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Are Black Girls Okay: Microaggressions and Academic Strategy Development for Black Women in Doctoral Programs

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Abstract

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by

Marcella Rolle

MEd, The University of West Georgia, 2012

BS, Tennessee State University, 2004

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Counselor Education and Supervision

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Abstract

Over the past years, researchers have explored the lived experiences of people of color, namely Black women, in academia. Examiners have learned that Black women often learn how to succeed in academia but at the expense of their mental well-being and even in the midst of oppressive situations. Most of the work previously presented was largely qualitative and has not considered predictive factors or unpacked the strategies Black women used to reach academic success. Therefore, this study used the doubled-edged sword conceptual framework and the Black feminist thought theoretical lens to investigate the relationship between microaggressions, academic strategy development, and region of upbringing among Black women enrolled in counselor education doctoral programs. A quantitative survey research methods design using a nonprobability sampling method to survey 47 Black women doctoral students was employed. The Racial and Ethnic Microaggressions Scale, the Learning and Study Strategies Inventory, and a demographic questionnaire to examine microaggressions, academic strategy development, and region of upbringing among Black women doctoral students were used. Using Pearson correlations, point biserial correlations, and multiple linear regressions, results revealed no significant relationships among microaggressions, academic strategy development, and region of upbringing. However, counselor educators and current and future Black women doctoral students may benefit and learn about the experiences of microaggressions and the process of developing academic strategies based on the design and discussions of this study.

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Dedication

I dedicate this body of work to Black girls who have gone before me: those who were enslaved and never dreamed this would be possible, those who dedicated much of their time to their spouses and children and found little time to take for themselves, and those who paved the way for me to be here today. To all of you, I say thank you! Furthermore, I dedicate this body of work to those who will come after me, the young girls I mentored, counseled, educated, and learned from in the Salt of the Earth Afterschool program in Crisp and Dooly County Georgia, to the young Black women I teach at the Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine, and to my sweet 3-year-old niece, Evelyn Ann Rolle. The world may look scary right now, but you have all the tools you need to thrive and conquer.

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What a friend I have in Jesus. All my sins and grief to bear. What a privilege to carry everything to God in prayer. I wish to thank God for knowing I was capable of this feat when I was formed. God, you are so sweet, loving, kind, and gracious. There is none other like you. You are everything and everything is you.

Thank you to my amazing family, Marcus E. Rolle I (daddy), Toni M. Rolle (mommy), Marcus E. Rolle II (Peppie), and Marshelle E. Rolle (Shelly). Mommy and Daddy, you knew not of what I spoke of on many occasions, but your love abounded through generosity, hospitality, and prayers. Thank you Mommy and Daddy! Peppie and Shelly, how sweet it is to be your big sister. I hope I am a reminder of just how much greater you both are than me! I love you!

Thank you to my sweet friends Malcolm J. King, Yulonda Shearon-Cooper, Dr. Sheronda Shearon-Richardson, Lesley, and Patricia Roberts for reviewing my work, staying up late to chat and lending your ear, your homes, your heart, and your prayers. I love you all so dearly. Thank you to my Walden colleagues who were invaluable during this process, Dr. Charity Godfrey, Dr. Lisa Corbin, Dr. Alicia Moore, Dr. Stephanie Moore, and Dr. Jil Hus.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

In this study, I explored the question of whether or not Black 'girls' are okay, particularly related to their experiences in higher education. To obtain the answer, I identified the problem and subsequent gap in the literature related to Black women doctoral students (BWDS) enrolled in counselor education programs. Specifically, I answered the question posed based on BWDS' experiences in academic strategy development amid the presence of microaggressions and based on the participants' region of upbringing. To clarify, I did not pose the question based on the assumption that Black girls are broken, less than, or severely damaged. Nor did I use the term *girls* to denote youth or immaturity, but rather a colloquial term of endearment often used among Black women. With this question, I challenged the presence of support, understanding, and scholarship based on the accurate experiences of Black women. Collins (1986, 2000) explained that to understand, support, and answer the call of many Black women, questions, such as the one posed in this study, with the voices, experiences, and intersectional oppressions of Black women, must be addressed. To that end, I challenged the methods many counselor education programs prepared for Black women in counselor education doctoral programs. Furthermore, I challenged the current design of support for Black women in counselor education programs to improve or rather adjust best practices for supporting, educating, supervising, mentoring, and counseling BWDS.

In this first chapter, I provide background information related to previous scholarship and foundational studies and theories supporting the work that I present here. Next, I offer the problem statement, purpose of the study, and research questions.

Additionally, I introduce the theoretical and conceptual frameworks, nature of the study, definitions of key terms, and assumptions. Finally, I discuss the scope and delimitations, limitations, and significance of the study. The goal of this chapter is to offer a brief explanation of rationale for the study.

Background

Over time, many researchers have studied the experiences of students pursuing doctoral education and have reported such outcomes as feeling burnt out, disconnected from friends and family, having diminished senses of academic self-efficacy, and having issues related to health and wellness (Jones et al., 2013; Minnett et al., 2019; Nadal et al., 2014; Patterson-Stephens & Vital, 2014; Shavers, 2010; Shavers & Moore, 2014a, 2014b). Looking deeper, researchers have reported that women of color often face the barriers of intersectionality in the form of racism, sexism, and a combination of the two with microaggressions. An underlining theme throughout the literature among scholars who have studied Black women is that adverse experiences in education meaningfully affect the educational journey (Bhat et al., 2012; Constantine et al., 2008; Felder & Barker, 2013; Nadal et al., 2014; Patterson-Stephens & Vital, 2017; Shavers & Moore, 2014a, 2014b).

Both Felder and Barker (2013) and Patterson-Stephens and Vital (2017) discovered that many Black students believe that faculty and staff overlook their cultural experiences to offer a neutral educational setting. The result of such actions includes beliefs from Black students related to a lack of awareness and understanding of their worldview (Felder & Barker, 2013; Patterson-Stephens & Vital, 2017). Shavers (2010)

and later Shavers and Moore (2014a, 2014b) revealed that the lack of awareness experienced by Black women largely influences their approach to academia in the doctoral setting. Furthermore, Nadal et al. (2014) presented a negative relationship between the experience of microaggressions and students' overall self-esteem toward the education process (i.e., as the experience of microaggressions increase, self-esteem decreases).

Educational and research scholars studying Black women in academia have based much of their work on the principals by Collins (1986), a sociologist who developed the Black feminist thought (BFT) theory to give voice to Black women, particularly those in education and professional settings (Allen & Lewis, 2016; Patterson-Stephens & Vital, 2017; Shavers, 2010; Shavers & Moore, 2014a, 2014b). Collins (1986, 2000) proposed that to become aware of, understand, and support Black women in their growth, development, and leadership in academia, researchers and scholars must consider the value, oppression, and culture of Black women. In line with the principles of Collins (1986), Morton (2016) presented that Black women, uniquely those from the Southern region of the United States, are much more than an underappreciated version of Black men or an underrepresented version of feminist women, but rather powerful aspects of Southern culture that in many ways shape the ideals and cultural beliefs of a large part of the United States.

Scholars have speculated and later scientifically proved that to better understand, appreciate, and support Black woman, intellectuals should listen to their stories and include their voices in research and various other settings, namely education (Bhat et al.,

2012; Collins, 1986, 2000; Constantine et al., 2008; Felder & Barker, 2013; Jones et al., 2013; Morton, 2016; Nadal et al., 2014; Ong et al., 2011; Patterson-Stephens & Vital, 2017; Shavers & Moore, 2014a, 2014b). Thus far, the common result among researchers who have studied adverse experiences among Black women in education is the presence of oppression, specifically in the form of microaggressions (Bhat et al., 2012; Felder & Barker, 2013; Hedin, 2018; Minnett et al., 2019; Nadal et al., 2014; Patterson-Stephens & Vital, 2017; Shavers, 2010; Shavers & Moore, 2014a, 2014b). Researchers have proven that the presence of microaggressions has challenged the academic process in several areas for students of color in general, and Black women in particular. Such areas include academic success, academic challenges, academic motivation, academic support, and academic socialization (Patterson-Stephens & Vital, 2017). According to Weinstein et al. (1988), these elements make up the process of academic strategy development or the development of learning strategies, which can lead to the success or failure of students in the academic setting.

In 1994, Sinkavich found that student motivation, including intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, significantly impacted students' ability to develop successful learning strategies in the graduate school setting. Moreover, Sinkavich suggested that to improve student motivation in graduate programs, instructors need to consider and include the distinct experiences of each student. Sinkavich proposed that for students to use the knowledge garnered in graduate schools, they must be able to relate to the concepts and practices. To provide such relatable instruction, educators must account for the environments and lived experiences of students (Sinkavich, 1994).

Additionally, Shavers (2010) and Shavers and Moore (2014a, 201b) revealed that doctoral-level graduate programs have added stressors that further shape the Black woman's capacity for developing strong strategies for success in academia. Students studied reported the need to diminish stereotypes related to their ability to succeed in the doctoral setting as well the desire to win for the benefit of their cultural communities (Shavers & Moore, 2014b). Due to these representations thrust upon Black women in the doctoral setting, they developed dualities to operate, which not only affected academic strategy development but also the overall wellbeing of their personhood (Shavers, 2010; Shavers & Moore, 2014a, 2014b).

However, even with the overwhelming evidence showing barriers to success and academic strategy development in doctoral programs, not much has been researched related to the experiences of BWDS in counselor education programs. Students and educators in counselor education doctoral programs promote balance in academic, individual well-being, and community relationships. Such principles should improve the process of academic strategy development among BWDS, even in the face of microaggressions. However, researchers have remained silent on the topic. The work of the authors mentioned in this section set a noteworthy precedent for further exploration related to a meaningful connection between academic strategy development and microaggressions among BWDS in counselor education programs.

Problem Statement

According to Jones et al. (2013), the number of Black women enrolled in doctoral programs is at an all-time high, with Black women making up nearly 60% of the Black

population in postgraduate programs. Additionally, as of 2016, the National Center for Science and Engineering Statistics reported that the online doctoral format is at the forefront for graduating Black students with advanced degrees, and Walden University is currently graduating nearly 40% of the nation's Black doctoral students (as cited in National Science Foundation, 2016). However, the reports of oppressive experiences such as isolation, nullification, discrimination, and underserved barricades to success continue to increase, leading to significant barriers to academic and personal wellness among students of color, namely BWDS (Constantine et al., 2008; Hedin, 2018; Nadal et al., 2014; Patterson-Stephens & Vital, 2017; Shavers & Moore, 2014a, 2014b).

Black women reported that oppressive experiences, namely microaggressions, have altered the way they approached higher education as well as decreased their self-esteem (Hedin, 2018; Nadal et al., 2014; Schwartz et al., 2003; Shavers & Moore, 2014a, 2014b). Recently, researchers discovered the disadvantage of academic development through strategy implementation in the face of diminished self-esteem and overall well-being (Nadal et al., 2014; Shavers & Moore, 2014a, 2014b). Furthermore, researchers have recognized that amid the development of academic strategies, Black women, particularly those in the Southern United States, experience various levels of oppression, including microaggressions (May, 2008; Morton, 2016; Nadal et al., 2014; Schwartz et al., 2003).

In their work, authors Shavers and Moore (2014a, 2014b) proposed that BWDS developed unique academic strategies to increase academic success. Examples of said strategies included striving to be a part of the majority group or the "bigger whole,"

attempting to prove naysayers wrong by dispelling stereotypes through rigorous efforts, and developing two selves to survive in the world of academia and everyday life (Shavers & Moore, 2014a, 2014b). However, many of the same strategies led to a diminished quality of life (Shavers & Moore, 2014b).

The emerging concept from the studies by Shavers (2010) and Shavers and Moore (2014b) is known as the double-edged sword (DES). The authors espoused that the DES represented the sharp strategies Black women develop during graduate studies when facing two, often drastic, environments (Shavers & Moore, 2014b). The first setting is the academic environment where Black women regularly engage in strategies to ensure that educators and student colleagues will accept them as equals into the larger group, essentially producing an academic mask (Shavers & Moore, 2014a, 2014b). The second environment is the personal or community setting where Black women implement strategies that promote strength and stamina, thereby proving cynics wrong, producing what the authors call a "personal" or "other" self (Shavers & Moore, 2014a, 2014b). Consequently, researchers discovered that Black women credited the influence of the academic environment as well as the geographic region and community with much of their response to academic strategy development and connection to personal wellness (Jones et al., 2013; May, 2008; Morton, 2016; Nadal et al., 2014; Schwartz et al., 2003; Shavers & Moore, 2014a, 2014b).

Shavers and Moore (2014a, 2014b) developed qualitative inquiries related to the success of BWDS, finding that the most common academic strategy development tools used to reach success in academia simultaneously lead to a diminished quality of overall

mental, physical, emotional, and spiritual wellness. Such findings support this study in which I explored the relationship between academic strategy development, participants' region of upbringing, and microaggressions. With this study, I conceptualized my research findings through the foundational principles of the DES, bringing statistical significance to a largely empirical concept.

Considering the presented information, the rates of Black women enrolling in doctoral programs will continue to increase. As the percentage of BWDS increases, so does the need for counselor educators working with BWDS to understand and prepare for their experiences in academia as both students and future professionals. Thus, through this study, I provide guidance for counselor educators on how academic development strategies, unique to Black women, can influence academic success while also increasing the overall personal wellness of students as encouraged in both the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP, 2016) Standards and the American Counseling Association's (ACA, 2014) Code of Ethics.

After a systematic review of the literature, I have not found any research aimed at exploring the theoretical belief proposed in the BFT theory that oppressive experiences and academic success are related. Such a gap in the literature makes it difficult for BWDS to interpret their experiences and nearly impossible for educators, supervisors, and mentors to provide statistically significant guidance to BWDS in support of their doctoral journey. I aimed to fill the gap through this developed quantitative study addressing the presence of a relationship between microaggressions, participants' region

of upbringing, and academic strategy development among BWDS in counselor education programs.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this quantitative survey research study was to determine if a relationship exists between microaggressions experienced by BWDS enrolled in counselor education programs, participants' region of upbringing, and their academic strategy development methods. Moreover, I used the DES theory introduced by Shavers and Moore (2014b) as the conceptual framework to provide requisite information for counselor educators in their efforts to teach, supervise, mentor, and support BWDS in their doctoral experience. To do so, I researched the possible relationship between microaggressions, participants' region of upbringing, and academic strategy development.

I captured the independent variable (IV) and predictor variable (PV; microaggressions) using the Racial and Ethnic Microaggressions Scale (REMS; Nadal, 2011). Furthermore, I used a demographic questionnaire to capture the dependent variable (DV) and PV participants' region of upbringing. Finally, I captured the DV, academic strategy development, using the Learning and Study Strategies Inventory, 3rd Edition (LASSI, Weinstein et al., 1988).

Research Questions and Hypotheses

I explored the following research questions (RQ) in this study:

RQ1: Is there is a statistically significant negative relationship between microaggressive experiences as measured by the REMS and academic strategy

development as measured by the LASSI among BWDS enrolled in counselor education programs?

H_a1: There is a statistically significant negative relationship between microaggressive experiences as measured by the REMS and academic strategy development as measured by the LASSI among BWDS enrolled in counselor education programs in that as the level of experienced microaggressions increases, the strength of academic strategy development decreases.

H_01: There is not a statistically significant negative relationship between microaggressive experiences as measured by the REMS and academic strategy development as measured by the LASSI among BWDS enrolled in counselor education programs.

RQ2: Is there is a statistically significant negative relationship between region of upbringing as measured by a demographic question and academic strategy development as measured by the LASSI among BWDS enrolled in counselor education programs?

H_a2: There is a statistically significant negative relationship between region of upbringing as measured by a demographic question and academic strategy development as measured by the LASSI among BWDS enrolled in counselor education programs.

H_02: There is not a statistically significant negative relationship between region of upbringing as measured by a demographic question and academic strategy development as measured by the LASSI among BWDS enrolled in counselor education programs.

RQ3: Do microaggressions as measured by the REMS and region of upbringing as measured by a demographic question predict participants' academic strategy development scores as measured by the LASSI?

H_a3: Microaggressions as measured by the REMS and region of upbringing as measured by a demographic question do predict participants' academic strategy development scores as measured by the LASSI.

H_03: Microaggressions as measured by the REMS and region of upbringing as measured by a demographic question do not predict participants' academic strategy development scores as measured by the LASSI.

Conceptual Framework

I used the DES developed by Shavers and Moore (2014b) as the conceptual frame to guide this study. The DES concept references the weaponry image of the sword, which both defends and destroys (Shavers & Moore, 2014b). Ultimately, the DES espouses that the strategies developed and implemented by BWDS to navigate the doctoral experience have both positive and negative effects that work to propel the student academically while also having a critical outcome on their wellbeing (Shavers, 2010; Shavers & Moore, 2014a, 2014b).

While exploring this phenomenon, Shavers and Moore (2014b) discovered two emerging themes that serve as vital components of the DES. The first is the "prove-them-wrong" syndrome, which encompasses strategies that BWDS implore to "combat 'negative' stereotypes" associated with the level of preparation, determination, and success afforded people of color in academia (Shavers & Moore, 2014b). The second

theme is the “part-of-a-bigger-whole” syndrome, which is related to the need for BWDS to reach success, particularly achieving a doctoral degree for their communities (Shavers & Moore, 2014b). The researchers found that the more negative experiences BWDS faced, the sharper the edges of the sword, which proved beneficial in the academic setting and often detrimental in the personal lives of the women (Shavers & Moore, 2014b).

Such findings supported my hypothesis that microaggressive experiences are related to development of academic strategy development among BWDS. Furthermore, I used the themes from the DES framework in defining the variable academic strategy development beyond the scope of study skills. Finally, I used the foundational elements of the DES to develop my research questions and narrow down the variables I studied in this project. I discuss the DES in more detail in Chapter 2.

Theoretical Framework

I used the BFT theory, developed by Collins (1986), as a framework to discuss the data gathered from this study. In BFT, Collins (1986, 2000) addressed the importance of incorporating culture while studying Black women in the academic setting both as students and faculty (Collins, 1986, 2000; Jones et al., 2013; Patterson-Stephens & Vital, 2017; Shavers, 2010; Shavers & Moore, 2014a, 2014b). BFT posits that to assist Black women in growth and development, educators must understand how Black women understand oppression, cultural experiences, and working with other Black women (Collins, 1986, 2000). Furthermore, it is necessary to put aside the stereotypes of Black women to understand how their unique lived experiences shape their decisions (Allen & Lewis, 2016; Collins, 1986, 2000; Minnett et al., 2019; Shavers & Moore, 2014a, 2014b).

In this study, I tested the principles of BFT, specifically as it related to the role of oppressive behaviors in the journey to success for BWDS. I discuss the BFT in more detail in Chapter 2.

Nature of the Study

For this study, I used a quantitative survey methodology to determine the presence of a relationship between microaggressions, participants' region of upbringing, and academic strategy development among BWDS enrolled in counselor education programs. Based on the current literature, much of the focus on the experience of Black women in academia has been captured through the qualitative lens. Therefore, I used a quantitative lens to investigate the possibility of statistical significance of oppressive experiences and success for BWDS.

Quantitative researchers use numerical data to explore relationships and focus on the accuracy of the data collected (Rutberg & Bouikidis, 2018). In many cases, such as the one I presented with this study, researchers want to address an unanswered research question without manipulating variables. While observing the variables through a qualitative lens is an option, such actions do not result in understanding relationship. Keeping in mind the problem and purpose of this study, as well as the research questions presented here, my goal for this study was to determine the presence of a relationship between variables without manipulating them. Survey research methodologists have learned that the process of using standardized surveys to present questions to participants often results in statistically significant correlation information (Rutberg & Bouikidis, 2018).

In this study, I incorporated the strength of the survey research methodology model by assessing the proposed relationship between three variables: microaggressions, participants' region of upbringing, and academic strategy development. I used a demographic questionnaire and two measurement scales (REMS and LASSI) to develop a survey for participants. Through the use of said instruments and the survey research design, I gained an in depth understanding of BWDS in counselor education programs related to the experiences of microaggressions, the process of academic strategy development, and how participants' region of upbringing relates to them both.

I collected the data using Survey Monkey and the LASSI publishing program. Subsequently, I analyzed the data using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software. I used a Pearson correlation analysis to answer RQ1, a point biserial correlation to answer RQ2, which included a dichotomous variable, and a multiple linear regression to answer RQ3. Rutberg and Bouikidis (2018) explained that using correlation and regression designs often lead to accurate relationship findings. Therefore, to accurately assess the presented RQs I used a correlation and regression analyses.

Recently, researchers uncovered that many people of color display a form of resiliency in the face of microaggressions or covert racism as they have experienced an abundance of overt racism (May, 2008; Nadal et al., 2014; Schwartz et al., 2003). Therefore, I wanted to explore any potential statistically significant findings about said theory by assessing participants' region of upbringing in relation to both academic strategy development and microaggressions. I measured microaggressions using the REMS (see Nadal, 2011). Furthermore, I used the LASSI to measure academic strategy

development (see Weinstein et al., 1988). Finally, I measured region of upbringing using a demographic questionnaire.

Definitions

In this study, I examined specific terms that are important for the reader to understand. The terms include academic strategy development, BWDS, microaggressions, and participants' region of upbringing. I provide the definitions of these terms below.

Academic strategy development: Academic strategy development is the process of constructing tactics that lead students to success in learning development (Cano, 2006). Students' strategic process often includes behaviors, attitudes, motivations, and beliefs about ability, desire, and self-regulatory practices toward the academic experience (Weinstein et al., 2016).

Black women doctoral students (BWDS): BWDS are women who identify as Black or African American based on the United States Census Bureau's race and ethnicity characteristics and the female sex with either masculine or feminine traits. Said women should be enrolled in counselor education doctoral programs for a minimum of 1 year or recently graduated in the past year.

Microaggressions: Microaggressions are common interactions, both conscious and unconscious, that diminish the value of a person in the form of verbal and nonverbal communication (Hedin, 2018; Nadal, 2011; Nadal et al., 2014). In many ways, people use microaggressions to undermine, offend, and control the images and perceptions of minority groups (Pierce, 1970).

Region of upbringing: I used the United States Census Bureau to define the region of upbringing, which is the region within the United States where a person was raised for most of their life defined by specific areas. The areas include (a) West (AK, WA, OR, ID, NV, CA, AZ, NM, CO, WY, MT, HI), (b) Midwest (ND, SD, NE, KS, MO, IA, MN, WI, IL, IN, OH, MI), (c) Northeast (ME, VT, NH, MA, RI, CT, NJ, PA, NY), and (d) South (TX, OK, LA, AR, MS, AL, GA, SC, FL, TN, NC, KY, VA WV, DE, MD, DC).

Assumptions

For many research projects, scientists often overlook assumptions, undervaluing the significance they have in the process of the study (Babbie, 2017). However, it is important to note that I made several assumptions for this study. The first assumption was that BWDS can recognize the presence of microaggressions. Next, I assumed that I would find a strong representation of BWDS from each region of the United States as defined in the definition section above. Additionally, I assumed that microaggressions are related to academic strategy development as proposed in my hypotheses. Finally, I assumed that participants would answer the questions honestly given the anonymity of the study.

Scopes and Delimitations

The focus of the study was to look at the potential relationship between microaggressions, academic strategy development, and region of upbringing in BWDS currently enrolled in counselor education programs or within 1 year of graduation. The scope of this study was BWDS currently enrolled or recently graduated from counselor education programs. I produced my sample from BWDS across the United States, hoping

to increase the generalizability of the study beyond a specific region. The scope of the study was limited to only students from counselor education doctoral programs to better understand the experiences in the counselor education setting. The second delimitation was the exclusion of men and transgender people to fill the gap left open by many researchers related to the unique voices and experiences of Black women. Finally, the third delimitation was the exclusion of all other ethnicities outside of Black or African American.

Limitations

Although a quantitative study, the target population was extremely specific, which resulted in a lack of generalizability outside of BWDS. To improve the level of generalizability among BWDS, I surveyed participants from across the United States. Additionally, to recruit participants, I did not use a traditional probability method of sampling. Instead, I used a nonprobability sampling method, namely quota and snowball sampling as a random sampling method was not conducive to the nature of this study. Moreover, the researchers normed the LASSI on a population (undergraduate students) different from the target population (doctoral students) of this study. However, I located one study in which researchers studied the LASSI on graduate students since its development, thereby eliminating the need to conduct a pilot study (see Sinkavich, 1994).

Finally, I matched the characteristics of the population I studied in this project. I am a Black woman, raised in the Southern region of the United States, currently in the dissertation process of a counselor education and supervision doctoral program. Such a close relationship to the population could have influenced my view of the process and

subsequent results of the study. I eliminated the presence of researcher bias by using SPSS to analyze the data and reporting only the outcome presented from the analysis software.

Significance

Counselor educators, supervisors, and mentors have a professional responsibility to provide approaches to academic and career achievement that do not simultaneously result in the detriment of the well-being of the students, trainees, and supervisees (ACA, 2014; CACREP, 2016). Moreover, with the influx of asynchronous learning environments, counselor educators, supervisors, and mentors must be intentional about developing authentic and supportive relationships with students, specifically those more prone to oppressive experiences in the academic setting such a BWDS (Hedin, 2018; Patterson-Stephens & Vital, 2017). Finally, with the current state of our world, namely the United States, experiencing an influx of racial oppression, specifically toward Black people, counselor educators, supervisors, and mentors must work to create an academic environment in which Black people, specifically Black women, recognize that not only does their life matter but so does their educational experiences, knowledge, and unique voice in the academic setting. With said factors in mind, I presented this study based on the need to provide statistical evidence to counselor educators, supervisors, and mentors that support the work of qualitative researchers, which reveals that oppressive environments causally relate to the manner in which many BWDS navigate and strategize for academic development in the doctoral setting (ACA, 2014; CACREP, 2016; Hedin, 2018; Patterson-Stephens & Vital, 2017).

Specifically, in this study, I sought to reveal a statistically significant relationship between microaggressions, participants' region of upbringing, and academic strategy development among BWDS enrolled in counselor education programs. I hoped to provide evidence that supported the need for counselor educators, supervisors, mentors, and researchers to assess requirements, staff, and principles that potentially hinder the overall well-being and academic experience of BWDS. This study is significant and exclusive because I attempted to provide statistically significant evidence supporting a relationship between microaggressions, participants' region of upbringing, and academic strategy development among BWDS enrolled in counselor education programs using survey research methodology, thereby adding quantitative research to a field of largely qualitative work.

The results of this study might provide foundational literature about the connection between implicit biases in the form of microaggressions and strategy development among BWDS in counselor education programs. Such insights can bring about social change through improved professional and academic relationships between BWDS and counselor educators, supervisors, and mentors. Authentic and substantial relationships for BWDS in academia result in feelings of validation and improved quality of life while navigating the grueling experience of completing a doctoral degree (Bhat et al., 2012; Constantine et al., 2008; Jones et al., 2013; Patterson-Stephens & Vital, 2017; Shavers & Moore, 2014a, 2014b).

Based on the results of this study, researchers may be able to continue exploring specific strategies for BWDS that are toxic versus those that introduce academic success

while also promoting a strong, personal well-being. Moreover, I offer the information presented as an introduction of the double-edged strategies to academicians and other counseling professionals in an effort to increase the knowledge of said strategies in the breakdown of the personal self among BWDS. While said strategies can cut through the barriers of education leading to success for many BWDS, they can also abate the overall well-being of many BWDS (Shavers & Moore, 2014a, 2014b). This study could lead to positive social change because insights from this study have the potential to educate prospective mentors, counselor educators, and supervisors of BWDS enrolled in counselor education programs with understanding the various elements that influence BWDS' doctoral experience (see Shavers & Moore, 2014a, 2014b).

Summary

In this chapter, I provided a detailed outline of the research study. With a focus on identifying a significant relationship between microaggressions, participants' region of upbringing, and academic strategy development among BWDS enrolled in counselor education programs, I offered the problem and the plan to address the problem in the purpose of the study. Moreover, I provided the foundational questions that drove the study as well as the theoretical and conceptual frameworks that served as lenses for the project. I explored the nature of the study along with definitions of key terms, assumptions, scope, delimitations, and limitations I considered. Finally, I offered a stance on the significance of this study to the field of counselor education and social change. In the next chapter I provide an in-depth overview of the current literature supporting the

proposed project. I explore theory and concepts and synthesize the findings to produce a coherent argument for the need for this study.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Currently, there is a substantial lack of significant literature and resources related to the potential connection between oppressive experiences (i.e., microaggressions), cultural environments (i.e., participants' region of upbringing), and BWDS' strategies to succeed academically in doctoral programs (i.e., academic strategy development). Such a gap in the literature makes it difficult for BWDS to interpret their experiences and nearly impossible for educators, supervisors, and mentors to provide relevant guidance to BWDS in support of their doctoral journey. The number of Black women enrolling in doctoral programs, specifically in counselor education, is increasing on a grand scale (Jones et al., 2013; National Science Foundation, 2016). However, with the increase of people of color in higher education, many educators and students have reported more and more instances of microaggressions in the academic setting (Constantine et al., 2008; Hedin, 2018; Nadal et al., 2014; Shavers & Moore, 2014a, 2014b). Such experiences can lead to a diminished quality of life, which may potentially play a role in BWDS' ability to develop effective academic strategies (Morton, 2016; Nadal et al., 2014; Shavers & Moore, 2014a, 2014b).

In recent studies, Shavers and Moore (2014a, 2014b) studied BWDS, looking specifically at cultural practices and beliefs, and found that educational environments affected their overall experiences and success academically. The emerging concept from these studies is termed the DES, which purports that although harsh experiences and environments may sharpen BWDS' efforts towards academic success, such efforts often manipulate their quality of life (Shavers & Moore, 2014a, 2014b). Furthermore,

researchers have recognized that amid the development of academic strategies, Black women, particularly those in the Southern United States, experience various levels of oppression, including microaggressions, thereby indicating that regionally specific upbringings may influence the reactions of some to microaggressions in the doctoral process (May, 2008; Morton, 2016; Nadal et al., 2014; Schwartz et al., 2003). To this end, the researchers called for additional research inquiries to understand better how to provide guidance and balance to BWDS attempting to succeed, grow academically, and avoid diminished quality of life amid oppression and a rigorous academic environment (Shavers & Moore, 2014a, 2014b).

Therefore, my purpose for this quantitative survey research study was to determine if a relationship existed between microaggressions experienced by BWDS enrolled in counselor education programs, participants' region of upbringing, and their academic strategy development methods. Moreover, I explored the potential predictive measures of microaggressions and participants' region of upbringing (IVs) on academic strategy development (DV). To this end, I begin Chapter 2 with a brief description of my literary strategy, followed by an explanation of the theoretical and conceptual frameworks from which I approached this study. Finally, I include an in-depth review of the variables under study. My goal for this chapter was to provide the reader with understanding of the significant concepts that I used to address the problem.

Literature Search Strategy

I conducted a scholarly review of the literature using various electronic databases, peer-reviewed journal articles, and published books. I incorporated such databases as

PsychINFO, Academic Search Complete, ProQuest, EBSCOhost, and Google Scholar. Additionally, I reviewed the following journals: Educational and Psychological Measurement, Social Problems, Southern Quarterly, Gender and Education, Journal of Counseling Psychology, Harvard Educational Review, Academic Perspectives in Higher Education, VISTAS, Journal of Counseling and Development, International Journal of Doctoral Studies, Journal of Negro Development, Journal of College Student Development, The Journal of Values-Based Leadership, International Journal of Human-Computer Interaction, Journal of Feminist Scholarship; Frontiers in Psychology, Journal of Statistics Education, Counseling Outcome Research and Evaluation, Mid-Western Educational Research, Journal of Ethnic and Cultural Diversity in Social Work, Administrative Issues Journal, Journal of Culture and Education; Academic Press, and Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies. I also used the Walden University's library database to find specific articles in PDF format, digital object identifiers (DOIs), as well as relevant dissertations and theses using the Dissertations and Theses at Walden University database.

To narrow my results to relevant articles, journals, and books, I used the following search terms: *Black women in doctoral programs, counselor education, microaggressions and strategy development, academic strategy development, strategy development graduate school, Black feminist thought, Black counselor educators, Black students in counseling programs; Black woman in graduate programs; learning strategies in academia, learning strategies in graduate programs, Black doctoral students, microaggressions in graduate programs, microaggressions in doctoral*

programs, microaggressions in counseling, microaggressions and counselor education, BFT in counseling programs, Black feminism and feminism in academia, microaggressions and well-being, microaggressions and Black students, microaggressions and Black women, Black women barriers to success, the doubled-edged sword, and *Black women students in the South*. Additionally, I added other terms to counselor education to locate articles that incorporated the variables under study, such as Black women, microaggressions, strategies for success, and region. Apart from relevant historical data such as those connected to theory, I used Google Scholar to narrow my search for scholarly articles within 5 years. Finally, I used citation chaining to explore recent and applicable articles to ensure saturation of the literature.

Conceptual Framework

For this study, I explain the direction of the research, the proposed relationships among the variables, and my position on the research problem and questions through the concept of the DES developed by authors Shavers and Moore (2014a, 2014b). The DES is a concept that emerged from the work of author Shavers (2010) in her dissertation examining the voices of Black women at predominantly White institutions (PWIs). From this initial work, Shavers (2010) and Shavers and Moore (2014a) uncovered seven pivotal themes, eventually leading to her discovery of the concept of the DES, describing the experience of oppression in the face of an intersectional identity (Phelps-Ward et al., 2017). The initial themes included "(a) outsider, (b) perception of tokenism, (c) shifting: the academic mask, (d) prove-them-wrong syndrome, (e) part of a bigger whole, (f) expectation versus reality, and (g) discouragement versus encouragement" (Shavers,

2010, p. 3). In a later study, Shavers and Moore (2014a) identified these themes as different masks or "selves" that Black women took on to survive in academia. Black women used said survival strategies, which the authors called coping or resiliency approaches, to excel in the academic setting (Shavers, 2010; Shavers & Moore, 2014a). However, while the coping strategies led to academic success, they simultaneously contributed to a diminished sense of wellbeing or quality of life, thus the term DES (Shavers & Moore, 2014b).

The DES concept references the weaponry image of the sword, which both defends and destroys (Shavers & Moore, 2014b). Ultimately, the DES espouses that the strategies developed and implemented by Black women to navigate the academic experience have both positive and negative effects that work to propel the student academically while also having a critical outcome on their wellbeing (Shavers & Moore, 2014a, 2014b). In recent studies, where researchers interviewed Black women in academia as both students and faculty, many participants articulated the role of microaggressions in their diminished sense of self-worth and self-efficacy (Constantine et al., 2008; Nadal et al., 2014; Patterson-Stephens & Vital, 2017; Schwartz et al., 2003; Shavers, 2010; Shavers & Moore, 2014a, 2014b). However, while the work of Shavers and Moore (2014a, 2014b) implied that microaggressions affected the lived experiences of Black woman, no studies revealed, with statistical significance, the presence of a relationship between the experience of microaggressions and strategies specific to academic development and success. I explored the relationship between the oppressive

experience of microaggressions, participants' region of upbringing, and academic strategy development with said conceptual definition in mind.

Shavers and Moore (2014b) happened upon two emerging themes that make up the DES concept and further articulated the framework for this study. The first theme is the "prove-them-wrong" syndrome in which Black women academics work tirelessly to dispel false truths about mental stamina related to their success in academia (Shavers, 2010; Shavers & Moore, 2014b). Many participants in Shavers and Moore's study described the prove-them-wrong syndrome as sheer determination or an extreme amount of focus on mental and physical stamina to stay the course. However, many researchers reported that while many BWDS used such extremes to succeed academically, even in the face of oppression, the aftermath for most BWDS was psychological and emotional distress (Constantine et al., 2008; Nadal et al., 2014; Patterson-Stephens & Vital, 2017; Shavers, 2010; Shavers & Moore, 2014, 2014b). To that end, I discuss the results of RQ1 with the realization that I cannot exclude the determination of BWDS based on the prove-them-wrong syndrome when exploring the relationship between academic strategy development, participants' region of upbringing, and microaggressions.

The second theme of the DES concept is the "part-of-a-bigger-whole" syndrome. In her initial study, Shavers (2010) described the emergence of the part-of-a-bigger-whole syndrome as the process of continuous connection to family and community. To understand how BWDS approach academic coping strategies, the researchers discovered that many women believe the process was larger than themselves and, in many ways, academic success was not just their own victory but also a cultural (i.e., family and

community) victory (Shavers, 2010; Shavers & Moore, 2014a, 2014b). Therefore, the authors described the part-of-a-bigger-whole syndrome as a communal mentality that many BWDS used to propel them to success. Many also reported feelings of fear and shame at the thought of discontinuing the doctoral process before completion, ultimately letting down the community (Shavers, 2010; Shavers & Moore, 2014b). Moreover, BWDS reported feeling disconnected from faculty and classmates who did not relate to or respect the communal mentality in which they approached the doctoral experience, which was a significant connector between the part-of-a-bigger-whole syndrome and this study. I used the qualitative experiences in which the authors discovered the part-of-a-bigger-whole theme to assess the results of this study, specifically RQ2 and RQ3.

Ultimately, researchers found BWDS faced negative academic experiences resulting in the development of the DES used to dispel stereotypes and support the communal mindset of success. I used the themes within the DES concept to unpack the results of the quantitative survey research study looking for relationship among microaggressions, region of upbringing, and academic strategy development My goal was to add to the literature on the DES concept by better understanding the process and implementation of the DES syndromes in the academic experiences of BWDS.

Theoretical Foundation

I used the BFT theoretical perspective, developed by Collins (1986), to discuss the analysis of this study as well as the framework from which I viewed the operationalization of all variables under study. Collins, developed BFT based on the phenomenon of the “outsider within” perspective, which indicates Black women share in

the knowledge of the lived experiences of the majority (i.e., White women, White men, and Black men) but are not invited into the conversation related to their unique experiences. Collins (1986, 2000) believes the power of the unbiased outside perspective is maintained by Black women, and theorized they could couple it with their lived experiences to provide a unique and essential perspective of the world. Such a perspective became the foundation for BFT in which Collins used the elements of the theory to give voice to the experiences, both empowering and oppressive, barriers, creativity, and thought processing from the distinctive standpoint of the Black woman (Collins, 1986, 2000; Patterson et al., 2017; Shavers & Moore, 2014a, 2014b).

For many years, feminist theorists (i.e., mainly White women) suggested there was no obligation to identify the feminist needs and thoughts of women outside the majority groups by considering ethnicity and race, thereby silencing the many experiences of Black women (Allen & Lewis, 2016; Collins, 1986, 2000). In many cases, feminist thinkers offered the Black female perspective through the voice of White women or Black men, further ostracizing a large group of people (Allen & Lewis, 2016; Collins, 1986, 2000). Consequently, intellectuals often deem the Black female voice inconsequential, if acknowledged at all (Jones et al., 2013).

Considering the rapid pace at which the Black female began disintegrating, Collins (1986) found it critical to capture the voices, thoughts, experiences, and feelings of Black women before they were lost. Therefore, BFT suggests Black women have unique experiences in society that include the intersectionality of intellectual thoughts and beliefs, racial and gender encounters, and socially oppressive happenings that are

pertinent to understanding how the Black female exists, thrives, and suffers in the world (Allen & Lewis, 2016; Collins, 1986, 2000; Jones et al., 2013; Patterson et al., 2017; Shavers & Moore, 2014a, 2014b). To present the complexity of Black women through BFT, Collins (2000) proposed three critical themes of BFT: the self-definition and valuation of Black women, the nature of oppression in the life of the Black woman, and the necessity of understanding the cultural experiences of Black women.

As stated earlier, the voices of Black women have been on the verge of extinction in the presence of feminism centered on the White female experience and male-dominant cultural practices. Therefore, defining and valuing the voice and presence of Black women is essential to understanding how to interact with, teach, and support Black women in society and academia. The process of self-defining through BFT begins with the inclusion of Black female voices and faces as the standard for characterizing Black women as opposed to stereotypes designed by society (Collins, 1986, 2000). Shavers and Moore (2014b) took the process a step further by stating that the inclusion of the lived experiences of Black women in academia, scholarly publications, and education forced many to challenge the acceptance of stereotypes and reassess the value many placed on Black women in the past. Moreover, the process of defining and valuing Black women is not simply replacing bad images with good images but rather replacing untruths with truths that can only come from the powerful voices of Black women (Collins, 1986, 2000).

A large part of defining Black women is understanding their oppressive experiences. For many years feminist theorists attempted to define the Black woman's

oppressive experiences by excluding the unique role of race and ethnicity (Allen & Lewis, 2016; Boux, 2016; Collins, 1986, 2000). However, the insight of oppression specific to the lived experiences of Black women make them experts in defining their interactions and reactions in everyday life (Shavers & Moore, 2014a, 2014b). Understanding the power of such oppressive experiences, I recognized the value of approaching this study through the lens of Black women's expertise in interconnecting oppressions in academia, which is offered only through the theoretical foundation of BFT.

In a study related to preparing Black women for the profession in academia Jones et al. (2013) used BFT to understand better how the idiosyncratic cultural influences of Black women defined their socialization in the setting of academia. The authors found that it is nearly impossible to understand how Black women evolve in academia based on stereotypes that do not include the expertise of the cultural understandings of Black women. Additionally, Allen and Lewis (2016) found the more researchers, educators, leaders, and professionals leave out the voice of Black women, the more professional and social systems will default to the negative stereotypes of Black women. An example of such is found in the updated version of the "mammy" now termed the "Black lady." Collins (2000) described the "Black lady" as the hardest working in the profession, working twice as hard to make ends meet with a constant reliance on the government for support. Such controlling images of Black women leave very little room for the truth about cultural experiences and positions on work ethic in professional settings, specifically academia. Considering the potential for such damaging images to permeate

this study, I incorporated the third and final principle of Collins' (1986, 2000) BFT, which posits that to understand how to assist and support Black women, we must include their voices related to their culturally oppressive experiences.

Literature Review

In this section, I describe noteworthy variables that I used to explore the state of Black girls in academia, specifically doctoral programs. I began this section by describing the population of BWDS in general and, more specifically, in counselor education programs. Next, I use relevant literature to clarify the meaning of microaggressions within this study. Furthermore, I provide a detailed description of academic strategy development in doctoral education. Finally, I explore the connection and significance of participants' region of upbringing in the United States and how that related to this study.

Black Women Doctoral Students

To describe the complexity of clarifying the definition of Black women, I turn to Generett and Jeffries' (2003) quote in which they ask, "How does one understand the 'other' when she is the 'other' and few have been able to articulate a definition of 'other' that is acceptable to her and from which she can begin the understanding process?" (p. 3). For years researchers, academic professionals, and societal leaders have overlooked the experiences of Black women and the overall effect Black women's experiences had on their choices in lifestyle, profession, and self-care practices. The results of the oversight led to a diminished understanding of the Black woman as an individual, apart from Black men and apart from other women. Moreover, the Black woman as a doctoral student, was only an imagined idea until 1921, when the first Black women earned doctoral degrees

(Minnett et al., 2019). Many researchers have reported that even though it has been nearly 100 years since Black women have been earning doctoral degrees, the barriers to success and overall wellness have not diminished (Allen & Lewis, 2016; Collins, 1986; Minnett et al., 2019).

With the influx of stereotypical outlooks, many view Black women as strong "workhorses" able to withstand any pressure without assistance while also questioning their ability to reach such high standards (Collins, 1986; Minnett et al., 2019; Shavers, 2010). Adapting to and navigating the doctoral process is nearly impossible when faced with such a dichotomy. The result of such extreme outlooks of Black women in doctoral programs is lack of mentorship, lack of Black women voices in research on positive doctoral experiences, lack of promotions in academia, and increased oppressive experiences such as microaggressions and blatant racism (Allen & Lewis, 2016; Collins, 1986; Constantine et al., 2008; Generett & Jeffries, 2003; Jones et al., 2013; Minnett et al., 2019; Patterson-Stephens & Vital, 2017).

Many researchers have contributed the presence of seemingly insurmountable barriers in the doctoral process among many Black women, to oppressive experiences, either underlying or on the surface (Bhat et al., 2012; Jones et al., 2013; Minnett et al., 2019; Patterson-Stephens & Vital, 2017; Shavers, 2010; Shavers & Moore, 2014a, 2014b). In their studies on BWDS enrolled in PWIs, authors, Shavers (2010) and Shavers and Moore (2014a, 2014b) reported microaggressions, such as stereotypes and isolation, diminished the quality of life for BWDS. Additionally, authors noted Black women often used the oppression faced in the classroom, workplace, and social settings to tap into the

dangerous stereotype of being strong against all the odds (Collins, 1986; Minnett et al., 2019; Shavers, 2010; Shavers & Moore, 2014a, 2014b). Most scholars expect such strength from Black women, which in turn, creates situations in which people make assumptions such as “she is okay” or “she is strong, she’ll get through this,” often overlooking the mental angst that comes with pursuing a doctoral education as a Black woman.

Minnett et al. (2019) discovered that mental angst often experienced by BWDS not only emerged from within but also from the outside experiences of the doctoral process such as the lack of mentoring forums and communal approaches. Considering such limitations, BWDS designed what the researchers referred to as radical coping, which is similar to Shavers and Moore's (2014b) discovery of sharp strategies that propel BWDS to success (Minnett et al., 2019). The authors of said studies, as well as others, set the groundwork for further research of BWDS and the relationship between microaggressions, participants’ region of upbringing, and academic strategy development (Minnett et al., 2019; Nadal et al., 2014; Shavers, 2010; Shavers & Moore, 2014a, 2014b).

Researchers (Minnett et al., 2019; Nadal et al., 2014; Shavers, 2010; Shavers & Moore, 2014a, 2014b) proved that BWDS can still be successful in critical and demanding settings, but the question remains, do such experiences relate to their approach to academic strategy development? As I presented earlier, the only way to present a culturally accurate and significant response to the questions studied here related to Black women is to continue to speak to Black women and allow them to offer their

experiences in academia (Collins, 1986, 2000). Therefore, I explored the possibility of a relationship between microaggressions, participants' region of upbringing, and academic strategy development by surveying BWDS, keeping their voices, perspectives, experiences, and undertakings at the forefront of research.

Black Women Doctoral Students in Counselor Education Programs

To date, very few researchers have explored the barriers to BWDS in counselor education programs. After a comprehensive search of the literature, I found studies on BWDS in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) related programs, master's level counseling and psychology programs, PWIs, and doctoral level education programs (Felder & Barker, 2013; Jones et al., 2013; Minnett et al., 2019; Patterson-Stephens & Vital, 2017; Schwartz et al., 2003; Shavers, 2010; Shavers & Moore, 2014a, 2014b). All investigators reported adverse experiences for Black women, people of color, and minorities. Some offered qualitative accounts of microaggressions influencing academic performance and wellbeing (Nadal et al., 2017; Riddell, 2017). Still, other investigators identified the overwhelming lack of support afforded to Black women pursuing degrees in higher education (Minnett et al., 2019; Schwartz et al., 2003). However, there remains a paucity of inquiries dedicated to exploring the relationship between microaggressions, participants' region of upbringing, and academic strategy development of BWDS in programs such as counselor education guided by ethical principles that promote both wellness and professional development.

A few years back, Shavers and Moore (2014a, 2014b) studied 15 BWDS using a grounded theory approach to answer questions about perception related to their academic

experience and how such experiences supported or diminished their well-being and academic persistence. Participants reported a constant imbalance between academic images and personal images, reporting minimal space in the academic setting for their personal characteristics. Moreover, Shavers and Moore shared the participants' stories of exhaustion, defeat, and mental anguish due to the lack of support at PWIs as well as rigor of the doctoral process. By presenting such rich anecdotal evidence surrounding challenging experiences and academic achievement, the authors laid substantial groundwork for the current study. Nevertheless, the researchers left a gap in research literature related to generalizability (e.g., among counselor education students) with the use of such a small sample group as well as the absence of objectivity and no concrete evidence reporting a relationship between adverse experiences (namely microaggressions) and academic development. Therefore, I addressed some of the limitations and charge left by Shavers and Moore through a quantitative analysis, a greater sample size, and an exploration of doctoral students in counselor education programs.

In many ways Bhat et al. (2012) began the conversation I continued with my study when they assessed 12 BWDS in counseling programs, specifically focusing on their experiences at PWIs. The researchers discovered that one of the major themes for BWDS in counselor education programs was discrimination and prejudice, including dispelling myths and working to legitimize their place in the program (Bhat et al., 2012). The authors called upon counselor educators to focus on creating a culture of inclusion by gaining a better grasp of the needs of BWDS. Furthermore, Bhat et al. urged other

researchers to study the challenges BWDS face in counselor education programs focusing specifically on how they alter the journey to success and wholeness for BWDS. I answered the call by Bhat et al. with this study.

For this study, I specifically looked at BWDS in counselor education programs as guidance for counselor educators related to assisting BWDS in developing academic strategies that do not simultaneously diminish their quality of life. Students enrolled in doctoral counselor education programs are expected to adhere to the guidelines set forth by two governing bodies, the ACA and the CACREP. Governing bodies of both ACA (2014) and CACREP (2016) call upon professionals and students to remain competent in their respective fields while practicing self-care. One of the many ways students choose to improve or expand competency in the counseling field is through continued education, namely advanced degrees. In the field of counseling, no degree is more grueling than a doctoral degree. Given the built-in ethical guidelines for counselor educators and counseling students, there was a need to understand if barriers such as microaggressions and participants' region of upbringing, are related to the academic strategy development methods of students, namely BWDS in the counselor education setting.

Microaggressions

After an exhaustive search of the literature, I found that BWDS are overwhelmingly affected by the lack of mentoring and microaggressions in the academic setting (Bhat et al., 2012; Felder & Barker, 2013; Hedin, 2018; Minnett et al., 2019; Nadal et al., 2014; Patterson-Stephens & Vital, 2017; Shavers, 2010; Shavers & Moore, 2014a, 2014b). For this study, I focused on the adverse effects of microaggressions.

Black women doctoral students report the experience of microaggressions from peers and staff such as isolation, lack of cultural awareness, assumptions, and the application of harmful stereotypes as the most influential on their academic success (Jones et al., 2013; Minnett et al., 2019; Patterson-Stephens & Vital, 2017; Shavers, 2010; Shavers & Moore, 2014a, 2014b). In many cases, researchers have reported that BWDS use said experiences to prove others wrong by reaching success or taking a step back from the doctoral process (Minnett et al., 2019; Shavers, 2010; Shavers & Moore, 2014a, 2014b). Such extreme reactions to definitively subtle oppressive experiences warrant further study.

For this study, I define microaggressions as common interactions, both conscious and unconscious, that diminish the value of a person in the form of verbal and nonverbal communication (Hedin, 2018; Nadal, 2011; Nadal et al., 2014). Pierce (1970) coined the term microaggressions to describe the undermining, sometimes calculated, and grossly offensive mechanisms White people used to control the image, perceptions, and beliefs about Black people. At the time, many scholars reported that struggles with race relations were at an all-time high, thus resulting in insurmountable barriers to peace among the Black and White groups. Through their pivotal work, Pierce et al. (1977) found that majority groups reduce their use of macro-aggressions such as lynchings, burning churches, and hosing, and resort instead to more controlling inconspicuous actions such as isolating Black people from lifestyle activities including sports clubs or restaurants, withholding promotions and educational privileges, and using manipulative forces in positions of power, ultimately creating an imbalance in power (Pierce, 1970; Pierce et al., 1977). In his initial work, Pierce categorized microaggressions as offensive mechanisms

designed to introduce people of color to a game for which they had no rules and that they were inherently set up to lose. Pierce reported many Black people who were able to find success amid microaggressions often enact defensive mechanisms to combat the offensive characteristics of microaggressions. Such defensive mechanisms included militancy and submitting to a consistent position of guarding one's mental, physical, and emotional space (Pierce, 1970). Pierce expressed suspicion about such strategies, stating that while the people engaging in those strategies may be able to combat microaggressions for the moment, the offensive players (namely White people presenting microaggressions) remain prepared for the defensive nature of Black people and always came out the winner of the figurative game. Although, the information Pierce provided was pivotal to understanding microaggressions for this study, he leaves much to the imagination of the reader concerning how to effectively approach microaggressions, specifically among Black people. Based on Pierce's research, I realized the need for such information was still warranted in 2020 as much as it was in 1970 with the rise of race relations in politics, the justice system, the educational system, and churches across the United States. Although Pierce later joined forces with colleagues to view the presence of microaggressions in the media, he did not get the chance to continue following the presence and influence of microaggressions as time progressed, leaving significant questions about the relationship of microaggressions to various elements, including the process of developing strategies for academic success.

Recent researchers discovered that many people of color, specifically Black women, experienced microaggressions in many forms in the academic setting (Allen &

Lewis, 2016; Constantine et al., 2008; Hedin, 2018; Nadal et al., 2014; Shavers, 2010; Shavers & Moore, 2014a, 2014b). Some reported such forms as a game of keep-away in which leading academicians constantly moved the line of success or failed to recognize and appreciate the path to success chosen by Black women (Allen & Lewis, 2016; Constantine et al., 2008; Hedin, 2018; Nadal et al., 2014; Shavers, 2010; Shavers & Moore, 2014a, 2014b). Others reported the presence of tokenism, leading to hypervisibility or invisibility (Constantine et al., 2008).

Constantine et al. (2008) used an interpretative phenomenological design to develop semi-structured interview questions posed to 12 Black doctoral level counseling faculty. The researchers studied the perceived experiences of the participants concerning microaggressions. The participants described such microaggressive experiences as lack of mentoring, feeling invisible, and experiences of being singled out because of their skin color. While the findings presented by Constantine et al. support much of the current literature and the operational definition of microaggression I used in this study, the authors failed to connect the findings to a significant question of influence or connection to the strategies for success doctoral staff needed to succeed in the academic setting.

On the other hand, Nadal et al. (2014) used a survey research design to study 225 undergraduate students for the purpose of exploring microaggressions as a predictor of low-self-esteem. Moreover, the researchers focused on specific types of microaggressions and reactions of diverse groups to microaggressions. The researchers presented well-defined research questions resulting in significant relationship findings. Nadal et al. found a significant negative correlation between racial microaggressions and self-esteem,

showing that as microaggressions increased, self-esteem decreased. Additionally, the authors noted participants reported educational and workplace microaggressions as the most harmful. Finally, the researchers discovered different ethnic groups have diverse experiences with microaggressions. I found such results critical in supporting the role of microaggression in academic strategy development. However, the authors did not capture the voice of the graduate student, specifically the doctoral student. The rigor of the doctoral program is vital in understanding how microaggressions relate to academic strategy development.

Given the absence of the doctoral student voice presented in the studies above, the findings by Shavers and Moore (2014b) proved crucial in capturing the presence of microaggressions and the influential nature of such adverse oppressive experiences on academic success among BWDS. The authors found that Black women reported extravagant amounts of microaggressive experiences as influential elements of their strategic choices and attempts to succeed academically. Such experiences by BWDS often hindered the various elements of academic strategy development needed to survive the doctoral process.

Several elements exist in academic strategy development, which I discuss in the next section. Shavers and Moore (2014a, 2014b) found that negative experiences, both outside and within the academic setting, greatly affected the doctoral journey among BWDS. I expand on their work by looking specifically at the relationship of microaggressions concerning the elements of academic strategy development. With Pierce's (1970) thoughts in mind, that microaggressions are learned over time, and

Nadal's (2011) idea that microaggressions are often subtle and perceived as misunderstandings, my goal was to clarify the diminishing qualities of microaggressions among BWDS in counselor education programs based on the results of RQ1 and RQ3.

Academic Strategy Development

With the overwhelming research data revealing the role of the adverse experiences in the learning environment, specifically among BWDS, it was imperative to explore the process of developing learning strategies to understand how negative experiences affect the process of developing academically. Academic strategy development is the process of constructing tactics that lead to success in the learning process (Cano, 2006). Developers of the LASSI called such tactics learning strategies, which include "behaviors, attitudes, motivations, and beliefs" about a person's ability, desire, and self-regulatory practices towards the learning experience in the academic setting (Weinstein et al., 2016, p. 6).

Academic strategy development is an understudied term specifically related to BWDS in counselor education programs. To date, no researcher has ever used the LASSI to understand the development of learning strategies among BWDS. Nevertheless, the need to understand the process and the potential barrier to the process is high. In their work exploring the DES, which points to the positive and negative experiences of BWDS in the doctoral journey, Shavers and Moore (2014b) discovered one of the many elements of the process that is greatly affected by adverse experiences is academic strategy development. Participants in Shavers and Moore's (2014a, 2014b) studies reported diminished skill self-efficacy in some cases as well as increased will to succeed at all

costs. Some participants experienced both drastically different perceptions of self throughout the doctoral journey, leading to reduced wellness and acts of self-care.

In an older study, and the only one in which researchers used the LASSI on graduate-level students, Sinkavich (1994) used a correlation design to study 45 graduate-level educational psychology students and determine the presence of a relationship between student motivation and the development of learning strategies. Sinkavich found significant correlations and realized the level of motivation students had about the learning process could predict their progression of academic strategy development and subsequent learning strategies (Sinkavich, 1994). However, Sinkavich failed to offer evidence related to barriers to motivation which could influence the way motivation relates to academic strategy development. Although more recent researchers studied and presented substantial findings associated with the power of microaggressions in affecting the academic motivation of students in the learning environment (Constantine et al., 2016; Hedin, 2018; Minnett et al., 2019; Nadal et al., 2014; Shavers & Moore, 2014b), much of the current literature is anecdotal. To provide a direction for educators and students concerning developing appropriate and effective strategies, I offered a statistical approach to the exploration of relationship among variables.

Students' development of appropriate and effective academic strategies during the doctoral process is imperative, specifically for BWDS facing many other barriers to success. Previous researchers repeatedly purported that many factors could alter the process of students' academic strategy development (Constantine et al., 2016; Hedin, 2018; Minnett et al., 2019; Nadal et al., 2014; Shavers & Moore, 2014b). In such cases, it

is vital to have literature to support the notion that certain adverse experiences, situations, and environments can have an influential impact on the process of academic strategy development. Adding to the work of previous authors with this study, I offered a space to explore the questions surrounding the process of developing the skill, will, and self-regulation to create successful learning strategies in a doctoral setting among Black women faced with microaggressions and in various regions of upbringing.

First, I used the voice of the Black women by gauging their current academic strategy development with the results from the LASSI which focuses on skill, will and self-regulation. Next, I incorporated the REMS to present numerical data highlighting the various characteristics of microaggressive experiences, uniquely experiences by BWDS. Collins (1986, 2000) consistently mentioned the importance of the Black female voice and further proposed that the lack of said voice resulted in underdeveloped ideals of Black women. Researchers confirmed that many academicians used the underdeveloped ideals to gauge how they approached Black women in the academic setting (Allen & Lewis, 2016; Bhat et al., 2012; Minnett et al, 2019; Shavers & Moore, 2014a, 2014b). With this study, my goal was to provide evidence to improve the quality of the Black female voice in research and in academia, reducing the need to rely on stereotypes.

Region of Upbringing

For this study, I define region of upbringing as the region within the United States where a person was raised for most of their life. For years, people in the world applied characteristics to others based on their race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, culture, and in many cases regional heritage. Recently in her study on the power of Southern

Womanism, Morton (2016) indicated that women from certain regions, particularly the Southern United States, viewed and approached the world vastly differently. Moreover, May (2008) described the life and works of activist Anna Julia Cooper within the boundaries and barriers placed upon her by Southern majority groups. While many attributed much of the nation's issues with racism and other oppressive acts, (i.e., discrimination and microaggressions), to the Southern United States, researchers have proven that students experience forms of oppression across the United States (Morton, 2016; Stewart, 2019).

For instance, Stewart (2019) studied six Black doctoral students at a mid-western university. Stewart wanted to document the similarities and differences among the students' experience with racism and race-based traumatic stress. Using four research questions exploring the experience of racism on and off campus, the main perpetuators of the racist acts, and the impact the acts had on the students, the researcher proposed that many students in the mid-west could not readily identify specific examples of racism, yet they knew racism was present (Stewart, 2019). Moreover, the researcher found that out of the six participants studied only one reported that the experience with racism and race-based traumatic stress did not affect her overall wellness. Stewart provided valuable support related to the inclusion of participants' region of upbringing in my study. However, Stewart failed to provide statistical significance to the potential relationship between adverse experiences in the academic setting and participants' region of upbringing. Therefore, I aimed to understand if participants' region of upbringing was

significantly correlated to academic strategy development or if it predicted the level of microaggressions experienced by BWDS in counselor education doctoral programs.

Summary and Conclusions

The studies I cite and the terms I explore here articulate the complexity of the doctoral experience for many Black women. Moreover, the research I present in the literature review represents a connection among microaggressions, academic strategy development, and region of upbringing among BWDS in counselor education doctoral programs. I present several instances where researchers confirmed, through a qualitative lens, the influence of adverse experiences such as isolation, hypervigilance, invisibility, and diminished quality of life for BWDS (Bhat et al., 2012; Collins, 1986; Constantine et al., 2008; Felder & Barker, 2013; Minnett et al., 2019; Patterson-Stephens & Vital, 2017; Shavers, 2010; Shavers & Moore, 2014a, 2014b; Stewart, 2019). Even with this overabundance of literature related to the connection mentioned above, researchers continue to overlook the need for statistically sound evidence to support the experiences of BWDS, particularly in counselor education programs. The current study addresses the gap by exploring the wellness of Black girls in academia through research on the relationship between microaggressions and academic strategy development among Black women doctoral students.

In the following chapter, I propose the use of a quantitative survey research method to answer three research questions designed to determine the presence of a statistically significant relationship among microaggressions, region of upbringing, and

academic strategy development. Additionally, I identify the sample population, sampling method, data collection method, and the data analysis process.

Chapter 3: Research Method

The purpose of this quantitative survey research study was to determine if a relationship existed among microaggressions experienced by BWDS enrolled in counselor education programs, region of upbringing, and academic strategy development methods. I used the BFT theory in the data analysis process as the foundation for operationalizing the variables. Moreover, I used the DES theory introduced by Shavers and Moore (2014b) as the conceptual framework to provide requisite information for counselor educators in their efforts to teach, supervise, mentor, and support BWDS in their doctoral experience by offering a study that addresses the possible relationship among microaggressions, region of upbringing, and academic strategy development for BWDS.

In this chapter, I describe a quantitative survey research methodology and provide a rationale for choosing a quantitative approach for this study. I operationalize the variables under study and their alignments with the research design choice. I identify the population and sample size as well as describe the procedures for sampling and recruitment. Moreover, I describe and operationalize the instruments I used during the data collection, including identifying the reliability and validity of the instruments I used in this study. Next, I discuss the analytic strategies and techniques for the study, such as statistical tests, the use of covariates, and the interpretation of intervals, ratios, and values. Finally, I present threats to internal and external validity as well as ethical procedures.

Research Design and Rationale

This was a quantitative study using a nonexperimental survey research design. My goal for this study was to collect statistical data using psychometrically robust instruments to assess the presence of a relationship among academic strategy development (DV), participants' region of upbringing (IV), and microaggressions (IV) amid BWDS enrolled in counselor education doctoral programs. I used a Pearson correlation analysis to ascertain the relationship hypotheses in RQ1 and a point biserial correlation analysis for RQ2. For RQ3 I used a multiple linear regression analysis to determine whether the IVs predicted the participants' scores on the DV. I measured academic strategy development using the LASSI developed by Weinstein et al. (1988) to assess the awareness of students' strategies for learning related to skill, will, and self-regulation. I measured BWDS' experiences with microaggressions with the REMS developed by Nadal (2011) to quantitatively assess the microaggressions BWDS experience. Lastly, I captured participants' region of upbringing using a demographic questionnaire.

I chose a nonexperimental survey research design because I did not observe, manipulate, or intervene with the constructs described above. According to Glasgow (2005), researchers using a survey research methodology can "establish a baseline against which future comparisons can be made" such as the process of investigating relationships between variables (p. 1-1). I recognized one of the main advantages of using a survey research design for this study was the systematic technique of gathering information from a sample group to produce statistically significant results that support the larger

population of BWDS (see Glasgow, 2005; Groves et al., 2009). Because survey research designs require the researcher to produce such large sample groups, the disadvantages include threats to external validity due to unforeseen outliers during sampling and results that do not render cause (Groves et al., 2009). With a survey research design, I studied and collected responses to multiple variables from participants and explored relationships between the IVs and DV.

Additionally, depending on the starting time of the data collection process, I considered the possibility of encountering barriers related to identifying participants, particularly those attending schools in the traditional format (i.e., brick and mortar). Issues such as summer or winter break could have delayed my ability to contact participants during this time period. Additionally, the start and continuation of a global medical pandemic and national social unrest directed towards Black Americans in the United States greatly influenced the time it took to reach my target sample size. I wanted to guarantee appropriate participant size by looking at participants within several different groupings (i.e., participants who live in different regions of the United States). I achieved my research goals by considering the value of survey research studies for analyzing relationships among variables and producing statistically significant numerical findings.

Methodology

In this section, I address the several concepts related to the methodology of the research. I begin by describing the participants under study, including the population, sampling procedures, and recruitment methods. I continue with a description of the

instruments I used in this study as well as the operationalization of the constructs in this study. Finally, I describe the data analysis process and restate the research questions.

Population

The population for this study consisted of BWDS enrolled in counselor education programs for at least 1 year or who have completed their studies in the past year. To fulfill the requirements of this study, participants were or had been enrolled in online or traditionally formatted programs across the United States. The participants varied in age and identified as Black or African American and of the female sex with either masculine or feminine gender traits. I excluded the male sex and transgender populations and all other ethnicities that can also be described as Black (e.g., Black Hispanic).

As of 2017, the CACREP (2017) reported approximately 3,000 enrolled or graduated students in counselor education doctoral programs across the United States. Black women made up 20% or 600 enrollees or recent graduates as of 2017 (see CACREP, 2017). Based on this information, I was able capture a significant sample size for this study.

Sampling and Sampling Procedures

For this study, I used nonprobability sampling methods, namely quota and snowball sampling. I chose these two sampling procedures based on the predetermined characteristics of the sample, which I used to generalize to the population with the same characteristics (see Creswell, 2014; Taherdoost, 2016). I paired snowball sampling with quota sampling to increase the chance of meeting the required sample size to ensure

validity and generalizability for the population I studied (see Creswell, 2014; Taherdoost, 2016).

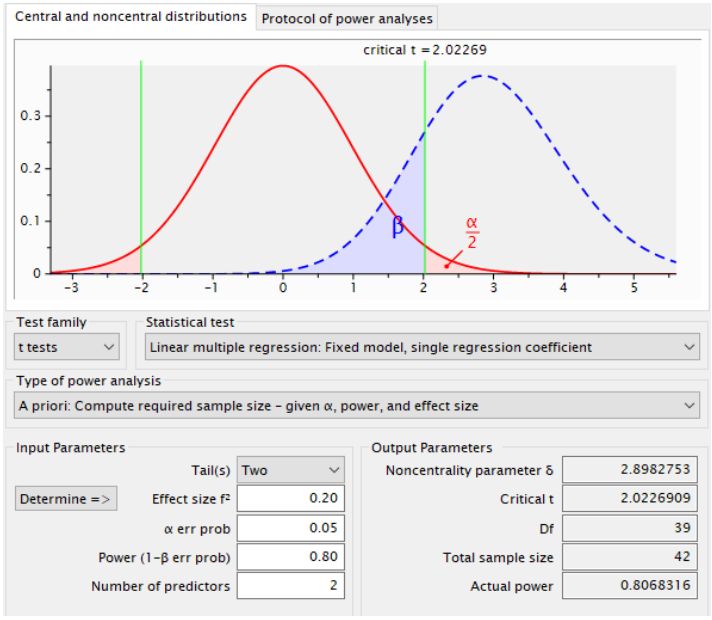
I used G*Power to determine the initial sample size. Secondly, I used participant recruitment strategies to increase the number of participants surveyed based on the previously mentioned characteristics (i.e., Black women; counselor education doctoral students). I chose this process of sampling given that many researchers who studied Black women found the participants often were close knit and could easily connect with other Black women. Using the Counselor Education and Supervision Network – Listserv (CESNET-L) as my participant pool, I connected directly to a sample population who met my criteria as CESNET-L serves as an influential hub reaching counselor education students and doctoral level students specifically. Additionally, I used approved social media sites to advertise and recruit for the study, including Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn. Considering that I did not have access to a list of Black women doctoral students enrolled in counselor education programs, researchers recommended the-above mentioned nonprobability sampling methods (see Frankfort-Nachmias & Leon-Guerrero, 2015).

I determined the appropriate sample size for a generalizable study using the G*Power 3.1 analysis software running for a multiple linear regression: fixed model using a priori to determine sample size (see Field, 2013; Green & Salkind, 2014). Researchers use the G*Power linear multiple regression (fixed models) test to determine sample size for correlations between continuous variables, such as the variables in this study (see Faul et al., 2009). The calculations for the effect size sample I obtained from

G*Power are based on research from Field (2013) and Faul et al. (2009) in which the authors addressed the most appropriate calculations for regression and correlation studies within the social sciences. Based on researchers' work related to obtaining sample sizes for social science research (Field, 2013; Faul et al., 2009), I moved forward with a medium effect size and 80% error of probability. Currently, researchers have not produced another quantitative study similar to my study, and in such cases, researchers default to the work of several social science authors to determine the effect size and error of probability as I have done here (see Field, 2013; Faul et al., 2009). I used an a priori analysis, I controlled Type 1 and 2 errors of probability, and I produced the following calculations: two predictors, an effect size f^2 of 0.20, α error of probability of 0.05 and power (1-β err prob) of 0.80. Using G*Power, I calculated a sample size for a multiple linear regression: fixed model, of 42 participants (Babbie, 2017; see Figure 1). Based on recent research, I determined I needed a target sample of approximately 85 at a response rate of 56% for online surveys to reach a minimum participant rate of 42 (see Loomis & Paterson, 2018).

Figure 1

Sample Size for Linear Multiple Regression: Fixed Model



Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection

For data collection methods for the proposed dissertation study, I incorporated the use of an online survey provided to BWDS in counselor education programs. For this study, I used the Survey Monkey platform, along with the LASSI publishing company's platform, H&H Publishing Company, Inc. Furthermore, researchers (Andrews et al., 2003; Creswell, 2014) encouraged others to use online surveys to produce results that were compatible with appropriate data analysis engines. Therefore, I obtained permission from the developer of the REMS (see Appendix A) to include the questionnaire in Survey Monkey. The publishers of the LASSI, however, provided a unique link and research identifier for participants to use to access the questionnaire on a different site. I entered

the questions of the REMS only into an online survey platform, assigned a link, and included the link in my recruitment emails to prospective participants.

I recruited prospective participants through approved social media outlets such as Facebook, focusing specifically on pages geared toward counselor education doctoral students. Such Facebook pages include those belonging to the American Counseling Association, the Southern Association for Counselor Education and Supervision, the Association for Counselor Education and Supervision, and Chi Sigma Iota. Additionally, I contacted Dr. Martin Jenicus, the administrator of CESNET-L, to gain permission to recruit participants using the CESNET-L platform. Finally, I used Walden University's pool of students to access potential participants.

Each request for participation included an informed consent form as well as an expected survey completion time, description of eligible participants, advisors, and my contact information. Additionally, I included the time frame for the study. Participants had access to the informed consent through Survey Monkey and indicated they agreed to participate, before they proceeded to the survey, ensuring they were informed of the process. The information I provided in the informed consent included: (a) purpose of the study, (b) probable risks, (c) benefits to the participants, (d) potential alternative options for contributing to the study such as sharing the study with other qualified participants (if necessary), (e) contact information for me (the researcher) and a selected member of the IRB, and (f) explanation of voluntary participation (Groves et al., 2009).

I did not ask for any identifying information from the participants outside of the information needed to determine that they meet the requirements. Specifically, I asked for

participants' gender, ethnicity, age, and region of upbringing. For example, one question is "Are you at least 18 years old?" Once I reached double my required sample size, I deactivated the survey link. At any time during the study, the participant could have exited simply by closing the survey link. Additionally, participants could have returned at any time while the survey was activated but they had to start the survey from the beginning. Once the participant completed the study, they took no further actions (i.e., there was no need for any follow-up surveys or debriefing).

Once complete, I accessed the data from Survey Monkey and the LASSI publishing platform. Before collecting data, I set up a restricted data page and created a password for which only I had access. After I collected all data, I accessed the information using the password, downloaded to a secure file and began the data analysis process. To ensure the safety of the data, I kept keep the raw data in a safe and secure place (i.e., my personal computer with password protection) until five years elapses as is required by my university.

Instruments

For this study, I used two reliable and valid instruments, tested on similar populations to the one I studied in this research project. I based my choice to use previously tested instruments on authors Creswell's (2014) and Groves et al.'s (2009) reported work of the diminished credibility and consistency of self-constructed surveys as well as the time-consuming process of piloting a study and continuous revisions of such instruments. Therefore, in this section, I describe the psychometrics and appropriateness of using the REMS, LASSI, and demographic questionnaire.

Racial and Ethnic Microaggressions Scale

The REMS is a 45-item scale consisting of statements about experiences with racial and ethnic microaggressions. The REMS consists of six subscales including: (a) assumptions of inferiority, (b) second-class citizen, (c) microinvalidations, (d) exoticization or assumptions of similarity, (e) environmental microaggressions, and (f) workplace or school microaggressions (Nadal, 2011). Respondents used a Likert scale to indicate how often each experienced the described microaggressions. Responses ranged from zero to five, with zero equaling "I did not experience this event," and five denoting "I experienced this event five or more times" (Nadal et al., 2014, p. 466). Respondents based their responses on the past six months (Nadal, 2011; Nadal et al., 2014). Some questions indicate the use of reverse scoring to support the outcome that higher scores equal more experiences with racial and ethnic microaggressions.

Nadal (2011) studied 443 racially diverse participants from psychology classes using 131 items and three follow-up open-ended questions. The result of Nadal's scale development research was the 45-item scale used in this study with a Cronbach's alpha of $r = .91$ for the model and a range of $r = .78$ to $r = .87$ for each subscale. The REMS is a valid and reliable scale based on positive correlations with other scales that measure oppressive experiences (e.g., Racism and Life Experiences Scale-Brief; Daily Life Experiences-Frequency Scale; Nadal et al., 2014). The REMS was an appropriate scale for this study as researchers have used this scale across a diverse range of participants, including male and female Asian Americans-Pacific Islanders, Latinx, Black African Americans, and multiracial groups (Nadal et al., 2014; Nadal et al., 2017).

The Learning and Study Strategies Inventory 3rd Edition

The LASSI is a ten scale 64-item questionnaire designed to assess participants' awareness of how they use learning and study strategies (Cano, 2006; Weinstein et al., 1988; Weinstein et al., 2016). The developers designed the LASSI in 1988 to focus on skill, will, and self-regulation and a goal of uncovering obvious and hidden performances, outlooks, incentives, and principles about the idea of success in the post-secondary learning setting (Cano, 2006; Weinstein et al., 2016; Weinstein et al., 1988). Although the developed included 10-subscales, for the purpose of this study, I explored three of the ten subscales: The 10 LASSI subscales include: (a) test strategies, (b) time-management, and (j) using academic resources (Weinstein et al., 2016). I chose these three subscales as they aligned with previous research related to how researchers and BWDS defined academic success as well as their main focus for strategy development. I determined it was appropriate to isolate subscales because the developers did not create a way to analyze a total score for the LASSI, rather based the scores in the individual percentages if each subscale (Weinstein et al., 2016).

The developers of the LASSI 3rd Edition administered the scale to 1,386 post-secondary students ranging from adult education programs to four-year university programs across the United States with various racial and ethnic backgrounds including American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, Black or African American, Hispanic or Latino, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, and White or Caucasian (Weinstein et al., 2016). The LASSI is mainly diagnostic and prescriptive (Cano, 2006; Weinstein et al., 2016). Therefore, I did not assess a total score but rather a student profile indicating

percentile ranks for each subscale. Each profile offered a description of the participants' percentile score per subscale, explaining where each person needed improvement. The percentile scores are 75 to 100 indicating no need to further develop the strategies, 50-75, indicating the need to consider improving the strategies with this score; and 0-50, indicating serious issues related to succeeding in school within the realm of the strategies related to this score (Weinstein et al., 2016). The LASSI has an overall reliability score of r =.76 (Weinstein et al., 2016). This scale was appropriate for this study because it is the only instrument that measures learning and study strategies among college-age students. After the original development in 1988 researchers tested the LASSI on graduate-level students to assess self-testing ability, information-processing ability, and motivation (Sinkavich, 1994).

Demographic Survey

I designed a brief demographic survey for this study. The demographic information consisted of four items: degree level, program of study, age, and region of upbringing. I did not use names on any of the questionnaires, including the demographic survey, thereby ensuring confidentiality.

Operationalization of Constructs

Operationalization is critical to the understanding of this study as I used the operationalized definition to showcase how I measured and scored each variable. Using information from the instruments above, I provide an operational definition of academic strategy development, microaggressions, region of upbringing, age, race and ethnicity,

degree level, and program of study. Lastly, I provide a sample item of measurement for each variable.

Academic Strategy Development

Academic strategy development is the process of constructing tactics that lead to success in the learning process (Cano, 2006). I used the LASSI to measure academic strategy development, which is the dependent variable in this study. As mentioned earlier, I did not base the measuring strategy on a total score but rather a range of percentages for each subscale of the LASSI (see section on the LASSI for detailed information about the percentile ranges). Two examples of items from the LASSI are "I try to find relationships between what I am learning and what I already know" and “Even when study materials are dull and uninteresting, I manage to keep working until I finish.” Respondents answered with one of the following (a) not at all typical of me, (b) not very typical of me, (c) somewhat typical of me, (d) fairly typical of me, or (e) very much typical of me (Weinstein et al., 2016).

Microaggressions

For this study, I described the independent variable, microaggressions, as common interactions, both conscious and unconscious, that diminish the value of a person in the form of verbal and nonverbal communication (Hedin, 2018; Nadal, 2011). I used the REMS to measure participants' experiences with microaggressions within a six-month period. Example items include, "I was ignored at school or at work because of my race" and, "Someone asked me to teach them words in my 'native language'." Participants rated their experience with each item in the past six months via a 6-point Likert-scale,

ranging from zero (I did not experience this event) to 5 (I experienced this event five or more times). The scoring range for the REMS is 0-5 (the developers of the instrument instructed users to divide the total score by 45) with lower scores indicating little to no experience with microaggressions and higher scores indicating extreme experiences with microaggressions (Nadal, 2011).

Region of Upbringing

For this study, region of upbringing was an independent variable defined as the specific area of upbringing for each participant within the United States based on the official map used by the United States Census Bureau. I captured this variable in the demographic survey. I offered the following choices for respondents: (a) West (AK, WA, OR, ID, NV, CA, AZ, NM, CO, WY, MT, HI); (b) Midwest (ND, SD, NE, KS, MO, IA, MN, WI, IL, IN, OH, MI); (c) Northeast (ME, VT, NH, MA, RI, CT, NJ, PA, NY); and (d) South (TX, OK, LA, AR, MS, AL, GA, SC, FL, TN, NC, KY, VA WV, DE, MD, DC).

Degree Level

For this study, I described degree level as the point of progress reached by each participant in their doctoral studies at the time of the survey. I captured this description on the demographic survey with the following survey item: "What is your current degree level in your doctoral program?" The respondents answered with one of the following options: (a) current doctoral student or (b) doctoral graduate within the past year.

Age

In this study, I referred to age as how old the participants were at the date of the study. I calculated age as a continuous variable and participants entered using a numeric response. I collected the data related to age in the demographic questionnaire.

Program of Study

The program of study is the type of degree program the participant was seeking. I captured this information in the demographic survey with the following question, "In which type of degree program are you obtaining a doctorate?" Participants chose either counselor education and supervision or counselor education.

Data Analysis

I used the SPSS, Version 27.0, to analyze the collected data from the REMS and LASSI. The SPSS is a data analysis software used for quantitative research in which the researcher can extract and interpret complex data to produce comprehensible results (Cronk, 2017). Using SPSS, I entered data, performed statistical calculations, and tested my research hypotheses using Pearson correlations, point biserial correlations, and multiple linear regressions. To ensure I presented valid and reliable results, I analyzed my data through a series of cleaning and screening methods, including spot-checking, eyeballing the results, and a logic check (Cronk, 2017; Frankfort-Nachmias & Leon-Guerrero, 2015).

The process of spot-checking involved comparing the results of the online surveys with the data in SPSS to ensure there were no changes to the raw data (Cronk, 2017). Through the eyeballing method, I ensured I paired each response with the appropriate

code assigned. Finally, with a logic check, I analyzed the responses of the participants, looking for any irrational or unrelated responses as well as incomplete surveys. I discarded incomplete participant responses.

I used descriptive statistics to summarize data from the demographic survey through SPSS Version 27.0 using plots and graphs to identify any outliers in the data. Researchers proved that outliers affect the credibility of the results with false assumptions and invalid relationships (Cronk, 2017; Frankfort-Nachmias & Leon-Guerrero, 2015). Therefore, I removed all outliers before presenting final results based on the images the scatterplots. Furthermore, I ran Pearson correlations, point biserial correlations, and multiple linear regressions to test the following hypotheses.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

I explored the following RQs in this study:

RQ1: Is there is a statistically significant negative relationship between microaggressive experiences as measured by the REMS and academic strategy development as measured by the LASSI among BWDS enrolled in counselor education programs?

H_a1: There is a statistically significant negative relationship between microaggressive experiences as measured by the REMS and academic strategy development as measured by the LASSI among BWDS enrolled in counselor education programs in that as the level of experienced microaggressions increases, the strength of academic strategy development decreases.

$H_0$1: There is not a statistically significant negative relationship between microaggressive experiences as measured by the REMS and academic strategy development as measured by the LASSI among BWDS enrolled in counselor education programs.

RQ2: Is there is a statistically significant negative relationship between region of upbringing as measured by a demographic question and academic strategy development as measured by the LASSI among BWDS enrolled in counselor education programs?

H_a2: There is a statistically significant negative relationship between region of upbringing as measured by a demographic question and academic strategy development as measured by the LASSI among BWDS enrolled in counselor education programs.

$H_0$2: There is not a statistically significant negative relationship between region of upbringing as measured by a demographic question and academic strategy development as measured by the LASSI among BWDS enrolled in counselor education programs.

RQ3: Do microaggressions as measured by the REMS and region of upbringing as measured by a demographic question predict participants' academic strategy development scores as measured by the LASSI?

H_a3: Microaggressions as measured by the REMS and region of upbringing as measured by a demographic question do predict participants' academic strategy development scores as measured by the LASSI.

$H_0$3: Microaggressions as measured by the REMS and region of upbringing as measured by a demographic question do not predict participants' academic strategy development scores as measured by the LASSI.

Threats to Validity

I designed the study to yield results based on responses from web-based surveys in which respondents responded once with no follow-up. Therefore, I achieved minimal presence of internal validity threats such as history and maturation. However, I considered threats to internal validity based on researcher bias, related to my expectation of statistically significant relationships between the independent and dependent variable (Cronk, 2017; Frankfort-Nachmias & Leon-Guerrero, 2015; McKibben & Silvia, 2016). To minimize the presence of such a threat to internal validity, I plan processed validity as the distance between the researcher's understanding of the results and the actual results, remaining aware that the two are different and only the latter will yield valid results (McKibben & Silvia, 2016).

Additionally, researchers McKibben and Silvia (2016) identified social desirability as a common threat to validity, particularly when using web surveys. The authors suggested using instruments that have accounted for the presence of social desirability, yielding fewer risks of internal validity. Using reliable and valid tested instruments, I reduced the threat of construct validity. Moreover, I used the screening and cleaning processes offered through SPSS Version 27.0, as detailed in the data analysis section.

The significant threat to external validity to this study was the lack of generalizability to populations outside of the demographics listed here. Therefore, I explicitly defined my population and sample size to ensure others who may duplicate this study understand the limitations to generalizability. Additionally, I recognized the threat

to external validity introduced by location and unnatural conditions when testing participants (García-Pérez, 2012). Considering the participants were able to complete the online surveys comfortably from their chosen locations, I minimized the said threat to external validity. Furthermore, I accounted for statistical conclusion validity relying on the dependability of the G*Power 3.1 analysis software to ensure I chose a valid sample size. Moreover, I yielded to the data analysis processes of various researchers studying a similar population to reduce the risk of the use of inappropriate and ineffective statistical tests and analyses (García-Pérez, 2012; Nadal et al., 2017; Nadal et al., 2014; Taherdoost, 2016).

Ethical Procedures

To ensure I met all ethical guidelines for the process of research on human subjects, I adhered to the procedures developed by my university's IRB. Firstly, I refrained from contacting any participants or advertising my study without approval from the IRB. Secondly, I focused on developing informed consent based on the American Counseling Association's ethical principles (ACA, 2014). Considering I used an electronic platform to connect with participants, I guaranteed I implemented an electronic signature from participants such as an anonymous digital signature that allowed participants to agree to the parameters of the study without revealing any identifying information (Saraswat & Yun, 2009). In addition to the signed informed consent, I included appropriate contact information for my university’s staff to assist participants with any questions they had.

Although I did not have any physical contact with human subjects, there remained a potential risk to participants through the presence of uncomfortable questions or topics in the questionnaires (Babbie, 2017). Therefore, I included a mental health hotline number (1-800-950-NAMI [6264]) to ensure participants could quickly access assistance in the process of engaging in this study caused emotional triggers. Additionally, I followed all feedback given by my dissertation committee and the IRB related to ensuring confidentiality for all participants and minimizing the risk to personal exposure for all participants. Additionally, I ensured the safety of the participants throughout the research process by developing a study that met the requirements of educational research and performance opinion research, both acceptable types of research at my university (Babbie, 2017).

I did not purposefully engage vulnerable populations; however, I cannot ensure that vulnerable populations did not volunteer to complete the study. Therefore, if a participant was from a vulnerable population, due to the confidentiality of my study, I did not know it. I recruited on platforms that were specific to my population. Additionally, I developed screening questions to reduce the risk of recruiting children and other vulnerable populations. An example of a screening question was: “Are you at least 18 years old?” Furthermore, I did not recruit at my office or any of my places of business to minimize the presence of undue pressure to subordinates and clients related to completing the study (Babbie, 2017).

Additionally, I recruited from the university I am attending (i.e., Walden University) as researchers have proven Walden University produces the highest number

of doctoral graduates. Therefore, I ensured all responses were confidential given my close connection to said potential participants. However, I did recognize the ethical risks associated with recruiting a population of which I am a member and with whom I regularly engage. Nevertheless, because data collection is confidential, and I did not collect identifying information, I did not know if someone with whom I was acquainted completed my survey.

Once the IRB approved the study and I collected the data, I imported the data into SPSS Version 27.0 analysis software. I stored the raw and analyzed data on a personal computer, of which I only had access using a password. Once the data was analyzed and reported, I planned to destroy all data associated with the study after five years in adherence to the ACA (2014) and my university's IRB. If, at any point, participants wanted to leave the study or withdraw consent to use their data in the study, they could do so by contacting me without the fear of penalty.

Summary

The purpose of this quantitative survey research study was to determine if a relationship existed among microaggressions experienced by BWDS enrolled in counselor education programs, region of upbringing, and academic strategy development methods. In this chapter, I describe the use of a survey research methodology to examine relationship between the independent variables and dependent variable using a correlation analyses and multiple linear regressions to determine relationships. Furthermore, I provide a detailed operationalized description of each variable and the instruments I use to measure the variables. Moreover, I describe the population and sample size, providing

a statistically sound sample using the G*Power software. I discuss the recruitment process and my plan to ensure ethical soundness to the research project and safety to the research participants. I address potential threats to validity and efforts to increase the external and internal validity of this study. My goal for this study was to address the gap in the literature related to quantitative testing of the relationship between microaggressions and academic strategy development by developing a study with a potential for significant and generalizable results that will address the presence of a relationship between microaggressions and academic strategy development among BWDS.

In chapter four, I further articulate the data collection process and the results. Specifically, I evaluate statistical assumptions, report statistical analyses, and explain figures and tables associated with such. Finally, I summarize the answers to the research questions.

Chapter 4: Results

The main purpose of this quantitative survey research study was to determine if a relationship existed between microaggressions experienced by BWDS enrolled in counselor education programs, participants' region of upbringing, and their academic strategy development methods. For this study, I assumed BWDS would recognize the presence of microaggressions and that I would find a strong representation of BWDS from each region of the United States. Additionally, because I provided the participants with a self-report questionnaire, I assumed that participants would answer honestly. Lastly, I assumed there would be a relationship between microaggressions and academic strategy development.

I explored the following RQs and *H*s in this study:

RQ1: Is there is a statistically significant negative relationship between microaggressive experiences as measured by the REMS and academic strategy development as measured by the LASSI among BWDS enrolled in counselor education programs?

H_a1: There is a statistically significant negative relationship between microaggressive experiences as measured by the REMS and academic strategy development as measured by the LASSI among BWDS enrolled in counselor education programs in that as the level of experienced microaggressions increases, the strength of academic strategy development decreases.

H_01: There is not a statistically significant negative relationship between microaggressive experiences as measured by the REMS and academic strategy

development as measured by the LASSI among BWDS enrolled in counselor education programs.

RQ2: Is there is a statistically significant negative relationship between region of upbringing as measured by a demographic question and academic strategy development as measured by the LASSI among BWDS enrolled in counselor education programs?

H_a2: There is a statistically significant negative relationship between region of upbringing as measured by a demographic question and academic strategy development as measured by the LASSI among BWDS enrolled in counselor education programs.

$H_0 2$: There is not a statistically significant negative relationship between region of upbringing as measured by a demographic question and academic strategy development as measured by the LASSI among BWDS enrolled in counselor education programs.

RQ3: Do microaggressions as measured by the REMS and region of upbringing as measured by a demographic question predict participants' academic strategy development scores as measured by the LASSI?

H_a3: Microaggressions as measured by the REMS and region of upbringing as measured by a demographic question do predict participants' academic strategy development scores as measured by the LASSI.

$H_0 3$: Microaggressions as measured by the REMS and region of upbringing as measured by a demographic question do not predict participants' academic strategy development scores as measured by the LASSI.

Data Collection

I gained IRB approval on August 27, 2020 (IRB# 08-27-20-0642031). Additionally, I gained IRB approval from the university where I am employed on August 31, 2020 (Protocol #H20-030E). After developing the Survey Monkey questionnaire (including the REMS and demographic information), I linked the collected data to the LASSI data, which the publishers held in a separate database. I began data collection on October 4, 2020. I made the questionnaires for this study available online through Survey Monkey and provided participants with a unique link to access the LASSI instrument for approximately 3.5 months during the data collection period.

In the sampling frame for this study, I included BWDS enrolled in CES programs or recent graduates (within 1 year). I used nonprobability sampling methods, namely quota and snowball sampling. I advertised the invitation to complete the study using three listservs, CESNET-L, Counsgrads, and DIVERSEGRAD-L, as well as the Walden University participant pool. Additionally, I advertised on Facebook groups, including Walden CES Connection, Dissertation Struggle Bus, Abundance Practice Builders, SACES Graduate Students, Black Girls Connect-Through Strength, Love, and Motivation, Black Counselors and Social Workers PSA, National Association of Black Counselors Group Discussions, Black Women in Higher Education, Omega Zeta Chapter of Chi Sigma Iota, Walden University PhD/EdD/DBA, and PhinisheD/FinishED (Drs/Future Drs) #WhoGotNext. Finally, I advertised my study on my personal LinkedIn and Instagram accounts.

Over the course of 15 weeks, I shared my study approximately 40 times across the above-mentioned platforms with a result of 94 responses. Of the 94 potential participants who entered the study, 47 (50%) completed the questionnaire on Survey Monkey and the LASSI site. I only purchased 50 surveys from the LASSI publishing company; therefore, if anyone tried to complete the survey on the LASSI site after I hit the total number of 50, the site would have blocked the participant. After I reached the required number of subjects based on my power analysis, I allowed a few more participants to complete the survey and then closed the survey on Survey Monkey and downloaded the data from both the Survey Monkey program and the LASSI program into SPSS for cleaning and statistical analysis.

Sample

I studied BWDS currently enrolled or recently graduated from CES doctoral programs. I conducted an a priori power analysis for the study, which indicated a sample size of 42. Although I sent the invitation to approximately 10,000 people using the sampling protocol discussed earlier, there were only approximately 600 people meeting the criteria across the United States (see CACREP, 2017). From the start of data collection until completion, 94 respondents answered at least some of the survey questions. Ultimately, 47 (50%) completed the survey. Forty-five participants did not complete the LASSI, and two did not complete all questions in the REMS. I discuss the demographics of this study next.

Demographics

In this survey, I included several items to help establish external validity of the results of the sample, including explicitly defining the population and sample size as well as ensuring the participants could take the survey in any location comfortable for each person. I included race and ethnicity, degree status, age, and region of upbringing as demographic questions for this study. In the next section, I discuss findings about the sample.

BWDS Demographics

In Table 1, I provide the demographic characteristics of this sample. Based on the sample size for this study, I represented approximately 8% of the total population of BWDS in the United States (see CACREP, 2017). All participants identified as women and either Black or African American. Moreover, 76.6% (n = 36) identified as current doctoral students, and 23.45% (n = 11) identified as having graduated within the past year. When asked about their program of study, 93.6% (n = 44) of the respondents shared they were enrolled in counselor education and supervision programs, and 6.4% (n = 3) were enrolled in counselor education programs. The age of the participants ranged from 27 to 54, with approximately 50% of respondents identifying between the age of 27 and 35.

In the demographic questionnaire, I designated geographic locations within the regions developed by the United States Census Bureau. The four geographical areas were: West (AK, WA, OR, ID, NV, CA, AZ, NM, CO, WY, MT, HI), Midwest (ND, SD, NE, KS, MO, IA, MN, WI, IL, IN, OH, MI), Northeast (ME, VT, NH, MA, RI, CT, NJ,

PA, NY), and South (TX, OK, LA, AR, MS, AL, GA, SC, FL, TN, NC, KY, VA WV, DE, MD, DC). When measuring region of upbringing, I found that many respondents were raised in the Southern region of the United States, with a rate of 61.7% (n = 29), which is a limitation of this study that I discuss further in Chapter 5. The other regions listed in this study (West, Midwest, and Northeast) made up 38.3% of the participants (see Table 1).

Table 1

Characteristics of Sample

Characteristics		***N***	Percent
Age*	27-35	24	51.2
	36-40	13	27.7
	42-50	6	12.6
	51-54	4	8.5
Region of upbringing	West	2	4.3
	Midwest	9	19.1
	Northeast	7	14.9
	South	29	61.7
Program of study	Counselor Education and Supervision	44	93.6
	Counselor Education	3	6.4
Doctoral status	Current student	36	76.6
	Recent graduate	11	23.4

Statistical Assumptions

Prior to conducting a Pearson's correlation, I tested four assumptions including the use of continuous variables, the absence of outliers, linearity, and related pairs (Schober et al., 2018). I met the first assumption with the scoring for the REMS and the LASSI. I met the second and third assumptions by using a scatterplot to reveal linearity

for the variables that were originally continuous (see Appendix A). I can assume I met the last assumption of related pairs because each participant had scores from both the REMS and the LASSI.

For RQ2, I conducted a special Pearson correlation called a point biserial correlation. When using a point biserial correlation, the researcher must confirm one variable is continuous and the other is dichotomous (Bonnett, 2020). Therefore, I dichotomized the variable region of upbringing before continuing with the point biserial correlation. I met all other assumptions of the point biserial correlation which are the same as the Pearson correlation.

For a multiple linear regression, I met the assumptions of linearity, a normal distribution, the absence of multicollinearity, and homoscedasticity (Plonsky & Ghanbar, 2018). For the assumption of normal distribution, I looked at Normal Q-Q plots and found that all variables fit well to the line (see Appendix B). To test multicollinearity, I inspected the size of the intercorrelation coefficients of the predictors, variance inflation factors (VIFs) and tolerance values and found that none exceeded the range indicating multicollinearity. I found VIFs less than 10 and tolerance statistics not below 0.2 using the collinearity statistics. Therefore, I met the assumption of absence of multicollinearity. Finally, I checked for homoscedasticity using a plot of standardized residuals versus standardized predicted values and there were no obvious signs of funneling, suggesting the assumption of homoscedasticity has been met.

Statistical Analysis and Findings

I entered data in SPSS version 27.0 to analyze the collected responses from the survey. I used descriptive statistics, correlations, and linear regression analyses to provide insight into the relationship among microaggressions, academic strategy development, and region of upbringing. What follows is an in-depth description of the results of the data analysis process.

Data Screening and Recording

I checked the data for errors and missing information through the SPSS program. Survey Monkey excluded participants who answered that they were not currently enrolled or recently graduated from a CES program. Additionally, Survey Monkey disqualified participants who did not identify as a cisgender, Black or African American woman. Although 94 BWDS accessed the study, 47 (50%) were disqualified for not completing all items on both questionnaires.

The scoring directions for the 45-item REMS required reverse scoring of seven items (Nadal, 2011). In the initial formatting of the survey a low score represented limited experience with described microaggressions, and a high score represented greater experience with the microaggression described. For items 12, 18, 19, 24, 28, 37, and 41 I reversed the scoring to achieve an accurate total score for each respondent.

Data Collection and Analyses Process

I designed this study to examine a proposed relationship between microaggressions, academic strategy development, and region of upbringing among BWDS in CES programs. I asked participants to complete the REMS, LASSI, and a

demographic questionnaire after consenting to participate and answering eligibility questions. I developed the Survey Monkey questionnaire for participants to complete the consent process, eligibility questions, demographic questions, and the REMS. Once complete, I asked participants to create a unique identifier in Survey Monkey that I used to connect to their responses for the LASSI. I then directed participants to the link to complete the LASSI on a different website where they used the unique identifier created in Survey Monkey to create the account for participation in the LASSI.

For the REMS questionnaire, I asked participants to rate their level of experience with microaggressions on a Likert-type scale with answers ranging from no experience to experienced five or more times. For the LASSI, I asked participants to consider their academic strategies through a series of statements and answer the level at which they identified with each statement. The responses ranged from not typical of me to very typical of me.

I extracted the data from the LASSI into a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet and then, along with the data from the Survey Monkey (demographic questionnaire and REMS), analyzed the collected data from 47 participants using SPSS Version 27.0. I filtered the data for incomplete responses, looking specifically for those who did not answer all items of the REMS and LASSI and recoded all scale items as numeric fields. Additionally, I completed the reverse coding necessary to accurately interpret the REMS data.

Hypotheses 1 and 2

I calculated three Pearson correlations (see Table 2) for the REMS and LASSI, one for each subscale (TST, TMT, and UAR) because, as stated above, the LASSI did not

produce an average percentage score. Ultimately, I wanted to determine if there was a statistically significant negative relationship between microaggressions and academic strategy development. I hypothesized that as the experiences of microaggressions increased among BWDS, the overall academic strategy development of BWDS would decrease. The Pearson correlation measures the linear relationship between two continuous variables with correlations ranging from -1.0 (strong negative relationship) and 1.0 (strong positive relationship; see Creswell, 2014). Based on the data collected and analyzed I rejected *H1* for RQ1 as there was not a statistically significant relationship between microaggressions as measured by the REMS total score and academic strategy development as measured by three LASSI subscales: TST (r = -.094; ρ = .529); TMT (r = -.064; ρ = .670); and UAR (r = -.034; ρ = .820).

To answer RQ2 I calculated three point biserial correlations (see Table 3) to evaluate if there was a negative relationship between region of upbringing and the three subscales from the LASSI. I hypothesized that there was a negative relationship between region of upbringing and academic strategy development. Based on the analyzed data in Table 3, I rejected *H2* that there is not a statistically significant relationship between region of upbringing and academic strategy development: TST (r = .014; ρ = .925); TMT (r = .199; ρ = .180); and UAR (r = .012; ρ = .935).

Table 2

Pearson's Correlation Coefficients for the REMS and the LASSI

		TST_Percentile	TMT_Percentile	UAR_Percentile	REMS_Total_Scale_Score
TST_Percentile	Pearson Correlation	1	.478**	.377**	-.094
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.001	.009	.529
	N	47	47	47	47
TMT_Percentile	Pearson Correlation	.478**	1	.368*	-.064
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001		.011	.670
	N	47	47	47	47
UAR_Percentile	Pearson Correlation	.377**	.368*	1	-.034
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.009	.011		.820
	N	47	47	47	47
REMS_Total_Scale_Score	Pearson Correlation	-.094	-.064	-.034	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.529	.670	.820	
	N	47	47	47	47

Table 3

Point Biserial Correlation Coefficients for the Region of Upbringing and the LASSI

		UAR_Percentile	TMT_Percentile	TST_Percentile	Region of upbringing
UAR_Percentile	Pearson Correlation	1	.368*	.377**	.012
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.011	.009	.935
	N	47	47	47	47
TMT_Percentile	Pearson Correlation	.368*	1	.478**	.199
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.011		.001	.180
	N	47	47	47	47
TST_Percentile	Pearson Correlation	.377**	.478**	1	.014
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.009	.001		.925
	N	47	47	47	47
Region of upbringing	Pearson Correlation	.012	.199	.014	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.935	.180	.925	
	N	47	47	47	47

Hypothesis 3

In many cases, researchers may opt out of running a regression analysis in the absence of a relationship among variables. However, based on the information I provided in the statistical assumptions section of this chapter, correlation among variables is not a pre-requisite to running a linear regression. Moreover, researchers have shown that a lack of statistical significance in a correlation analysis does not denote an insignificant regression analysis (Bewick et al., 2003). Therefore, I performed three multiple regression analyses to assess RQ3 trying to determine if microaggressions, as measured by the REMS, and region of upbringing as measured by a demographic question would predict participants' academic strategy development scores as measured by the TST, TMT, and UAR from the LASSI (see Appendix B). Based on the collected data I rejected H3 that microaggressions and region of upbringing predict participants' academic strategy development scores: TST (F (2, 44) = .197, ρ = .822); TMT (F (2, 44) =.949, ρ = .395); UAR (F (2, 44) = .027, ρ = .973).

Analysis of the Racial and Ethnic Microaggressions Scale

As I described in the questionnaire, for the REMS, participants who received higher scores were presumed to have greater experiences with microaggressions (Nadal, 2011). For instance, if participants indicated they were ignored at school or work based on race more than five times in the past six months, they would have chosen the numerical response of five which is the highest choice offered. On the other hand, had participants indicated they had never experienced being overlooked based on race in the

last six months they would have chosen the numerical response of zero. Therefore, the higher the score on the REMS, the greater the experience with microaggressions.

The REMS developers designed the instrument using six subscales. I have listed the means and standard deviation for each subscale in Table 4. The sum of the raw scores for each subscale ranged from 0 to 40 with lower scores indicating not as much experience with the microaggressions of each subscale topic (Nadal, 2011). However, Nadal (2011) suggested researchers divide the raw score by the number of items in each subscale to get the computed score. For instance, if the total respondent raw score was 32 for the first subscale, I divided that total score by eight (because there are eight items in the first subscale) to get the computed score of four.

The first subscale, Assumptions of Inferiority, is an 8-item scale which measures the level at which participants experienced microaggressions related to an assumed inferiority from a person or system (Nadal, 2011). Out of the 47 respondents who completed the survey, the mean score for the first subscale was (M = 1.95; SD = 1.1) indicating that most of the participants had little to no experience with microaggressions related to assumed inferiority. The highest score was 5 and the lowest score was 1.

The second subscale, Second-class Citizens and Assumptions of Criminality, is a 7-item scale which measures the level at which participants experienced microaggressions related to feeling like a second-class citizen or assumed criminal (Nadal, 2011). Out of the 47 respondents who completed the survey, the mean score for the second subscale was (M = 1.62; SD = 0.92) indicating that most of the participants

had little to no experience with microaggressions related to feeling like a second-class citizen or assumed criminal. The highest score was 5 and the lowest score was 1.

The third subscale, Microinvalidations, is a 9-item scale which measures the level at which participants experienced microaggressions related to feeling invalidated by a certain person, system, or people group (Nadal, 2011). Out of the 47 respondents who completed the survey, the mean score for the third subscale was (M = 2.16; SD = 1.32) indicating that most of the participants had experienced this form of microaggression at least twice in the past six months. The highest score was 5 and the lowest score was 1.

The fourth subscale, Exoticization and Assumptions of Similarity, is a 9-item scale which measures the level at which participants experienced microaggressions related to being treated as if they are something out of the ordinary or foreign along with the implication that they possess similar likes and dislikes of others in their people groups (Nadal, 2011). Out of the 47 respondents who completed the survey, the mean score for the fourth subscale was (M = 1.39; SD = 0.74) indicating that most of the participants had little to no experience with microaggressions related to being exoticized or assumed as similar to others in their cultural groups. The highest score was 5 and the lowest score was 1.

The fifth subscale, Environmental Microaggressions, is a 7-item scale which measures the level at which participants experienced microaggressions related to the absence of representation in their environments (Nadal, 2011). Out of the 47 respondents who completed the survey, the mean score for the fifth subscale was (M = 3.35; SD = 1.03) indicating that most of the participants had experience with this form of

microaggression at least three times during the past six months. The highest score was 5 and the lowest score was 1.

The sixth subscale, Workplace and School Microaggressions, is a 5-item scale which measures the level at which participants experienced microaggressions at work and school (Nadal, 2011; Nadal et al., 2014). Out of the 47 respondents who completed the survey, the mean score for the sixth subscale was (M = 1.85; SD = 1.10) indicating that most of the participants had little to no experience with microaggressions at school or their workplace in the last six months. The highest score was 5 and the lowest score was 1.

Overall, the highest score a participant could make on the REMS was five (at the computed level) and of the 47 participants who completed the survey, the mean score for the REMS was (M = 2.03; SD = .76) indicating most participants had experienced microaggressions in one form at least twice in the last six months. Moreover, the participants reported the most experience with microaggressions related to representation in their environments indicating it was rare to see Black women as leaders in the communities and organizations as well as in entertainment forums such as magazines, televisions, and movies.

Table 4

Means and (Standard Deviations) of the Racial and Ethnic Microaggressions Scale Across Participants

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
REMS_Inferior	47	1	5	1.9521	1.12999
REMS_Criminal	47	1	5	1.6201	.92163
REMS_Microinvalid	47	1	5	2.1678	1.32361
REMS_Exotic	47	1	5	1.3901	.74351
REMS_Environ+Microagg	47	1	5	3.3587	1.03911
REMS_Workplace+Micro	47	1	5	1.8596	1.10408
REMS_Total	47	1	5	2.0397	.76218

Analysis of the Learning and Study Strategies Scale

Unlike the REMS, the developers of the LASSI did not include a percentage of total scores of the 10 subscales, but rather a percentage score for each subscale. For this study, I used the percentage scores for the subscales Test-Strategies (TST), Time Management (TMT), and Using Academic Resources (UAR; Weinstein et al., 2016). The highest possible percentage was 99% and the lowest possible percentage was 1% (Weinstein et al., 2016)

Table 5

Correlation for LASSI Subscales

		TST_Percentile	TMT_Percentile	UAR_Percentile
UAR_Percentile	Pearson Correlation	1	478**	.377**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.005
	N	47	47	47
TMT_Percentile	Pearson Correlation	.478*	1	.368**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.005
	N	47	47	47
TST_Percentile	Pearson Correlation	.377**	.368**.	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.005	.005	
	N	47	47	47

The TST subscale measures participants use of "test preparation and test taking strategies" (Weinstein et al., 2016, p 8). The subscale consisted of six items measured on a Likert-type scale with responses ranging from not typical of me to very typical of me. Out of the 47 respondents who completed the survey, the mean score for the TST was (M = 70.04; SD = 27.32; see Table 6) indicating that most of the participants should consider improving strategies related to test preparation and test taking (Weinstein et al., 2016). Such consideration implies the participant responded that she did not spend much time or maybe had difficulty preparing strategies in this area (Weinstein et al., 2016). The percentages from the TST reveal a moderate positive linear relationship with percentages

from the TMT (r = .478; ρ = .000) with an effect size of r^2 = .228 and the UAR (r = .368; ρ = .005) with an effect size of r^2 = .135 (see Table 5).

Table 6

Means and (Standard Deviation) for the Learning and Study Strategies Subscales Test-Strategies (TST), Time Management (TMT), and Using Academic Resources (UAR)

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
LASSI_TST	47	5.00	99.00	70.0426	27.32570
LASSI_TMT	47	1.00	95.00	52.8511	30.72386
LASSI_UAR	47	1.00	99.00	43.1277	26.25512

The TMT subscale measures participants use of time management strategies (Weinstein et al., 2016). The subscale consists of six items measured on a Likert scale with responses ranging from not typical of me to very typical of me. Out of the 47 respondents who completed the survey, the mean score for the TMT was (M = 52.85; SD = 30.72) indicating that most of the participants struggled with developing and implementing time management strategies (Weinstein et al., 2016). The percentages from the TMT reveal a weak positive linear relationship with the UAR (r = .368; ρ = .005) with an effect size of r^2 = .135 (see Figure 4).

Finally, the UAR subscale measured participants' use of resources such as writing and tutoring centers (Weinstein et al., 2016). The subscale consists of six items measured on a Likert-type scale with responses ranging from not typical to very typical of me. Out

of the 47 respondents who completed the survey, the mean score for the UAR was (M = 43.12; SD = 26.25) indicating that most of the participants do not actively seek out or connect with academic resources available to them (Weinstein et al., 2016). The percentage scores from the UAR reveal a weak positive linear relationship with scores from the TST (r = .377; ρ = .005) with an effect size of r^2 = .142 and the TMT (r = .368; ρ = .005) with an effect size of r^2 = .135 (see Table 5).

Summary

In this chapter, I provided the results from the eligible BWDS that completed the questionnaires for this study. Results of this study indicated that there were no significant relationships associated with microaggressions, academic strategy development, and region of upbringing among BWDS in CES programs. Moreover, based on the results of this study there is no significant evidence that the experience of microaggressions by BWDS and their region of upbringing predicts their academic strategy development. In the following chapter, I interpret the findings as well as provide explanations and rationales for the results. Additionally, I discuss the limitations of the study, social justice implications, and recommendations for future research studies.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

The goal of this study was to answer the question "are Black girls okay" by exploring their experiences with microaggressions in academia. To date, researchers have addressed questions similar to the one posed here using a qualitative lens, resulting in rich findings about the unfortunate pressures of succeeding amid oppressive experiences in higher education (Jones et al., 2013; Minnett et al., 2019; Nadal et al., 2014; Patterson-Stephens & Vital, 2014; Shavers, 2010; Shavers & Moore, 2014a, 2014b). Considering the quantitative gap in current research related to the experiences of BWDS, I chose to explore relationship between two common factors BWDS revealed as significant in their academic experiences, microaggressions and academic strategy development based on region of upbringing. Ultimately, the purpose of this quantitative survey research study was to explore the presence of a relationship between microaggressions, academic strategy development, and region of upbringing.

Based on the main findings of this study, I indicated (a) BWDS' experiences with microaggressions are not directly related to and does not predict their ability to develop academic strategies and (b) region of upbringing is not related to nor does it predict academic strategy development. After examining the relationship among these variables, using correlations and regressions, I accepted the null hypotheses of RQ1, RQ2, and RQ3. In this chapter, I further discuss an analysis of the results, limitations of the study, and recommendations. I close the chapter with implications for social change.

Interpretation of the Findings

I designed this study to explore the relationships between microaggressions, academic strategy development, and region of upbringing among BWDS enrolled or recently graduated from CES programs. I conceptualized the findings using the DES framework introduced by Shavers and Moore (2014b) and the BFT theory developed by Collins (1986). Specifically, from the DES, I explored the "prove-them-wrong" syndrome and the "part-of-a-bigger-whole" syndrome. Through the development of each syndrome, Shavers and Moore focused on the development of strategies by women of color designed to combat negative stereotypes (prove-them-wrong) and the concept that the process of seeking the degree is for the greater good of the community (part-of-a-bigger-whole; Shavers & Moore, 2014a, 2014b). Furthermore, using the BFT, I focused on the principle that the oppressive experiences of Black women are critical to understanding how to support and develop intentional safe spaces for them (Collins, 1986, 2000).

While the DES framework is fairly new, researchers have used BFT in their studies and explorations on the topic of Black women in higher education experiencing oppression and navigating the ranks of academia (Allen & Lewis, 2016; Jones et al., 2013; Patterson et al., 2017; Shavers & Moore, 2014a, 2014b). Based on the tenets of BFT, I understand that microaggressions and all other oppressive experiences are significant components of the success story of most Black women. However, many academics have not focused on said experiences mainly because it does not align with the stereotype that Black women are fearless, resilient, and, in many cases, impenetrable

(Allen & Lewis, 2016; Collins, 1986, 2000; Shavers & Moore, 2014b). That said, in this study, I found it essential to explore the less attractive experiences of Black women as they continue to serve as standard experiences for people of color. In the next section, I explore the variables investigated in this study accompanied by an explanation of the findings.

Microaggressions

In Chapter 2, I defined microaggressions as common interactions, both conscious and unconscious, that diminish the value of a person in the form of verbal and nonverbal communication (Hedin, 2018; Nadal, 2011; Nadal et al., 2014). I used the REMS to better understand the experience of microaggressions based on six subscales: Assumptions of Inferiority, Workplace and School Microaggressions, Second-class Citizens and Assumptions of Criminality, Microinvalidations, Exoticization and Assumptions of Similarity, and Environmental Microaggressions. By using this scale, I was able to capture an in-depth picture of how BWDS experienced microaggressions, which provided substantial information upon which I based my hypotheses.

In RQ1 I asked if there was a statistically significant negative relationship between microaggressive experiences and academic strategy development among BWDS enrolled in counselor education programs. I hypothesized that participants' scores on the REMS used to measure microaggressions would be significantly related to participants' scores on the LASSI based on three subscales (TMT, UAR, and TST). In the related third research question, RQ3, I asked if microaggressions and region of upbringing predict participants' academic strategy development scores. I hypothesized that microaggressions

and region of upbringing would be significant predictors of participants' scores on the LASSI, which measured academic strategy development. After running Pearson correlations for RQ1 and linear regression analyses for RQ3, I found that there is no correlation or predictive relationships between microaggressions and academic strategy development. This result did not match my original hypothesis; however, they may connect to previous studies.

Although I concluded that there is not a significant correlation or predictor quality between microaggressions and academic strategy development, I also concluded that while developing strategies in academia, BWDS did experience a constant presence of microaggressions. Based on the scores from the six subscales in the REMS, participants reported an average of approximately two experiences of microaggressions related to work, school, environment, stereotypes, invalidity, and assumptions in the past 6 months, which is higher than the average for Black students in Nadal's (M = 1.77; 2011) pilot study as well as White students (M = 1.56). Such results align with many researchers' qualitative work revealing the presence of microaggressions through the process of developing academic strategies in higher education (Bhat et al., 2012; Shavers, 2010; Shavers & Moore, 2014a, 2014b).

Moreover, Shavers and Moore (2014b) specifically identified BWDS' reports of experiences with microaggressions strengthening their strategies for success. However, the results of this study revealed that BWDS struggled with academic strategy development, specifically related to test preparation, time management, and use of academic resources. Such findings, however, highlight the reasons Collins (1986, 2000)

believed that just by asking about the experiences (oppressive and otherwise) of Black women, much more is learned about how they exist in the world, professionally and academically. While there may not be a significant relationship, I must acknowledge and respect the responses of the participants in this study who shared a constant struggle with academic strategy development in support of the basic tenets of BFT: listen, believe, and respect the stories, experiences, and voices of Black women (see Collins, 1986, 2000). I provide further detail about the findings related to academic strategy development in the next section.

Academic Strategy Development

Earlier in this study, I used the work of Cano (2006) to define academic strategy development as the process of constructing tactics that lead to success in the learning process. Additionally, I used the LASSI to define and explore the levels of academic strategy development for each participant. To adhere to the definition provided above, I only assessed the scores from three subscales, the time-management scale, using academic resources scale, and test strategies scale. Within these subscales, the developers asked questions about respondents' strategies and resourceful processes related to developing strategies. As stated in Chapter 2 of this study, researchers have mostly overlooked academic strategy development in recent work related to BWDS. Moreover, no other researcher has used the LASSI to measure academic strategy development among BWDS in a quantitative study. Nevertheless, the development of operative academic strategies in any doctoral setting is valuable to all students, specifically BWDS given the overwhelming evidence that BWDS are more likely to have adverse

experiences that other students. With that said, I presented three research questions related to academic strategy development in this study. As I focused on the findings from research RQ1 and RQ3 in the previous section, I focus on the findings of RQ2 in this section as well as further interpret the findings from all questions from the perspective of academic strategy development.

In RQ2, I asked about a significant relationship between region of upbringing and academic strategy development, hypothesizing that there would be a statistically significant relationship. Based on the results of the study, I found there was not a significant relationship between region of upbringing and academic strategy development. I based my hypothesis on the overwhelming qualitative research supporting the struggle many students of Southern heritage had adjusting to academia, specifically in PWIs. However, in light of the absence of quantitative literature using the LASSI as well as the criteria used in this study, there were no previous findings that fit alignment.

Although I discussed the lack of significance in the previous section, I propose here that the results related to academic strategy development are valuable based on the principles of the DES. The scores indicating the need for additional training related to academic strategy development are noteworthy given that BWDS tend to deplete their physical, mental, emotional, and often spiritual stamina trying to reach success in rigorous doctoral programs (Shavers & Moore, 2014a, 2014b). While the relationship of academic strategy development to the region of upbringing and microaggressions is not significant, Shavers and Moore (2014b) reported that although BWDS are figuring out how to succeed, their methods for getting to success including academic strategy

development are stressful and often cause some to consider their choices related to pursuing such a demanding degree. Such findings by Shavers and Moore (2014a, 2014b) aligned with the findings in this study, which reveals much more work needs to be done related to guiding BWDS in academic strategy development in counselor education doctoral programs.

Region of Upbringing

I chose to include region of upbringing in this study as a predictor variable for two reasons. The first being researchers have reported elevated levels of oppressive experiences among Black women in general as well as those enrolled in doctoral programs (Morton, 2016; Stewart, 2019). Secondly, the work of Morton (2016) supported the notion that exploring region of upbringing upholds the BFT tenet that environment is a fundamental characteristic in the professional and academic experiences of Black women (Collins, 1986, 2000).

I defined region of upbringing as the region within the United States where a person was raised for the majority of their life, focusing specifically on the West, Northeast, South, and Midwest (defined in greater detail in Chapters 2, 3, and 4). As I discussed earlier, region of upbringing was not significantly related to nor did it predict academic strategy development among BWDS enrolled in counselor education programs. Similar to academic strategy development, such findings are new to the scholarly database as no researcher has explored relationship between region of upbringing and academic strategy development.

However, I did discover fascinating descriptive statistics related to region of upbringing and the criteria for this study. An overwhelming number of participants (61.7%) were from the Southern region of the United States. This is noteworthy because in many ways I am reminded of the work of May (2008) and activist Anna Julia Cooper which revealed that the Southern experience is uniquely connected to oppression in a way that is vastly different from any other region in the United States. Readers could deduce that based on this notion from May (2008) and Cooper, Southern BWDS were attracted the title of this study. I discuss this notion further in the limitations section.

Limitations of the Study

Despite the efforts to present a rigorous quantitative survey research study, I detected several limitations. Firstly, I presented a significantly limited sample size. While I chose the sample population intentionally, using research and theoretical frameworks, I recognized the stringent criteria restricted the generalizability of the study beyond Black women enrolled in counseling education doctoral programs. Moreover, I recognized by using a strict delimitation criteria, I may have removed the voices of other Black women in counseling such as those in counseling psychology.

Another limitation of the study was the use of self-report measures in the REMS and LASSI. Self-report measures could increase the chance of poor response rates and often diminish the generalizability of the study. Moreover, by using self-report measures in the online format, I risked participants not seeing the study or disregarding it altogether as the longer such measures are available, the more potential participants may overlook the study (Coughlan et al., 2009; Park et al., 2019)

As I mentioned earlier, I advertised primarily through internet forums and social media. Therefore, participants either had to be members of specific social media groups or subscribe to specific listservs to have access to the invitation and study. For those that were able to access the study, I assumed they would understand the definitions of the variables and respond based on that understanding. Although, I provided a brief overview of the purpose of the study, I did operationalize the terms for the participants. The results of such omissions may have resulted in different understandings of microaggressions, region of upbringing, and academic strategy development among respondents.

Given the current research indicating a unique connection to oppressive experiences from Southern residents, the title of my study may have unexpectedly attracted Southern region participants over all other regions in the United States. Alternatively, given the social and racial unrest in the United States at the time of advertisement for this study, many people could have been put off by the topic and potentially distressed. Although, I predicted minimal psychological distress based on the topic of oppressive experiences, I could not have planned for the injustice experienced by many, namely people of color across the world during the data collection phase of this study.

Another limitation is that while I am a researcher in this study, I am also a member of the population under study. I identify as a Black woman raised in the Southern United States enrolled as a doctoral student in a counselor education and supervision program. Therefore, I was able to access certain online groups, organizations,

and listservs based on my similar characteristics. Other researchers replicating this study that do not share my characteristics may not have the same access.

Limitations related to the instruments used on this study are mainly directed toward the use of the LASSI. The developers of the LASSI originally focused on academic strategies of high school students (Weinstein et al., 1988). Later, researchers expanded the study to account for the experiences of college students, namely four-year universities. In my search of the literature, I only found one study in which the researchers used the LASSI on graduate level students. Based on my knowledge, I am the first researcher to use the LASSI on doctoral level students. Consequently, some of the subscales and questions on the LASSI may not have captured the specific experiences of doctoral students, particularly those pursuing a degree in counseling.

Recommendations

Based on the limitations above as well as the lack of statistical significance of the findings, I am presenting a few recommendations for future studies. First, I recommend additional research related to the academic strategy development process of BWDS in all counseling programs. The voice of Black women related to their process of developing strategies for success that are not also detrimental to their well-being is critical in understanding how to best serve BWDS in the future. The findings from this study reveal problematic strategies in academic strategy development related to test-taking, use of university-based resources, and time management. A qualitative study may provide greater depth as to the specific barriers to strategy development in these categories,

increasing the knowledge base of the academic community in terms of ways to support BWDS.

Secondly, I recommend the development of an instrument that encompasses academic strategy development criteria related to the experiences of students enrolled in doctoral programs online, hybrid, and face-to-face. One item on the LASSI reads "I only study the subjects I like" (Weinstein et al., 2016). The presence of this question is indicative of a program with various subject matter such as English, Mathematics, and History. However, a doctoral level program is mainly focused on the students chosen subject. Therefore, the example item is not relevant in a questionnaire designed for students completing doctoral programs.

Thirdly, I recommend researchers develop future studies with a less stringent sample population to make room for comparison among various groups. While this study aligned with the principles of Collins (1986, 2000) and BFT, highlighting the voice of the Black woman, it would be helpful to know if there are significant differences in the voiced experiences of Black woman in comparison to transgender or transracial women, or other members of the Black Indigenous People of Color group. Additionally, I recommend researchers explore additional intersectionalities of Black women such as sexuality and religious beliefs, in an effort to determine if relationship among oppressive experiences and academic strategy development changes based on the complexity of intersectionality.

Finally, I recommend researchers develop a future study which considers the other tenet of Collins' (1986, 2000) BFT. I discussed one of the tenets in the previous

paragraph which is the influence of intersectionality of personal characteristics on Black women's professional and academic experiences. The second tenet I explored in this study, which was the power of suffering and socially oppressive experiences in Black women's professional and academic experiences. The third is one I recommend researchers explore and that is the intersectionality of intellectual thoughts and beliefs of Black women in academia and the professional world. I suggest researchers present questions that explore the increase or diminishing of said thoughts and beliefs based on academic setting, support during the doctoral process, as well as the influence of the previously mentioned tenets.

Implications for Social Change

Although I did not present findings of significant relationships among microaggressions, academic strategy development, and region of upbringing, I present a call for social change based on the results of this study still. The social change implications I proposed in Chapter 1 included education for professionals related to how to show up as mentors, counselor educators, and supervisors in relationship with BWDS. Also, I wanted to use the DES themes prove-them-wrong and part-of-the-bigger whole to provide a deeper look into the often untold stories of Black women's journey to success in many cases to the detriment of their well-being. Finally, I wanted to give voice and validation to BWDS regarding their experiences with microaggressions and how it potentially directed their academic strategy development. I explore these implications for social change in the next few sections.

Individual Social Change Implications

As an individual social change implication of this study, I invite counseling professionals to review the information presented here to challenge their approach to mentoring, education, and supervision for BWDS. Such an invitation aligns with counseling professionals' duty to support students in developing academic and career strategies for success while also encouraging self-care (CACREP, 2016). By reviewing and digesting the theoretical framework, literature review, and findings of this study, counseling professionals adhere to their ethical duty to provide a culturally competent and appreciative environment for BWDS no matter the academic setting (ACA, 2014).

Organizational Social Change Implications

Collin's (1986, 2000) proposed dramatic social change, meaning social change on a mezzo or micro level. Organizational social change is change that happens on a mezzo level to create an environment in which groups work together to change or improve the experiences of oppressed or marginalized groups (De la Sablonnière, 2017). I used this study to imply organizational change by encouraging leaders in the profession to not only listen to the voices of Black but to take those voices into account when developing plans for educational curriculum, supervision models, and mentoring practices.

Global Social Change Implications

While I provide possible paths for global social change (change at the macro level) in this study, there is still more work to be done to explore the implications for global social change based on this study. My hope is that researchers, counselor educators, leaders in the counseling profession, currently enrolled BWDS, and recent

graduates review the limitations and recommendations of this study and fill the gaps with work that may extend the voices of Black women beyond counselor education, the counseling profession, and the United States. Such change happens through lobbying efforts to work towards diminishing the effects of systemic oppression and racism within the profession.

Although the year 2020 prompted many professionals to rethink how they approached interactions with marginalized groups, there remains a limited number of Black women in leadership roles in the counseling profession. BWDS continue to enroll in counselor education programs at growing rates yet are met with a grossly underrepresented presence of mentors and faculty that reflect their experiences and characteristics. The voices of Black women must not only influence education and ethical practices of the profession; the voices of Black women must be critical in how the profession validates, markets, and identifies the role and purpose of the professional globally.

Conclusion

The goal of this study was to add to the literature using a quantitative survey research methodology to determine the presence of a relationship between microaggressions, academic strategy development, and region of upbringing among BWDS in counselor education programs. I used the principles of both BFT and DES to understand the responses of the participants by focusing on the voices of Black women and recognizing that experiences with oppression largely influence how Black women operate in the profession as well as in academia (Collins, 1986, 2000; Shavers & Moore,

2014a, 2014b). While the results of the study were not statistically significant, I used the findings to explore recommendations for future research as well as implications of social change.

In the literature review I presented findings based on the experiences of Black women in academia related specifically to their strategies for success and their experiences with microaggressions. Researchers concluded the academic strategy development processes of BWDS regularly introduced a path to academic success, giving them a temporary voice in the world of their peers. However, it was not long before they began experiencing extreme diminishing qualities of overall well-being mentally, physically, emotionally, and spiritually. BWDS reported that these diminishing characteristics were often as a result of a lack of mentorship, support, supervision, and educational environments that invited their voice, experiences, and intellectual thought. Such results served as foundational elements of the design and implementation of this study.

In Chapter 5, I concluded the research study by exploring limitations to findings and the study, sharing a broader sample as well as the use of the LASSI may have played a role in the lack of statistical significance in the study. Moreover, I recommended researchers qualitatively explore academic strategy development among BWDS as well as consider the intersectional personal characteristics and intellectual thoughts and beliefs of Black when defining the sample in the future. I recommended researchers consider developing a scale designed to address the unique academic process of a doctoral

program given the limitations of the LASSI. Finally, I closed chapter with a focus on implications for social change at individual, organizational, and global levels.

Ultimately, my hope is that the results of this study spark a movement of the Black woman's voice in all aspects of the counseling profession. Additionally, I hope Black woman across the globe hear their voice in this study and are encouraged to continue telling their stories for the benefit of not only the profession, but the world. As a counseling professional it is my duty to voice to the overlooked and enhance the possibilities for those that come after me. I anticipate such happenings based on the content presented here.

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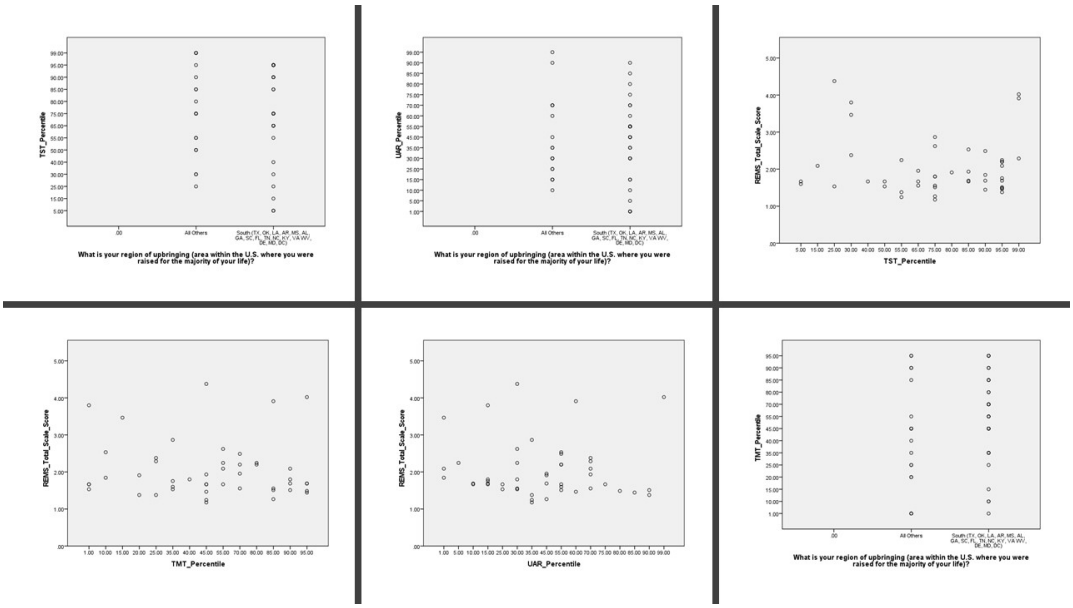
Appendix A: Scatterplots Showing Linearity and Absence of Outliers for Variables, REMS, LASSI Subscales (TST, TMT, and UAR), and Region of Upbringing



Appendix B: Figures

Figure B1

Summary of the REMS Total Score in Relation to Subscale TST from the LASSI

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.094[a]	.009	-.036	27.81559

a. Predictors: (Constant), What is your region of upbringing (area v
REMS_Total_Scale_Score

b. Dependent Variable: TST_Percentile

Figure B2

Analysis of Variance Addressing the Relationship Between the Participants' Region of Upbringing, Participants' Scores on the REMS and Participants SCORES on the Subscale TST

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	304.811	2	152.405	.197	.822[b]
	Residual	34043.104	44	773.707		
	Total	34347.915	46			

a. Dependent Variable: TST_Percentile

b. Predictors: (Constant), What is your region of upbringing (area within the U.S. where you were raised for the majority of your life)?, REMS_Total_Scale_Score

Figure B3

Summary of the REMS Total Score in Relation to subscale TMT from the LASSI

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.203[a]	.041	-.002	30.75773

a. Predictors: (Constant), What is your region of upbringing (area v
REMS_Total_Scale_Score

b. Dependent Variable: TMT_Percentile

Figure B4

Analysis of Variance Addressing the Relationship Between the Participants' Region of Upbringing, Participants' Scores on the REMS and Participants SCORES on the Subscale TMT

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	1796.281	2	898.141	.949	.395[b]
	Residual	41625.676	44	946.038		
	Total	43421.957	46			

a. Dependent Variable: TMT_Percentile

b. Predictors: (Constant), What is your region of upbringing (area within the U.S. where you were raised for the majority of your life)?, REMS_Total_Scale_Score

Figure B5

Summary of the REMS Total Score in Relation to Subscale UAR from the LASSI

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.035[a]	.001	-.044	26.82855

a. Predictors: (Constant), What is your region of upbringing (area w
REMS_Total_Scale_Score

b. Dependent Variable: UAR_Percentile

Figure B6

Analysis of Variance Addressing the Relationship Between the Participants' Region of Upbringing, Participants' Scores on the REMS and Participants SCORES on the subscale UAR

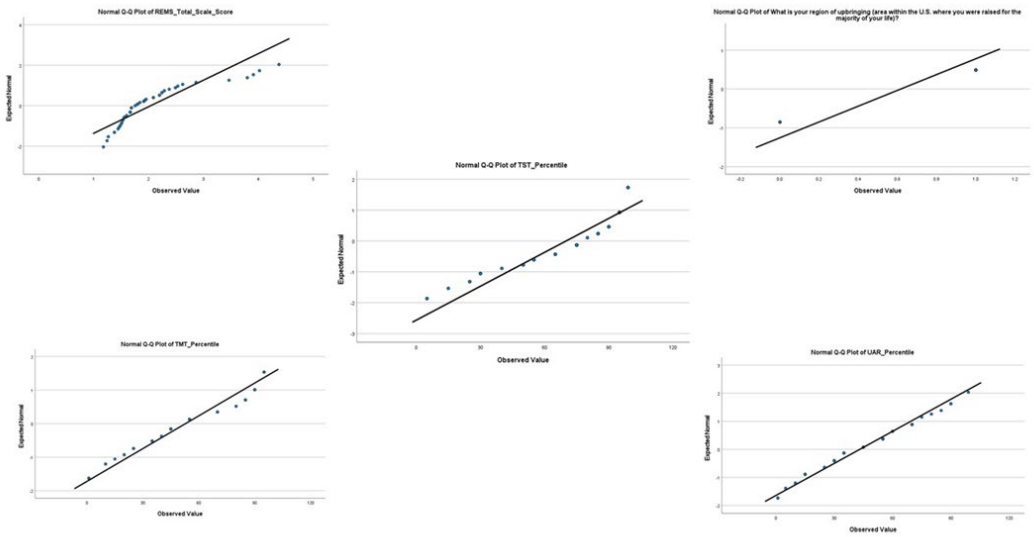
ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	39.297	2	19.648	.027	.973[b]
	Residual	31669.938	44	719.771		
	Total	31709.234	46			

a. Dependent Variable: UAR_Percentile

b. Predictors: (Constant), What is your region of upbringing (area within the U.S. where you were raised for the majority of your life)?, REMS_Total_Scale_Score

Appendix C: Q-Plots Showing Normal Distributions



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