distinguish between a simple act of misinterpretation and a microaggression. Leaders of color live in their intersectionalities daily and recognize actions used to belittle, insult, or snub them. Furthermore, institutions have failed to provide leaders of color the adequate strategies or resources to acknowledge, validate, and eliminate bias, prejudice, and microaggressions (Sue et al., 2019).

Approaches

The exploration of approaches from leaders is explored to comprehend the numerous factors that influence their interactions with microaggressions.

Equipped Background. There are leaders whose professional, personal, and academic backgrounds equip them with the ability to approach microaggressions differently than other MIOCs. The comments from a vice president, provost, and director clarified this indicator:

- My social upbringing, college undergraduate experience, and experience in previous jobs throughout my diverse career have offered me confidence in addressing microaggressions.
- Combination of my upbringing and professional training have influenced my ability to approach microaggressions.
- I am confident [in approaching microaggressions] because I know I have rights and freedom of speech.

These Black leaders have a background founded on strength, resilience, and rights. These statements are empowering, demonstrating that leaders are willing to combat microaggressions through barriers and oppression.

Allyship and Empowerment. Other leaders use their experience with microaggressions to empower themselves and others. The statements from an executive director and a vice president provided the basis for the allyship and empowerment concept:

- Years of hard work, success, and support from my college and colleagues have empowered me.

This executive director believed that their ability to approach microaggressions comes from the support of others, strengthened by their dedication and success. Relationships built on trust and encouragement can increase marginalized leaders' ability to respond effectively and approach microaggressions:

- Being a Black female in America and higher education has fueled me to continue fighting to educate those ignorant.

The narration from the vice president demonstrated the role marginalized leaders have taken to educate those blatant or ignorant of microaggressions (Chance, 2021). This approach is centered around the empowering realization of MIOCs that offenses are not indicative of the value of the person of color but rather a reflection of the offender and the oppressive systems used to protect them.

These emerging concepts provided first-hand descriptions from leaders as they explored the occurrences, types, and impacts of microaggressions they experienced while holding a leadership position at a Texas higher education institution. Furthermore, the emerging concepts offered a more robust understanding of the responses and approaches used by these leaders to acknowledge, address, or eliminate microaggression incidents. Although intersectionality information was not required for analyzing this question, the researcher used it to strengthen the complexity of this phenomenon. These concepts create a concrete foundation for analyzing and discussing emerging themes.

Emerging Themes

The emerging themes were derived from the leader's descriptive narrations that responded to the secondary-level questions four and five. The themes analyze and discuss institutional commitment and the advice provided by these leaders, resulting in three themes from each segment.

Institution's Commitment

The comments from the participants reflect their institution's commitment to acknowledging, addressing, or eliminating microaggressions committed against leaders of color. The responses are divided into three themes: (1) DEI Integration Approach, (2) Mission and Vision Approach, and (3) Ambiguous, Ineffective, or Absent Approach.

DEI Integration Approach. Institutions are enacting DEI into their strategic plan and professional development to combat microaggressions. These institutions are committed to implementing frameworks and systems to eradicate microaggressions and social injustice**.**

- In recent years, my institution has made great advances in working to address microaggressions against leaders who are marginalized individuals of color - and continues to do so. This is most evident in the diversity ratios of the college leaders and with our new DEI divisions expanded and active involvement.

- Over the last several years, we implemented an Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion to lead the conversation, conduct professional development, and raise overall awareness.

A vice president from a South institution emphasized that in recent years, their institution's ability to increase equity and inclusion is evident with the increase higher of leaders of color and the development of a DEI division. Furthermore, a vice president from an East institution reinforced that including the DEI office and using professional development to bring awareness and conversation about microaggressions has created a sense of action. However, leaders' narrations further proved that DEI inclusion might be ineffective due to various factors connected to occurrences, types, and impacts (Lederman, 2022; Chun & Feagin, 2020):

- DEI has been implemented in the Strategic Plan, but in my opinion, it is only being done because it is required and not actually to make changes.
- The institution says it supports diversity, equity, and inclusion, yet the actions from leadership do not demonstrate support— all talk and no action.

A director from a Panhandle institution offered the first description reiterating the established notion that the duality of social justice and social injustice exists in the highest power levels at institutions. The comment from a provost from an East region campus echoed the sentiment of the previous leader. DEI is used as an aesthetic of innovation and inclusion but often lacks the resources and support from board members and executive leaders to produce sustainable change (Chun & Feagin, 2020). Therefore, DEI cannot be successful when higher education institutions claim to push equity and diversity but sustain structures of bias and microaggressions (Richardson Fraser, 2017).

Mission and Vision Approach

Some institutions incorporate strategies into their policies, procedures, and messaging to enact a mission and vision approach toward addressing and eliminating microaggressions.

Colleges are working to ensure that the culture and environment suit all individuals. The description from an executive leader from an East region institution resonated with this action:

- The college commits to creating and sustaining an equitable environment. Our goal is for students, staff, faculty, and administration to grow and achieve their personal and educational potential. We recognize that our community comes from diverse backgrounds. Our stance is that equity differs from equality; equity is integral to the college's mission. (East/executive director)

It is significant for institutions and leaders to recognize that leaders are allowed to grow personally and professionally. Furthermore, they must acknowledge that equity is more suited for dismantling systems rooted in historical oppression.

- My institution has made a public stance to become an antiracist college, and we have put strategies and outcomes in place that are measurable. My district is not far along in this work. Commitments have been made, but the history of microaggression is deep, and it will take time to change the culture in a safe way. (South/Vice president)

A vice president from a South institution explained that their college has publicly announced itself as an antiracist. This simple strategy can be significant in areas where it is assumed that racism is a concept lost in the antebellum days. Moreover, microaggressions are an unmeasurable concept, so contesting and eliminating them is an incredible ambition.

Ambiguous, Ineffective, or Absent Approach

Moreover, leaders are navigating ambiguous, ineffective, or absent approaches to addressing and abolishing microaggressions. Interestingly, comments from leaders employed in Panhandle, North, and East higher education institutions provided more positive descriptions of their campus's efforts. The more negative comments derived from the feedback of leaders from the South and Central regions. Example narrations (from an East, Central, and South institution) are used to highlight these forms of approaches.

- My institution has a conflicted culture around diversity, equity and inclusion issues. While generally supportive of DEI, the Board does not fully embrace DEI. (East)

- We have a Diversity, Equity & Inclusion department that tries to take care of these issues. The main thing is most don't feel comfortable enough to utilize their services. (Central)

- Honestly, I do not know that my institution commits to acknowledging, addressing, or eliminating microaggressions. (South)

It is complicated for institutions to sustain DEI efforts when board members refuse to embrace that microaggressions are used against individuals of color. This attitude creates contradictory and noxious relationships among leaders and others in power. Another leader expressed that a lack of trust destroys the effectiveness of DEI divisions. Some institutions develop support and resources without creating frameworks and structures that acknowledge and eliminate microaggressions. Even more detrimental is that institutions lack research and literature exploring the experience of people of color in executive leadership positions, which is vital to institutional advancement and strategic planning (Jackson, 2004).

Advice from Leaders

Comments from the participants in this final exploration were advice that MLOCs offered to aspiring leaders who, expectedly, will endure microaggressions as they navigate higher education. The advice is divided into three themes: Empowerment, Value, and Pride Advice, Speak-up, Speak Out, Resilience, and Accountability Advice, and Allyship and Epitome Advice.

Empowerment, Value, and Pride Advice. Some advice from marginalized leaders of color was centered on empowerment, value, and pride. These leaders recognize that microaggressions influence the experience of individuals; however, they want them to understand that the path to change is worthwhile (Richardson Fraser, 2017). The descriptions are contributions from a provost, president, and executive director.:

- Know who you are, believe in what you are doing and capable of doing, and follow through. You define yourself and no one else.

- I would advise that while they might experience microaggressions, they are worthy of their roles and aspirations. Moreover, the BIPOC students we serve need their leadership. Stay strong and focused on the mission of serving all students, especially those that are most marginalized.

- People are ignorant. State your story and your path to success. Demonstrate how hard you worked to get to the point you are today.

The provost understands that microaggressions induce doubt in leaders confronted with microaggressions (Perez-Gomez, 2022). Therefore, they want future leaders to remember the misconceptions and assumptions of closed-minded offenders do not define them. A president reiterated the sentiment of value by explaining that a leader's mission is to enact equitable change for marginalized students; representation can inspire students, staff, faculty members, and potential leaders. The final commentary is from a director who believed that through assiduousness, a leader could validate their place in a sector of leadership. Through these messages, it is evident that even though these leaders encounter various microaggression incidents that negatively impact them, they believe their place among leadership positions is vital to enacting change.

Speak-up, Speak Out, Resilience, and Accountability Advice. The comments from leaders encourage the act of speaking up-speaking out through resilience and validating microaggression experience with measures of accountability. Over 50% of the advice from leaders focused on speaking up against microaggressions:

- I would speak with the individual responsible for the aggression and make sure they understood what was unacceptable.

- Don't be afraid to address and have a difficult conversation.

Two vice presidents produced these statements. These leaders believe that the aggressor or offender must be taught that an act of microaggression has occurred and that it is unacceptable. Furthermore, the second comment explained that discussions based on

race/ethnicity or other intersectionalities could be challenging. Speaking up is vital to highlighting the insistences of microaggressions for those who are oblivious to them. However, leaders employed at institutions that permit retaliation against victims make implementing this logical piece of advice challenging. Speaking up against offenders of microaggressions creates a tone of resilience:

- Do not tolerate them. Call them out! Understand that when you are told you are rough around the edges or need refining, it is a tactic to dismiss your concerns and ability to fight!

An executive director reiterated that although some microaggressions are unintentional, individuals with power and privilege use them to dismiss the success and accomplishments of marginalized leaders of color. Therefore, a leader must develop a protective shell of resilience to combat the microaggressions against them. Finally, other leaders reminded individuals that accountability is essential to addressing microaggressions.

- My advice is to address it right away by reporting the incident to the Human Resources Department. (Director)
- Intelligently address the behavior with the aggressor(s), document and report. (Director)

These directors believe it is crucial to speak up and ensure that documentation of microaggression incidents is maintained. These pieces of advice exposed the complicity of measuring encounters that can be dismissed or excused as misunderstandings.

Allyship and Epitome Advice. Establishing strategies that merge bystanders, White allies, and marginalized leaders of color can eliminate microaggressions (Sue & Spanierman, 2020; Sue et al., 2019) in higher education. Therefore, exploring the final set is focused on advice from leaders that addresses allyship and the role model method. A director explains that a support system is imperative to surviving microaggressions.

- Discuss the issue with someone of color who has experience in the institution before proceeding.

The significant emphasis that allyship must be established with an experienced leader of color highlights marginalized individuals' innate instinct to distrust those who are not ethnic minorities (Chun & Feagin, 2020). Nadal et al. (2014a) demonstrate that "victims of microaggressions need to feel validated when a microaggression occurs" (p. 63); therefore, this leader assumes that a person of color will not only understand the experience but will know how to deal with microaggressions through effective cognitive and emotional processes:

- Establish a reputation that you will address microaggressions and not err on the side of fear. Be a role model and set an example for others to follow. Be an ally and find allies to be stronger together.

The message from a vice president encouraged future leaders to model actions and behaviors that address and eliminate microaggressions because this philosophy models social justice for individuals on campus (Sue et al., 2019). Furthermore, they reiterate that an allyship is required among marginalized individuals of color and others. Enacting change is possible through partnerships and collaborations between diverse groups with intersectionalities.

CONCLUSION

Chapter Five analyzed the quantitative findings and supported the discussion with intersectionality (race, gender, age, and generation) to explore further the complexity of understanding the phenomenon of microaggressions by answering the primary and secondary-level questions (1, 2, and 3). The primary question dissected the analysis into the occurrences, types, and impacts of microaggressions experienced by marginalized leaders of color who traverse higher education. Also, exploring their responses and approaches to these daily incidents provided depth to the study of microaggressions as they impact leaders, including presidents, vice presidents, provosts, executive directors, and directors. The secondary question establishes

that leaders from all these top-leadership positions experience microaggressions during their leadership path. The research confirmed that these leaders' experience with microaggression occurrences, types, impacts, and responses/approaches virtually parallel the experience of students and faculty. Leaders' survey responses prove that intersectionalities influence their experience with the various measures (occurrences, types, impacts, or responses/approaches). The findings and results were measured using MOMSS-1 and MOMSS-2, quantifying the experience of marginalized leaders of color with microaggressions.

Furthermore, the qualitative analysis explored written responses and examples from leaders to explore the primary and secondary-level questions 4 and 5, establishing emerging concepts and themes. The first-hand descriptions provided a path toward various emerging concepts. The emerging concepts were divided using the four sections of the primary question: *Occurrence* (Political and Social Focus Incident, Tone/Language/Treatment Incident, MIOCs vs. MIOCs Incident, and The Role of DEI and External Factors Incident); *Type* (Question Experience and Ability, Speckled Treatment Impression, Private and Power Interactions, Denial of Intelligence and Recognition, and Common Expectancy); *Impact* (Doubt, Stress, Anxiety Outcomes, Accept and Resilience Outcomes, and Empowerment Attitude versus Defeated Attitude); R*esponse/Approach* (Fear of Power and Privilege, Power of Reflection, Lost in Translation, Equipped Background, and Allyship and Empowerment)—the emerging themes derived from the open-ended questions. The analysis and discussion explored an institution's commitment and leaders' advice. The researcher developed and discussed the themes two-fold: *the institution's commitment* (DEI Integration Approach, Mission and Vision Approach, and Ambiguous, Ineffective, or Absent Approach) and *advice from leaders* (Empowerment, Value, and Pride Advice, Speak-up, Speak Out Advice, Resilience, and Accountability Advice, and

Allyship and Epitome Advice). This analysis and discussion give voice to the specific experiences of leaders who participated in the research, expanding on the phenomenon, and humanizing these individuals.

These leaders' participation provided incredible insights into the experience of leaders of color who hold leadership positions at a higher education institution in Texas. The findings and results of this microaggression study parallel the literature on microaggressions as experienced by students, faculty, and leaders. Furthermore, it adds depth to research focused on leaders of color in higher education and establishes a foundation that intersectionality influences this population's experience. Most importantly, it creates a forum for further investigation and understanding of the phenomenon of microaggression in the realm of leadership and higher education. Moreover, Chapter Six develops conclusions, implications, and recommendations.

Chapter Six: Conclusions, Implications, and Recommendations

INTRODUCTION

This study enacted a mixed-methods methodology to research the microaggression phenomenon. By incorporating quantitative and qualitative research, the researcher believes this approach established a further understanding of a complex and multilayered concept. The study described the experience of marginalized individuals of color (MIOCs) who must navigate a leadership position at Texas higher education institutions while facing microaggressions. The findings and results are essential as institutions shift towards increasing diversity, equity, and inclusion (Alcade, 2021). Each institution must determine if its marginalized leaders of color (MLOCs) have the support, resources, and structures to sustain DEI initiatives effectively (Lederman, 2022). Additionally, this study provides data that asserts that increasing the number of leaders of color in leadership roles does not guarantee social justice or equitable racial advancement. More importantly, the experience these leaders have with microaggression occurrences, types, and impacts influences their responses and approaches to acknowledge, address, or eliminate them from their institution's culture, practices, and messaging. Chapter Six is organized into three sections (a) conclusions, (b) implications, and (c) recommendations.

CONCLUSIONS

The conclusions are assertations shaped by the findings and analysis from Chapters Four and Five; moreover, they discuss the extent the study answered the primary and secondary-level questions. Secondarily, it presents their connection to the theoretical frameworks

(Microaggression Theory, Critical Race Theory, Psychological Significance, and Identity-Neutral Leadership) and the experience leaders of color have with microaggressions. The assertions are discussed through the primary question, secondary-level questions 1, 2, and 3, and secondary-level questions 4 and 5.

PRIMARY QUESTION

Quantitative and qualitative data were used to answer the primary question: What are the occurrences, types, and impacts of microaggressions experienced by marginalized individuals of color who hold a leadership position in a Texas higher education institution, and what responses and approaches do they use to acknowledge, address, or eliminate microaggression incidents?

Quantitative

The researcher established an understanding and vibrant answers to the primary question's four elements (occurrences, types, impacts, and responses/approaches).

Occurrence of Microaggressions

Of the marginalized leaders of color, 86% experienced microaggressions while holding a position at a Texas higher education institution; furthermore, these leaders, at minimum, were confronted with at least one occasion of microaggressions per semester, resulting in an incident every four to five months (see Table 12). Moreover, approximately 20% of these leaders were met with five or more incidents per semester, which is an overwhelming reality for these MLOCs. Four occurrences—social and political relations, witness and bystander interaction, supreme offender, and institutional acknowledgment—impacted the MIOCs' leadership. About 45% of presidents, vice presidents (not academic/instruction), provosts (academic VP), and directors encountered an increase in occurrences when political and social relationships became more malicious or chaotic (see Table 11). Furthermore, the president's position experienced the

highest level of impact when there was social and political unrest in the community. This outcome is logical as presidents must directly interact with community leaders, stakeholders, board members, and corporate partners. Also, nearly 86% of these MLOCs witnessed a microaggression incident against another leader of color (see Table 11); moreover, 100% of presidents, vice presidents, and provosts witnessed microaggression occurrences.

Astonishingly, MLOCs experienced the highest volume of microaggressions in the leadership realm because their most significant offender was other leaders, followed by faculty, staff, community members, and students. This outcome is because leaders of color are the minority in a sector historically reserved for White men (Preskill & Brookfield, 2009). Also, within the quantitative data, there were no occurrences committed by board members; however, the qualitative data proved this initial finding misguided. Finally, only about 56% of leaders' institutions acknowledged that leaders of color experience microaggressions. This fact is devastating toward the shift of increasing diversity, equity, and inclusion because an institution must develop structures and frameworks that recognize and eliminate microaggressions committed against all members of their campus, including leaders of color. The false assumption that leaders of color cannot experience microaggressions is aligned with the Shut-up and Lead idea (explained in Chapter One); this impression establishes the misconception that a successful ethnic minority in an organization proves that racism does not exist or, equally as damaging, that a minority who advances into leadership should be grateful for that opportunity, excluding them from complaining about racial and social inequalities.

Type of Microaggressions

Most microaggressions against MIOCs were centered around the intersectionality of race and ethnicity; moreover, sex/gender and age were the secondary intersectionalities used against

MLOCs, with 20% of participants for each. Furthermore, marginalized leaders of color (MLOCs) experienced Microinsults (about 35% of participants), Microinvalidations (about 31% of participants), and Microassaults (about 15% of participants) with a Moderate to Extremely High level of occurrence (see Table 14). Lastly, 23% of leaders had Extremely High encounters with environmental and meritocracy microaggressions; 19% of MIOCs experienced color blindness, and 15% ascription of intelligence at Extremely High levels (see Table 15). Therefore, executive leaders experience all microaggression forms.

Impact of Microaggressions

Microaggressions had a Moderate or Extremely High impact on marginalized individuals of color, including emotional (28% of participants), psychological (28% of participants), and physiological (16% of participants). The continuous encounter with microaggressions impacted the leader and their interactions with others at their institution. Therefore, 66% of leaders who faced microaggression occurrences could not build relationships and collaborations with others on campus. Also, 60% of MLOCs could not commit and remain loyal to an institution where microaggression incidents were prevalent. Institutions should be confounded with these facts; they cannot profess to be antiracists or proponents of DEI initiatives while their leaders of color struggle to manage numerous adverse impacts. An executive leader who faces microaggressions rightfully associates these occurrences with an institution's ineffective culture and structures, hindering social justice advancement. Lastly, Covid-19 had a divided impact on the increased microaggressions experienced by MIOCs, with 50% of leaders having a direct influence and the others having no immediate effect.

Response and Approach to Microaggressions

Of the participants, 84% were comfortable addressing microaggressions committed against them; however, they were divided among the five types of reactions and approaches: Ignore It (16%), Let it Go (16%), Respond Immediately (32%), Respond Later (20%), and Other 16%) (Table 18). It was alarming to recognize that leaders were willing to ignore or let go of a microaggression encounter even though they demonstrated high confidence in addressing the initial incident. Moreover, leaders who addressed or acknowledged microaggressions experienced several outcomes; 44% of participants held that the microaggression was identified and addressed; 24% of participants were told the encounter was a misunderstanding; 16% of participants experienced an outcome of no action or consequence to the offender (see Table 18).

Qualitative

Narratives and first-hand responses established emerging concepts; these were used to explore further the primary question's concepts (occurrence, type, impact, and response/approach).

Occurrence of Microaggressions

Within the emerging concept of the *Political and Social Focus Incident*, leaders accepted that racism and bias in social and political platforms directly impacted the level of microaggressions leaders of color experienced (Kim et al., 2020). This connection created a sense of acceptance and comfort for offenders who believe using microaggressions or racist acts is acceptable. Also, the *Tone/Language/Treatment Incident* concept established that marginalized leaders of color recognize that offenders use these elements to minimize their professional and academic ability. Moreover, these microaggressions were often used by offenders to snub, belittle, and exclude minorities subtly (Lilienfeld, 2017). Tone, language, and treatment are often

viewed as misunderstandings by ineffective institutions and leadership. The concept of *MIOCs vs. MIOCs Incident* presented the complexity of microaggression between minority groups. One perspective revealed that offenses could occur between two minority groups; another vehemently recognized that an ethnic minority could not be racist toward another minority. Microaggressions can occur between ethnic individuals, even with the same race or ethnicity, when colorism is a factor in the interaction. Finally, *The Role of DEI and External Factors Incidents* illustrated the duality of effectiveness and ineffectiveness in implementing DEI initiatives. At some institutions, DEI is used only as an aesthetic to superficially promote antiracism and social justice because institutions fail to implement structures to support leaders of color. However, other institutions use DEI efforts to establish supports essential to impacting equity and inclusion.

Type of Microaggressions

Through the concepts of *Question Experience and Ability* and *Speckled Treatment Impression*, significant notions were established: (1) that MLOCs' race, gender, and age unequivocally play a role in the microaggressions used against them to determine their professional and intellectual experience and ability, and (2) that race/ethnicity microaggressions vary depending on the intersection of sex/gender and age, proving that women of color experience a more challenging path in leadership. Furthermore, the *Private and Power Interactions* emerging concept exposed that individuals in power use their privilege to implement microaggressions against subordinates of color, suffering minimal to no consequences; these offenders include leaders and board members. Marginalized leaders of color recognized that board members are offenders of microaggressions, contradicting the quantitative results. Board members hinder DEI practices and social justice initiatives as they either fail to acknowledge that

microaggressions exist or eliminate microaggressions from their interactions with marginalized individuals of color. Microaggressions committed by board members damaged the establishment of trust and collaboration with leaders. Leaders feared retaliation and confrontation with microaggression incidents committed by board members over other encounters. Finally, the *Denial of Intelligence and Recognition* and *Common Expectancy concepts* divulge that (1) supervisors continuously question MLOCs' ability even when they have demonstrated mastery of skills and (2) marginalized leaders of color accept color blindness and meritocracy as standard practices. MIOCs' ability to tolerate certain microaggressions as standard expectancy negatively impacts efforts to eliminate these occurrences. Tolerance of injustice and bias hinders higher education institutions' diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives.

Impact of Microaggressions

The emerging concept of *Doubt, Stress, and Anxiety Outcome* revealed that these seemingly resilient and intellectual leaders of color suffered various damaging impacts. Each microaggression encounter erodes these accomplished men and women, creating perpetual doubt that leads to anxiety and stress. Also, the *Accept and Resilience Outcome* exposed MIOCs' need to accept microaggressions as everyday occurrences and build resilience to survive daily incidents. Leaders have enacted this attitude to manage or overcome the impacts brought on by microaggressions; moreover, this attitude, although required for survival, has created a sense of tolerance for intolerable acts. However, victims of microaggressions must navigate relationships and collaborations in a culture of microaggressions. Hence, acceptance and resilience are the strategies they have equipped themselves with as institutions have failed to provide adequate resources and methods. Finally, the emerging concept of *Empowerment Attitude versus Defeated Attitude* presented the complexity and destructive impact microaggressions have on marginalized

individuals of color. Some leaders, regardless of the number of microaggressions, sustain relationships, collaborations, and loyalty to an institution. However, other leaders disconnect or isolate, negatively impacting their relationships and interactions with others at their institution.

Response and Approach to Microaggressions

The emerging concept of *Fear of Power and Privilege* exposed that MLOCs' response and approach to microaggressions are influenced by the offender's level of power and privilege. Therefore, board members influence the interactions of leaders of color and DEI advancement at their institutions. When a board member commits a microaggression, leaders' response is hindered due to fear and retaliation; furthermore, to avoid creating a tumultuous climate, they often remain silent against these offenders. Therefore, the qualitative data further validified that board members are not only offenders of microaggressions but have the most devastating impact on leaders of color and DEI efforts. The concept of the *Power of Reflection* offered a strategy marginalized leaders of color use to combat microaggressions— reflection. Through critical reflection, these leaders make intelligent decisions (Preskill & Brookfield, 2009) on appropriate responses and approaches to incidents against them and other MIOCs. MLOCs have to depend on reflection to address and verify that a microaggression has occurred; their mere explanation of an encounter is not quantifiable enough at institutions without adequate support systems. The emerging concept of *Lost in Translation* proved that institutions' ability to acknowledge, address, and eliminate microaggressions depend heavily on the frameworks, supports, and resources used to advance leaders of color. Some institutions immediately address incidents, while others defend them as misunderstandings. Regardless of the institution's approach to acknowledging or addressing microaggressions, an incident has unequivocal impacts on a leader's ability to effectively advance DEI efforts and establish a climate of social justice.

The concept of *Equipped Background* illustrated that a leader's professional, academic, and personal backgrounds correlate with an individual's ability to combat and approach offenders of microaggressions. Those with solid foundations and convictions on race and justice can quickly confront those situations; however, others experience powerlessness and continuous victimization. Finally, the *Allyship and Empowerment* emerging concept proved that a marginalized leader of color's most powerful approach to microaggressions is allyship. Having other ethnic minorities who understand and validate these subtle incidents strengthens victims and provides them with strategies to manage microaggressions effectively. Even more significantly, MLOCs with equipped backgrounds can mentor and encourage those without it.

Secondary Questions 1, 2, and 3

These questions are (1) What are the leadership positions MIOCs hold while still experiencing microaggressions? (2) Are microaggression occurrences, types, impacts, and responses/approaches different for MIOCs once they navigate toward leadership positions in higher education? and (3) Do intersectionalities influence the occurrences, types, impacts, or responses/approaches?

Question 1: Leadership Positions

This results for Question 1 indicate that 100% of presidents, 86% of vice presidents, 100% of provosts (academic VP), 90% of directors, and 33% of executive directors experienced microaggressions while holding these executive leadership positions at a Texas higher education institution. Over 83% of presidents encounter Moderate to High levels of microaggression incidents per semester. Therefore, regardless of position, leaders endured microaggressions while navigating higher education institutions.

Question 2: Do Microaggressions Change?

The experience of students, faculty, and leaders of color are parallel in all aspects: occurrences, types, impacts, and responses/approaches. However, they differ because students and faculty are viewed as reasonable and probable victims of microaggressions, while leaders are regarded as less likely to endure these incidents. Therefore, leaders suffered devastating impacts but had limited resources and support systems as institutions focused predominantly on the experience of students and faculty.

Question 3: Do intersectionalities influence MIOCs?

Intersectionality unequivocally influences the occurrences, types, impacts, and responses/approaches of MIOCs (Smith et al., 2016; Young et al., 2015). The following are some examples to prove this assertion. *Occurrences* illustrated that more Latino than Black leaders recognized that social and political issues influenced the occurrence of microaggressions used against them. However, the topics discussed on social platforms impact the culture most associated with those misconceptions, altering social relationships and microaggression attacks. Of the Silent and Millennial generation leaders, 100% witnessed aggression against others, while Generation X was lower and Baby Boomers at the lowest. Therefore, an individual's ability to recognize microaggressions is linked with the generation's experiences with racism and bias. Also, leaders from the North and South regions had a higher percentage of recognition that their institutions did not acknowledge microaggressions committed against MLOCs. *Types* proved that women experience a more divided intersectionality experience than men as they must navigate not only race/ethnicity but sex/gender and age microaggressions. About 90% of male participants principally experience race/ethnicity microaggressions; none viewed gender as a limitation. Women experienced more color blindness microaggressions, but men experienced

more meritocracy microaggressions. Furthermore, Blacks, Silent Generation, and Baby Boomers experienced the highest level of racial microaggressions. However, with environmental microaggressions, Black and Hispanics experienced the same level of incidents. *Impacts* established that women, Latinos, and Silent Generation members were more likely to limit their relationships with members of an institution when microaggressions committed against them increased. Similarly, men were more likely to remain loyal to an institution than women when they experienced microaggressions. *Response/Approach* explained that Black leaders were less likely to ignore microaggressions than Hispanics; Millennials were the only generation that refused to ignore microaggressions, while the other generations expressed that they would ignore incidents. Also, women were approximately three times more likely than men to be told that a microaggression was a misunderstanding. Therefore, intersectionality is a factor that increases the occurrence of microaggressions experienced by a leader of color in a leadership position.

Secondary Questions 4 and 5

The secondary-level questions four and five are the following: What is a leader's understanding of their institution's attempt to acknowledge, address, or eliminate microaggressions committed against leaders who are marginalized individuals of color? And what advice do MLOCs give to other MIOCs aspiring to become leaders who might experience microaggressions? These narrations provided first-hand experiences and examples of marginalized leaders of color, creating emerging themes.

Question 4: Institutional Approaches

The theme *DEI Integration Approach* validated that MLOCs are divided in determining the effectiveness of DEI. Some leaders expressed that DEI was improving institutional culture and hiring practices (Lederman, 2022; Chun & Feagin, 2020) as more leaders of color were

being hired and their campus had included a DEI division. However, others believed that DEI was only included in strategic plans to meet the requirements of social and racial paradigm shifts but that institutional frameworks, structures, and policies did not reflect or support sustainable change. Moreover, the *Mission and Vision Approach* theme proclaimed that changes in policies and procedures through mission and vision messaging allowed institutions to acknowledge and eliminate microaggressions. These leaders of color recognized that change is slow and difficult but that social justice is possible by including DEI in the institution's mission and vision. Finally, the Ambiguous, Ineffective, or Absent Approach theme solidified that institutional efforts to increase diversity among their leadership and incorporate DEI varied drastically. Some leaders reiterated that even when institutions proclaimed DEI initiatives, board members failed to embrace social change or the occurrence of microaggressions. Other leaders stated that even when there is a DEI office, the culture does not nurture trust, so individuals resist using resources out of fear of retaliation. Most damaging was leaders' acceptance that their institutions were not committed to acknowledging, addressing, or eliminating microaggressions committed against individuals of color.

Question 5: Leaders' Advice

The theme of *Empowerment, Value, and Pride Advice* validated the occurrence of microaggressions and their impact on leaders; moreover, these MLOCs encouraged future leaders to be empowered to create radical change because they are valuable and vital to the success of marginalized populations. Also, leaders have earned the right to leadership positions and should never fear acknowledging and addressing microaggressions. MLOCs should sustain their pride in obtaining a leadership position in a realm that often excluded them. Additionally, the emerging *Speak-up, Speak-Out Reliance, and Accountability Advice* theme was established

as about 50% of MLOCs focused on the message that future leaders must speak up and speak out against microaggressions by remaining resilient and holding offenders accountable. Marginalized individuals of color acknowledge that microaggressions are challenging to validate or prove to populations oblivious to these encounters due to their subtle nature. Therefore, MLOCs must document and report these incidents to the Human Resources department office. Finally, the theme of *Allyship and Epitome Advice* reiterated the significance of MIOCs' need to build and sustain allyship relationships. These bonds are essential to navigating microaggressions in higher education. More significantly, MLOCs unambiguously assert that leaders must create relationships with other individuals of color who understand the experience of microaggressions and the institution's culture and climate.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

The Microaggression Theory validated MLOCs' experience and revealed to offenders that these occurrences exist (Torino et al., 2019) in the contemporary era. It is important to remember that regardless of the intent (explicit or implicit), victims are affected the same by microaggressions. This theory revealed the effects MIOCs endure through intersectionality (race, gender, and age) (Torino et al., 2019). Moreover, Critical Race Theory (CRT) permitted the exploration of the relationship between race, intersectionality, and their power to influence progress in higher education institutions (McCoy & Rodricks, 2015). CRT exposed that marginalized individuals who experience microaggressions influence campus climate (Lewis et al., 2019). This lens validated that microaggressions impact leaders' ability to establish relationships, collaborations, commitment, and loyalty at institutions where they experience microaggressions. Furthermore, the Identity-Neutral leadership approach proved that outdated frameworks held by institutions do not validate MLOCs' race and gender intersections, which

are either ignored or dismissed. Leaders of color must feel valued and have a sense of belonging to enact sustainable DEI and social advancement. Finally, with the Psychological Significance lens, mental health influences on MIOCs who hold leadership positions in higher education are evident and devastatingly impactful.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

As higher education institutions push for the advancement of marginalized people of color into leadership positions, it is essential to explore the experience these individuals have as they circumnavigate structures and frameworks at Texas colleges and universities. The increased hiring of ethnic minorities and the inclusion of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) has created a false sense of advancement because microaggressions are persistent and constant in the educational environments publicly proclaim social justice and antiracism. The analysis offered various implications for organizations, programs, and individuals committed to DEI, social justice, and leadership in higher education. Individuals that can use the insights of this study are (1) Educational Scholars and Microaggression Researchers, (2) DEI Designers, DEI Divisions, and Leadership Programs, and (3) Institutional Leaders and Board Members.

IMPLICATIONS FOR EDUCATIONAL SCHOLARS AND MICROAGGRESSION RESEARCHERS

This study provides academic scholars and microaggression researchers with further qualitative data into the phenomenon of microaggressions and a comprehensive understanding of their impact on marginalized leaders of color. Furthermore, the quantitative (including intersectionality and disaggregated) data and the inclusion of MOMSS-1 and MOMSS-2 offers a quantifiable and measurable understanding of occurrences, types, impacts, and responses/approaches and their association with MIOCs who hold leadership positions at Texas

higher education institutions. These scholars and researchers can use the ideas of this study to further invest in empirical research on this population.

Implications for DEI Designers, DEI Divisions, and Leadership Programs

This study's findings and results provide DEI designers and DEI divisions topics for professional development and training, focusing on the experience of leaders of color. DEI training is predominantly fixated on the experience of students and then faculty, but little to none is centered around leaders' experience with microaggressions. Furthermore, the literature review proved that leadership programs often fail to address the experience of marginalized leaders of color with microaggressions, so educational programs committed to DEI should use the findings from this study to acknowledge, address, and equip their students for the realities of higher education.

Implications for Institutional Leaders and Board Members

The findings and results of this study prove that the most significant inhibitors of DEI and social progress are board members and institutional leaders. This data can be used to begin discussions and forums that address institutional efforts to eliminate offenses committed by groups with power and privilege. Board members' explicit or implicit acceptance of microaggressions incidents against leaders of color is damaging to antiracist and social justice initiatives. These discussions can reveal that retaliation and fear should not be associated with executive leaders and board members who are offenders of microaggressions.

These groups are most linked to the implications established by the research; however, anyone interested or invested in eliminating social injustice and microaggressions should benefit from these findings.

RECOMMENDATIONS

After exploring and analyzing the quantitative and qualitative data, the conclusions, and implications, it was essential to establish concrete recommendations, such as practitioner application and future research. These recommendations can enhance the relationship between institutions and leaders of color and decrease the limitations and gaps in the current literature focused on the experience of leaders of color with microaggressions.

PRACTITIONER APPLICATION

The practitioner application recommendations are centered on the initiatives DEI divisions and Chief Equity Officers (CEO) can enact at higher education institutions. These applications are (1) the onboarding integration process, (2) continuous professional training, and (3) partnership, protection, and protocols procedures

Onboarding Integration Process

DEI divisions and Chief Equity Officers should design an onboarding integration process that focuses on the experience of MLOCs with microaggression incidents. This division should mandate this integration process for all leaders and board members, whether new to the institution or a given leadership position. Furthermore, the onboarding integration should equip MLOCs with resources and strategies for recognizing and managing microaggression occurrences. Additionally, this session should offer MLOCs support systems that guide individuals through the emotional, psychological, and physiological impacts of microaggressions. Finally, the division should design a session that provides board members and non-ethnic minority leaders with several concepts: 1) foundational knowledge on microaggressions, 2) an understanding of the effects of power and privilege, 3) strategies for

eliminating offenders, and 4) extensive comprehension on their role in sustaining DEI initiatives and advancing leaders of color.

Continuous Professional Training

DEI divisions and the CEO must offer leadership training that addresses issues that leaders of color confront as they circumnavigate higher education structures. Furthermore, the topics should cover the four concepts of microaggressions (occurrences, types, impacts, and responses/approaches). Additionally, training can discuss intersectionalities (sex/gender, age, and generation) and their influence on the experience of MLOCs. DEI trainers should design training sessions that cater to various groups: MLOC, all leaders, and board members. Microaggression training can include all groups to shift towards collaboration and allyship; however, sessions should permit MLOCs to engage in microaggression training without other groups. A primary goal of this training should be to equip all groups with a common language and approach to addressing, acknowledging, and eliminating microaggressions. Microaggression training should be implemented annually, at a minimum, by an institution's DEI division.

Partnership, Protection, and Protocols Procedures

The DEI division and Chief Equity Officer are responsible for establishing a relationship of trust and collaboration with marginalized leaders of color. Therefore, they must implement coffee talks or meet-and-greet sessions between the division, the CEO, and leaders of color, creating a culture and environment of protection, transparency, and allyship. This connection is required if MLOCs are expected to use the reporting protocols against those they view as powerful and privileged (leaders and board members). Furthermore, the reporting protocols must use the common language and frameworks designed in training; it must protect MLOCs from retaliation and fear.

These recommendations are essential for implementing and sustaining diversity, equity, and inclusion within higher education institutions; moreover, they can improve the efforts of campuses committed to antiracism and social justice.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Although there is an incredible volume of scholarship focused on the experience of students and faculty with microaggressions, there are limitations and gaps in literature centered on higher education, leadership, and microaggressions (Chance, 2021; Tchoumi, 2020; Townsend, 2020; Richardson Fraser, 2017; Syler, 2014; Eagly & Chin, 2010; Bartol et al., 1978). Therefore, educational scholars and microaggression researchers should consider incorporating the mixed-methods approach for future research to offer knowledge on the experience of MIOCs in leadership positions and their experience with microaggressions. The areas to consider are (1) broader regional and cross-sectional scope, (2) hierarchal microaggressions, (3) the role of professional development, training, and onboarding, (4) the role of DEI on supports and resources, (5) impact of intersectionality, and (6) influence of board member offenders.

BROADER REGIONAL AND CROSS-SECTIONAL SCOPE

It would benefit the study of microaggressions and leadership to broaden the regional scope by including other states, such as North, South, West, and East regions in America. Furthermore, these studies can be done independently and compared using a cross-sectional approach to understand the variant experiences of MLOCs throughout American higher education institutions. The researcher can determine if the scope will merge community colleges and universities or study them separately in the cross-sectional study.

Hierarchal Microaggressions

Exploring the impact hierarchal microaggressions have on the relationships established between executive leaders and middle-level managers is essential to understand further why leaders are the greatest offenders of microaggressions against other leaders.

Role of Professional Development, Training, and Onboarding

Discovering the effectiveness of professional development, training, and onboarding in addressing, eliminating, and acknowledging microaggressions against leaders is needed to decrease limitations and gaps in this empirical research. Furthermore, this research can provide tools for diversity, equity, and inclusion departments.

Role of DEI on Supports and Resources

Studying the role of DEI on supports and resources incorporated to address and eliminate microaggressions against MIOCs who are leaders is vital to determining if this effort is advancing social justice or creating a false sense of advancement.

Impact of Intersectionality

Scholars should further develop research on the impact intersectionality has on the experience of marginalized leaders of color who navigate through structures, frameworks, and policies that support a culture and climate of exclusion, social injustice, and microaggressions. Intersectionality research should address sex/gender, race/ethnicity, age, and sexual orientation/identity. Moreover, there needs to be a deeper investigation into the role generation experience has on MLOC.

Influence of Board Member Offenders

Educational and microaggression researchers must investigate the negative ramifications board members have on the experience of marginalized leaders of color and DEI initiatives.

Also, an exploration of the influence power and privilege have on MLOCs' ability to address or eliminate microaggressions is essential.

There is a tremendous need for empirical exploration of microaggressions' influence on marginalized leaders of color at higher education institutions. Furthermore, it is necessary to increase the quantitative data to prove that microaggressions are measurable and constant occurrences in the daily interactions of people of color, including leaders. These are some possible focuses for further research, but this Microaggression Climate Study proved that there are various options to reduce the limitations and gaps in the current literature.

CONCLUSION

The study's assertations verified that microaggressions exist in the experience of marginalized individuals of color who hold leadership positions at Texas higher education institutions; moreover, these occurrences have detrimental impacts and ramifications. Leaders suffer emotional, psychological, and physiological consequences, affecting their ability to establish relationships, collaborations, and commitment to an institution. Therefore, if higher education institutions and DEI departments are honest about eliminating injustice and increasing diversity, equity, and inclusion, they must explore studies, training, and resources that confirm that MLOCs are victims of microaggressions. They must acknowledge that these leaders are not immune from these incidents because they hold a title of leadership and power.

Furthermore, institutions that publicly promote a culture of antiracism and inclusion but ignore or dismiss microaggressions committed against marginalized leaders of color privately communicate that they should shut up and lead. However, leaders of color do not owe their success to offenders and frameworks that use microaggressions and systematic stereotypes to promote MLOCs while limiting them by using outdated misconceptions, typecasts, and

assumptions. Marginalized leaders of color deserve the opportunity to advance institutions toward social justice and inclusion because these initiatives directly impact the experiences of marginalized ethnic minority students and faculty.

Moreover, with solid support and resources, these professional and intellectual leaders will continue to push against inequity and social injustice; however, this cannot occur when marginalized leaders of color are covertly directed to shut up and lead. Microaggressions are silent hindrances that must be eliminated throughout institutional frameworks, structures, and policies, offering MLOCs the strategies, support systems, and collaborations required to speak up and enact transformational change.

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Appendix A: IRB Approval

FERRIS STATE UNIVERSITY

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD
1010 Campus Drive FLITE 410 Big Rapids, MI 49307
www.ferris.edu/irb

Date: June 20, 2022
To: Susan DeCamillis, EdD and Leonor Calderon
From: David R. White, Ph.D, IRB Chair
Re: IRB Application *IRB-FY21-22-96 Microaggression Impacts on Marginalized Individuals of Color in Higher Education*

The Ferris State University Institutional Review Board (IRB) has reviewed your application for using human subjects in the study, *Microaggression Impacts on Marginalized Individuals of Color in Higher Education(IRB-FY21-22-96)* and approved this project under Federal Regulations Exempt Category 2.(ii). Research that only includes interactions involving educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior (including visual or auditory recording).
Any disclosure of the human subjects' responses outside the research would not reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, educational advancement, or reputation.

Your protocol has been assigned project number IRB-FY21-22-96. Approval mandates that you follow all University policy and procedures, in addition to applicable governmental regulations. Approval applies only to the activities described in the protocol submission; should revisions need to be made, all materials must be approved by the IRB prior to initiation. In addition, the IRB must be made aware of any serious and unexpected and/or unanticipated adverse events as well as complaints and non-compliance issues.

This project has been granted a waiver of consent documentation; signatures of participants need not be collected. Although not documented, informed consent is a process beginning with a description of the study and participant rights, with the assurance of participant understanding. Informed consent must be provided, even when documentation is waived, and continue throughout the study.

As mandated by Title 45 Code of Federal Regulations, Part 46 (45 CFR 46) the IRB requires submission of annual status reports during the life of the research project and a Final Report Form upon study completion. **The Annual Status Report for this project is due on or before June 20, 2023.** Thank you for your compliance with these guidelines and best wishes for a successful research endeavor. Please let us know if the IRB can be of any future assistance.

Regards,

David R. White, Ph.D, IRB Chair
Ferris State University Institutional Review Board

Appendix B: Microaggression Climate Survey

Microaggression Climate Survey

Demographics

Thank you for your time in completing the Microaggressions Climate Survey. Your feedback is essential to the Microaggression Impacts on Marginalized Individuals of Color in Higher Education study.

Purpose of Study:
The researcher is interested in identifying, assessing, and exploring the impacts of microaggressions. The dissertation survey and research aim to identify and describe the occurrence, types, and impacts of microaggressions on marginalized individuals of color (MIOCs) who hold leadership positions in higher education. Furthermore, to explore the responses used by MIOCs who experience microaggressions.

Required Demographic:
You are being asked to participate if you meet the criteria: 1) identify as a marginalized individual of color, 2) hold a leadership position (President, Vice-President, Provost, Executive Director, or Director), and 3) hold employment in a higher education institution located in Texas. There are three Demographic Questions to determine the participant's qualification. The survey is voluntary; answers will be kept confidential, and responses will be anonymous to college and organization personnel. After completing the Participant Qualifying section, eligible participants will be directed to the survey sections: Demographic Details, Occurrence of Microaggressions, Types of Microaggressions, Impact of Microaggressions, Response to Microaggressions, and Open-Ended Questions.

There are 35 multiple choice questions and two open-ended questions; the survey will take 15-30 minutes to complete.

Definitions:

***Microaggressions* will be defined as "subtle snubs, slights, and insults directed toward minorities, as well as to women and other historically stigmatized groups, that implicitly communicate" (Lilienfeld, 2017, p. 139) or produce hostility, exclusion, or divisiveness.**

***Minoritized groups* will be defined as marginalized individuals who identify as people of color.**

***Intersectionality* will be defined as the complex, multiple interactions of social categories and experiences such as social class, race/ethnicity, sex/gender, sexual orientation, and age.**

* 1. Do you identify as a MIOC (marginalized individual of color)?

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

* 2. Do you hold one of the following leadership positions: president, vice-president, provost, executive director, or director?

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

* 3. Do you hold a leadership position at a Texas higher education institution?

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

Microaggression Climate Survey

Demographic Details

1. What is your current leadership position? (or most like)?

- ◯ President
- ◯ Vice-President (not Academic/Instruction)
- ◯ Provost (Academic VP)
- ◯ Executive Director
- ◯ Director

2. What is your race identification?

- ◯ American Indian or Alaska Native
- ◯ Asian
- ◯ Black or African American
- ◯ Other (please specify)
- ◯ Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
- ◯ Hispanic or Latino

3. What is your sex?

- ◯ Female
- ◯ Male
- ◯ Other (please specify)

4. How long have you held a leadership position in higher education?

- ◯ Less than 1 year
- ◯ 1 - 5 years
- ◯ 6-10 years
- ◯ 11-15 years
- ◯ 16-20 years
- ◯ More than 20 years

5. What (age bracket) generation do you belong to?

- ◯ G.I. Generation (Born 1901-1926)
- ◯ Silent (Born 1927-1945)
- ◯ Boomers (Born 1946-1964)
- ◯ Generation X (Born 1965-1980)
- ◯ Millennials (Born 1981-1996)
- ◯ Generation Z (Born 1997- 2012)

6. Are you part of a small, middle, or large college or university system?

- ◯ Small (Less than 5,000 students)
- ◯ Middle (Between 5,000-15,000 students)
- ◯ Large (More than 15,000 students)

7. What region describes the location of your Texas institution?

Panhandle

North

West

Central

East

South

8. What percentage of leadership (President, Vice-President, Provost, Executive Director, or Director) at your institution is classified as an individual of color (including Blacks, African Americans, Latino, Asians, Pacific-Islanders, etc.)?

- ◯ Less than 5%
- ◯ 5-10%
- ◯ 11-20%
- ◯ 21-30%
- ◯ 31-50%
- ◯ 51-75%
- ◯ More than 75%

Microaggression Climate Survey

Occurrence of Microaggressions

1. I have experienced microaggressions while holding a leadership position in higher education. [Microaggressions are "subtle snubs, slights, and insults directed toward minorities, as well as to women and other historically stigmatized groups, that implicitly communicate" (Lilienfeld, 2017, p. 139) or produce hostility, exclusion, or divisiveness].

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No
- ◯ Not Sure

2. The occurrence of microaggressions I have experienced while holding a leadership position in higher education is

	None (0 per semester)	Very Low (1 per semester)	Low (2 per semester)	Moderate (3 per semester)	High (4 per semester)	Extremely High (5+ per semester)
Occurrence of Microaggressions	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

3. The number of microaggressions I have experienced while holding a leadership position has increased when social and political relations in society become volatile.

No	Yes
◯	◯

Provide a specific example of an occurrence (This is optional):

4. I have witnessed microaggressions committed against other minoritized leaders on my campus.

No	Yes
◯	◯

Provide a specific example of an occurrence (This is optional):

5. Acts of microaggression committed against me are most often from:

- ◯ Students
- ◯ Faculty
- ◯ Community Members
- ◯ Other Leaders
- ◯ Staff
- ◯ Board Members

6. The institution where I currently hold a leadership position acknowledges that leaders of color experience microaggressions.

No	Yes
◯	◯

Provide specific reasons for this response (This is optional):

Microaggression Climate Survey

Type of Microaggressions

1. The intersectionality used against me to commit microaggressions is mainly focused on: [Intersectionality will be defined as the complex, multiple interactions of social categories and experiences such as social class, race/ethnicity, sex/gender, sexual orientation, and age.e.]

- ◯ Race/Ethnicity
- ◯ Age
- ◯ Sex/Gender
- ◯ Social Class
- ◯ Sexual Orientation

2. I have experienced microaggressions centered around my race/ethnicity.

	Never (0 per semester)	Very Low (1 per semester)	Low (2 per semester)	Moderate (3 per semester)	High (4 per semester)	Extremely High (5+ per semester)
Racial Microaggression	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

Provide a specific example of a microaggression experienced (This is optional):

3. I have experienced microaggressions centered around my sex/gender.

	Never (0 per semester)	Very Low (1 per semester)	Low (2 per semester)	Moderate (3 per semester)	High (4 per semester)	Extremely High (5+ per semester)
Sex/Gender Microaggression	○	○	○	○	○	○

Provide a specific example of a microaggression experienced (This is optional):

4. I have experienced microaggressions centered around my age.

	Never (0 per semester)	Very Low (1 per semester)	Low (2 per semester)	Moderate (3 per semester)	High(4 per semester)	Extremely High (5+ per semester)
Age Microaggression	○	○	○	○	○	○

Provide a specific example of a microaggression experienced (This is optional):

5. I have experienced microaggressions centered around my sexual orientation.

	Never (0 per semester)	Very Low (1 per semester)	Low (2 per semester)	Moderate (3 per semester)	High (4 per semester)	Extremely High (5+ per semester)
Sexual Orientation Microaggression	○	○	○	○	○	○

Provide a specific example of a microaggression experienced (This is optional):

6. I have seen behaviors or heard verbal comments that were rude, insensitive, and demeaning towards another person's race/ethnicity or sex/gender.

	Never (0 per semester)	Very Low (1 per semester)	Low (2 per semester)	Moderate (3 per semester)	High (4 per semester)	Extremely High (5+ per semester)
Microinsult Microaggression	○	○	○	○	○	○

Provide a specific example of a microaggression experienced (This is optional):

7. I have explicitly experienced a violent verbal or nonverbal attack meant to hurt through name-calling, avoidant behavior, or purposeful discriminatory actions.

	Never (0 per semester)	Very Low (1 per semester)	Low (2 per semester)	Moderate (3 per semester)	High (4 per semester)	Extremely High (5+ per semester)
Microassault Microaggression	○	○	○	○	○	○

Provide a specific example of a microaggression experienced (This is optional):

8. I have experienced verbal comments or behaviors that exclude, negate, or nullify the thoughts, emotions, or reality of a person of color.

	Never (0 per semester)	Very Low (1 per semester)	Low (2 per semester)	Moderate (3 per semester)	High (4 per semester)	Extremely High (5+ per semester)
Microinvalidation Microaggression	○	○	○	○	○	○

Provide a specific example of a microaggression experienced (This is optional):

9. I have experienced insults or invalidations manifest from a systemic or environmental level.

	Never (0 per semester)	Very Low (1 per semester)	Low (2 per semester)	Moderate (3 per semester)	High (4 per semester)	Extremely High (5+ per semester)
Environmental Microaggression	○	○	○	○	○	○

Provide a specific example of a microaggression experienced (This is optional):

10. I have been assigned a degree of intelligence based on my race/ethnicity or sex/gender.

	Never (0 per semester)	Very Low (1 per semester)	Low (2 per semester)	Moderate (3 per semester)	High (4 per semester)	Extremely High (5+ per semester)
Ascription of Intelligence Microaggression	○	○	○	○	○	○

Provide a specific example of a microaggression experienced (This is optional):

11. I have heard non-people of color state they do not see color or race.

	Never (0 per semester)	Very Low (1 per semester)	Low (2 per semester)	Moderate (3 per semester)	High (4 per semester)	Extremely High (5+ per semester)
Color Blindness Microaggression	○	○	○	○	○	○

Provide a specific example of a microaggression experienced (This is optional):

12. I have heard non-people of color state that race plays a minor role in success— everyone can be successful if they work hard.

	Never (0 per semester)	Very Low (1 per semester)	Low (2 per semester)	Moderate (3 per semester)	High (4 per semester)	Extremely High (5+ per semester)
Meritocracy Microaggression	○	○	○	○	○	○

Provide a specific example of a microaggression experienced (This is optional):

Microaggression Climate Survey

Impact of Microaggressions

1. Microaggressions have impacted me emotionally.

	None (0)	Very Low (1)	Low (2)	Moderate (3)	High (4)	Extremely High (5)
Level of Impact	○	○	○	○	○	○

Provide clarity or an example (This is optional):

2. Microaggressions have impacted me physiologically.

	None (0)	Very Low (1)	Low (2)	Moderate (3)	High (4)	Extremely High (5)
Level of Impact	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

Provide clarity or an example (This is optional):

3. Microaggressions have impacted me psychologically.

	None (0)	Very Low (1)	Low (2)	Moderate (3)	High (4)	Extremely High (5)
Level of Impact	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

Provide clarity or an example (This is optional):

4. Microaggressions have impacted my ability to build relationships and collaborations on campus.

	None (0)	Very Low (1)	Low (2)	Moderate (3)	High (4)	Extremely High (5)
Level of Impact	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

Provide clarity or an example (This is optional):

5. Microaggressions have impacted my commitment and loyalty to the institution.

	None (0)	Very Low (1)	Low (2)	Moderate (3)	High (4)	Extremely High (5)
Level of Impact	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

Provide clarity or an example (This is optional):

6. Microaggressions committed against me during the Covid-19 pandemic (2020-present) have increased.

	None (0)	Very Low (1)	Low (2)	Moderate (3)	High (4)	Extremely High (5)
Level of Impact	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

Provide clarity or an example (This is optional):

Microaggression Climate Survey

Response and Approach to Microaggressions

1. I am comfortable addressing microaggressions committed against me?

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

If you are comfortable addressing microaggressions, what has provided this confidence? or If you are not comfortable addressing microaggressions, what has led to this hesitation? (This is optional)

2. When I have experience microaggression, my response is to

- ◯ Ignore It
- ◯ Let it Go
- ◯ Respond Immediately
- ◯ Respond Later
- ◯ Other (please specify in comment section)

Other (please specify) or/and Provide clarity on your response choice (This is optional):

3. When I have addressed microaggressions, the outcome was:

- ◯ Consequences were executed on the person committing the microaggression(s)
- ◯ The misbehavior was identified and addressed
- ◯ That the microaggression addressed was explained as a misunderstanding
- ◯ That there were further microaggressions or exclusions experienced
- ◯ That no action or consequences were taken
- ◯ None of the above
- ◯ Other (please specify in comment section)

Other (please specify) or/and Provide clarity on your response choice (This is optional):

Microaggression Climate Survey

Open-Ended Questions

* 1. What is your institution's commitment to acknowledging, addressing, and eliminating microaggressions committed against leaders who are marginalized individuals of color?

* 2. What advice would you give to marginalized individuals of color aspiring to be leaders who might experience microaggressions?