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Gendered Racial Microaggressions' Cumulative Effects on Black Women's Psychological Well-Being

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Walden University
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Abstract

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issertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

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Abstract

Black women living in North America experience gendered racial microaggressions injurious confrontations in every social setting due to simultaneous discrimination involving race and gender. This basic qualitative research study aimed to explore the perceptions of Black women in this society with gendered racial microaggressions to discover how they perceive the cumulative effects of this phenomenon on their psychological well-being by utilizing intersectionality as the study's conceptual framework. Data collection occurred via interviews with a sample size of five Black women ages 51 and older who were born and raised in North America that self-reported experiencing gendered racial microaggressions. Participants were also asked about their perceptions of the subsequent cumulative adverse effects on their psychological well-being. Braun and Clarke's thematic analysis was used in this study to form codes and draw from these codes to identify and define six emerging themes. These themes included, Theme 1: Gendered Racism Experiences, Theme 2: The Black Woman is in Crisis, Theme 3: Grief and Loss, Theme 4: Physical Health Issues, Theme 5: Mental Health Issues, and Theme 6: Invisibility and Silencing. Key findings include the participants perceiving their experience with gendered racial microaggressions as negatively affecting their psychological well-being. Recommendations for future research are to expand the current study by having the experiences of a larger sample size of Black immigrant women with the phenomenon. Thus, as a result, augmenting social workers' practices regarding how organizations, particularly for Black women, deal with gendered racial microaggressions to promote social change and social justice on their behalf.

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MA, Cleveland State University, 2011

BS, Cleveland State University, 2000

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Dedication

To the "*Most High*" Elohim, *Creator* of all things, there was nothing made that HE did not make, including my inspiration for this discourse to the PRAISE of HIS GLORY and all for HIS Good pleasure: I am but HIS servant with a guided pen. To my beloved late husband, Alvin, may he rest in peace; I am so grateful for the loving resilience he demonstrated throughout this epic journey. Surely, he endured many long nights of my studying and yet still encouraged me when they seemed never to end, "I loved him dearly." I am very grateful for every precious moment of his patience, humbleness, our overarching growth, and unity. During our time together, we learned to always put the "*Most High*" Elohim first in our lives, and no matter what, we prevailed! He may be gone but he is not forgotten.

To my family members alive and in remembrance of those who are expired, as such, we are forever family, my *dear* brothers, my *first* friends, heroes, and lifetime confidants. I have learned so much from each of you throughout my life; thank you so much. I love you, Perry; I love you, Eugene; I love you, Ransom. I love you, GATS. I love you, Rahman. I cherish each of you immensely. Thank you for your contributions to my journey accordingly. To my precious sisters Theresa, Evonne, Evette, and Patrece, I love you; you are wonderful upon this earth! I am so grateful for your support, your laughter, and your love.

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The New Beginning

Dedication

Black Womanness

The treasure of our Black Womanness has no measure;

our spirits are ineffable, and the "Most High," our Creator,

predetermined the actuality of our existence.

It was HIS GOOD PLEASURE

to design us in these Black bodies

with HIS own loving HANDS;

molding and refining your

absolute incomparable beauty;

the knower of all things, proposing

before the foundation of the world

that there would never be another

mold HIS Black daughters

could ever fit besides

the sovereignty of HIS HANDS!

He has heard your cries!

ALL FOR HIS GLORY!

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how to finish my educational goals strong and incredibly inspired me to move forward as

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Introduction

Researchers have contended that Black women living in North America experience gendered racial microaggressions, defined as the "subtle and everyday verbal, behavioral, and environmental expressions of oppression based on the intersections of one's race and gender" (Lewis et al., 2016, p. 276). Numerous studies have further contended that gendered racial microaggressions callously affect Black women's psychological well-being, physical health, mental health, self-concept, and the role of social identity progressively (Lewis & Neville, 2015; Martins et al., 2020; Moody & Lewis, 2019; Williams & Lewis, 2019; Wright & Lewis, 2020). Gendered racial microaggressions interactions injure the respect, dignity, and worth of Black women's womanhood by devaluing their distinct manner of thinking and communicating (Lewis & Grzanka, 2016).

Correspondingly, Black women feel invisible and like second-class citizens due to society's inherent discrimination against their racial group being born "Black" and their "gender" being female. With the gendered racial microaggressions they endure without redress; Black women are North America's most unprotected and devalued population (Bent-Godley et al., 2017; Lewis et al., 2016; Martins et al., 2020; Williams & Lewis, 2019). Scholarship has been lacking on Black women's perceptions about their unique experiences with gendered racial microaggressions' cumulative effects on their psychological well-being (Lewis et al., 2016; Lewis & Neville, 2015; Martins et al., 2020; Rosenthal & Lobel, 2016). Accordingly, this study purposefully explored Black

women's experiences with gendered racial microaggressions to discover their perceptions and described experiences of the cumulative effects on their psychological well-being. The social implications of this study are evidenced by the profession of social work's obligation to adhere to empirically informed research, theories, practices, and education. Moreover, to best understand Black women's social disparities, such as the reach of racism and sexism that they are heavily burdened by every day and at every level of American society (Hicks, 2015).

Black women, due to the discrimination against their race and gender, are exposed to degrading stereotypes. These assumptions regard their womanhood, skin tone, unique manners of communication, socioeconomic status, culture, and hair textures and can manifest as low self-regard, powerlessness, and motivational deficits or lack of actualizing the totality of what they are capable of engendering (Awad et al., 2015; Bent-Goodley et al., 2017; Hicks, 2015; Mathews & Johnson, 2015). Likewise, this involves the uppermost advancement of their abilities and all-encompassing participation in and enjoyment of life in North American society. However, depriving Black women of these inherent rights because they are uniquely "Black" and a "woman" keeps this vulnerable population oppressed and marginalized (Awad et al., 2015; Bent-Goodley et al., 2017; Hicks, 2015). Consequently, Black women also experience higher risks for poor mental and physical health outcomes leading to diminished psychological well-being (Anderson, 1989; Lewis & Neville, 2015; Martins et al., 2020). Longstanding stereotypes evidence Black women's critical social disparities. These stereotypes include the angry Black woman's impoverishment, health disparities, and supposed moral inferiority.

Nonetheless, Black women have been subjected to these assumptions since slavery, which have guided their assumed lack of need compared to dominant groups, thus perpetuating their systematic oppression (Willingham, 2011). This vulnerable population's lack of access to early-detection screening tests increases the statistics of preventable diseases (e.g., colorectal and cervical cancer; American Cancer Society, 2014). Researchers have further stipulated that Black women are also dying disproportionately, 14% higher by all cancer combinations than White women (American Cancer Society, 2014).

Accordingly, for Black women facing these healthcare disparities, their lifespans are consequently shortened (American Cancer Society, 2014). Correspondingly, Black women's equitable participation in this society has been diminished (Lewis et al., 2017), a situation exacerbated by gendered racial microaggressions exchanges. Therefore, in addressing these social conditions, social workers reflect advocacy measures supported by empirically based knowledge (Bent-Goodley et al., 2017). Social workers can now systematically educate the community, policymakers, and the political domains about Black women's unique needs to advocate for long-term solutions to effect positive social change and promote social justice on their behalf.

Chapter 1 presents a discussion of the background of the study. An account of the research problem is also offered, which clarifies the most recent research that addressed the scholarship gap regarding the subject matter, reinforcing its necessity in this study. The study's purpose, significance to social work, and implications for social change are discussed. Key term definitions and the research question are presented, in addition to

elucidating the framework that emphasizes its relevance to the study. The study's

assumptions, scope and delimitations, limitations, and significance follow. This chapter

concludes with a synopsis and transitions to Chapter 2.

Background of the Study

Black women experience gendered racial microaggressions incessantly every day

in social settings in North American society. For example, there is a societal expectation

that all Black women fit the stereotype of the angry Black woman, upholding the premise

that all Black women are intimidating, argumentative, emasculating, and unfeminine

(Durr & Wingfield, 2011). Martin et al. (2020) claimed that gendered racial

microaggressions adversely affected Black women's psychological well-being, their self-

esteem, and the role of their social identity. These interactions are subtly oppressive

enactments of racism, and sexism delivered verbally, behaviorally, and environmentally

that demean their race and gender (Lewis et al., 2013). Lewis and Neville (2015) created

the Gendered Racial Microaggressions Scale (GRMS), an intersectional instrument, to

measure Black women's gendered racism subtleties.

Specifically, researchers have determined that these stereotypic interactions

berated Black women's womanhood and injured their subjective perceptions of

themselves individually and collectively (Bent-Goodley et al., 2017; Dunn et al., 2019;

Lewis & Neville, 2015). Researchers have further indicated that three forms of

microaggressions exist Black women living in North America experience namely,

denouncing microinsults, microassaults, and microinvalidations (Harrison & Tanner,

2018; Sue et al., 2007, p. 256). Microinsults reflect covert insults delivered to a targeted

individual, such as a Black woman, to cause the individual harm. For example, a person may walk up to a Black woman who is a doctor and say, "I bet your family never imagined you would become a doctor "(Sue et al., 2007). Microassaults denote specific actions, including discrimination, exclusions, and racial slurs, to humiliate, objectify, and shame Black women about their womanhood's natural features. The Rutgers University women's basketball team was called "*nappy-headed hoes*" by Don Imus, an MSNBC host, while broadcasting during airtime (Wachs et al., 2012). Microinvalidations are the intentional or unintentional denial, exclusion, or disregard of a Black person's thoughts, ideas, feelings, and unique existence, demonstrated by comments such as "sometimes I forget you are Black" or "you are just like one of us" (Williams et al., 2020).

Black women also experience similar racial slurs about their cultural values, intelligence, communication skills, and citizenship (Awad et al., 2015; Lewis et al., 2016; Lewis & Neville, 2015; Martins et al., 2020). Gendered racial microaggressions are the underpinnings of racism and sexism maintained by controlling images and historical stereotypes about Black women's racial group, such as the Mammy, the loyal servant, and the promiscuous Jezebel (Essed, 1991; Griffin, 2012; Lewis et al., 2016; Martins et al., 2020; Perry et al., 2013; Rodgers, 2017). These gendered racial microaggressions are inescapable and perpetuate Black women's marginalization experiences (Awad et al., 2015; Lewis & Neville, 2015). Likewise, whether deliberate or inadvertently provoked, these behaviors collectively communicate hostile and pejorative messages against Black women (Bent-Goodley et al., 2017; Lewis et al., 2016; Rodgers, 2017; Sue et al., 2007).

Therefore, gendered racial microaggressions have also destroyed the respect, dignity, and worth of Black women. Likewise, they have degraded how they think and communicate despite navigating through the effects of their persistent psychological stressors, as no other group of women living in North America has had to withstand (Lewis & Grzanka, 2016; National Association of Social Workers, 2015; Rodgers, 2017). This study can actively raise the awareness of social workers, policymakers, and society by serving as a platform that supports Black women's perspectives and described experiences of the oppressive conditions they endure living in North America (Lewis & Grzanka, 2016). Black women in this society have been oppressed, marginalized, subjugated, and objectified on every level of their lives as normalcy with no reprieve (Baalbaki, 2019). As such, given this misrepresentation of Black womanhood due to discrimination against Black women's interlocking race and gender, social work professionals are ethically compelled to enhance Black women's psychological well-being as individuals and collectively on the micro, mezzo, and macro levels of their lives (Bent-Goodley et al., 2017; Broussard, 2013; Corbin et al., 2018; Hicks, 2015; Lewis et al., 2016; Martins et al., 2020; Rodgers, 2017; Tatum, 1993).

Problem Statement

McClellan (2012) postulated that Black women had been historically burdened by the relentless forces of oppression and gendered racism. Black women's social identities have been abridged and confounded to the extent that they lack the buffering effects of self-esteem's survival mechanisms that promote mental health, physical health, and psychological well-being (Martins et al., 2020), which McClellan (2012) further

described as "lenses of interlocking forms of domination" (p. 91). Collins, P. H. (2000) defined the phenomenon as "forms of intersecting oppression." According to DuMonthier et al. (2016), oppressive restraints are placed upon Black women socially, politically, as individuals, and as a racial group in everything, they attempt to do in North America. Black women are experiencing constant confrontation of gendered racial microaggressions condemning their Blackness and womanhood through debasing stereotypes that are likely to question their intelligence, cultural values, and leadership roles.

Furthermore, Black women at the state and federal political levels are consistently underrepresented. Whereas in 2014, Black women composed 6.4 % of America's population, yet as of August 2016, Black women served in only 3.4% of the seats in the Congress in the United States and none in the Senate (DuMonthier et al., 2016). Black women held only 3.5 % of the legislature seats; in the states of Connecticut and Kentucky, only two Black women have ever held a position in the statewide executive elected office (DuMonthier et al., 2016). Black women of all ages are disproportionately imprisoned compared to White women. In 2014, 109 per 100,000 Black women were imprisoned in state and federal prisons, in contrast to 53 per 100,000 White women (DuMonthier et al., 2016).

Black women ages 18–19 are four times more likely to be incarcerated than White women of the same age group, at a rate of 32 per 100,000. Additionally, Black women are impoverished at a higher rate than Black men and all other racial groups other than Native American women; a quarter of Black women in the United States are living in

poverty (24.6%), compared to 18.9% of Black men and 10.8% of White women, who have the lowest impoverishment of all women (DuMonthier et al., 2016). Likewise, 40% of Black women experience violent physical attacks by an intimate partner over their lifetime (41.2%), in contrast to 31.5% of all women.

Black women are also dying due to health care disparities, and they had the highest occurrence of heart attacks between 1999 and 2013, at a rate of 177.7 per 100,000, among other racial and ethnic groups. Black women have the second-highest rate of dying from lung cancer at 35.7 per 100,000 among women's largest racial and ethnic groups (DuMonthier et al., 2016). Moreover, researchers have reported that gendered racism experiences are associated more significantly with Black women's experiences of depression, overall psychological distress, posttraumatic stress symptoms, diminished levels of existential well-being, and severe health concerns (Carr et al., 2014; Moradi & Subich, 2003; Szymanski & Stewart, 2010; Thomas et al., 2008; Watson et al., 2016). Lewis and Neville's (2015) study further indicated that over 90% of Black women had experienced at least one gendered racial microaggression in their lifetime.

According to Jones and Shorter-Gooden (2003), from empirical findings concerning Black women's distinct experiences with oppression, a fundamental theme emerged regarding oppressive exclusion tactics, indicating that white supremacists used these tactics because they are Black women. Researchers insist that to sympathize with Black women's suffering, researchers must consider incorporating general psychological processes to understand the associations between discrimination and Black women's race and gender (Martins et al., 2020).

Although abolishing slavery was supposed to have taken place in 1865, the berated social conditions of the Black women living in North America refute these claims, given that Black women's respect, dignity, and worth as human beings have yet to be rectified in this society. Consequently, Black women are disadvantaged and unprotected, unlike any other women in this society. Moreover, they are more at risk than any other women of being racially profiled, brutalized by police, and murdered (DuMonthier et al., 2016). Further, at least 20% of Black women are raped in their lifetimes. Systematically, Black women are struggling for their human rights and face long-term consequences of exclusions socially, economically, politically, occupationally, educationally, and psychologically, *being inescapably* Black women in North America (DuMonthier et al., 2016).

Correspondingly, this basic qualitative research study aimed to "seek to discover and understand a phenomenon, a process, or the perspectives and worldviews of the people involved" (Caelli et al., 2003, p. 2). As such, a significant gap has been exposed about how Black women's social realities have been historically burdened by oppression. However, to this present day, they still face the traumatic effects of gendered racism invoked upon them every day in this society, given that they are Black and women; this study helped fill in the literature about this phenomenon. To date, Black women's experiences with gendered racial microaggressions have not been thoroughly examined in the scholarly literature to understand their perceptions and described experiences of the cumulative effects on their psychological well-being (Lewis et al., 2016; Martins et al., 2020).

Purpose of the Study

This basic qualitative study aimed to explore Black women's perceptions and described experiences of the cumulative effects of gendered racial microaggressions on their psychological well-being. For data collection, I conducted face-to-face semistructured interviews with five participants; I achieved the study's goal regarding data saturation by asking open-ended questions to answer the study's research question from the rich, in-depth responses I gained from the participants about this phenomenon.

Research Question

What are Black women's perceptions and described experiences of the cumulative effects of gendered racial microaggressions on their psychological well-being?

Conceptual Framework

Crenshaw (1991), a Black feminist, first coined the term *intersectionality* in the 1980s, theorizing that Black women's experiences within the restraints of their race and gender independently were inexplicable and illuminated the systematic oppression that Black women experienced in society, leading to their devalued social positioning (Carbado et al., 2013). The conceptual framework of intersectionality has many definitions; however, for this study, it is best defined as "the complex, cumulative way in which the effects of multiple forms of discrimination, such as racism and sexism combine, overlap, or intersect especially in the experiences of marginalized individuals or groups" (Ryan, 2019, p. 172), such as Black women. Bowleg (2012) asserted that intersectionality's core tenets indicate that social identities are multiple, intersecting, and

not self-regulating or one-dimensional. Second, intersectionality, since its inception, has

historically focused on marginalized and oppressed groups.

Third, multiple microlevel social identities, such as race, gender, and

socioeconomic status, intersect with racism, sexism, and poverty, provoking distinctive

health outcomes. Correspondingly, Crenshaw (1989) asserted that there are four

approaches researchers can apply to describe Black women's lived experiences; for

example, Black women's experiences with racism and sexism can be similar to those of

White women and Black men. In contrast, the researchers also argued that Black women

could experience double jeopardy or double oppression (e.g., to be Black and a woman;

Crenshaw, 1989; Thomas et al., 2008). Another intersectionality phenomenon that Black

women can experience is the interaction of race and gender oppression (Moradi &

Subich, 2003). Accordingly, Black women can experience specific oppression unique to

Black women based on the intersection of their race and gender (Crenshaw, 1989;

Thomas et al., 2008).

For this research study, the conceptual framework of intersectionality's race and

gender approach was best for operationalizing and understanding the phenomenon.

Therefore, intersectionality further explains how Black women's intersecting social

identities interlock into one experience shaping what occurs during gendered racial

microaggressions' unrelenting "subtle and everyday verbal, behavioral, and

environmental expressions of oppression based on the intersection of one's race and

gender" (Lewis et al., 2013, p. 51). Researchers have asserted that gendered racial

microaggressions are a form of oppression enacted against Black women to maintain their powerlessness (Palmer et al., 2019).

Besides, intersectionality underscores that Black women's oppression is distinct and accelerated by their simultaneous interlocking racial and gender identities (Bowleg, 2008; Cole, 2009; Crenshaw, 1989; Lewis & Neville, 2015; Moradi & Subich, 2003; Thomas et al., 2008). The literature suggested that Black women are more likely to be exposed to stressful interactions (e.g., gendered racial microaggressions; Franklin, 2016; Lewis & Neville, 2015). Furthermore, these displays of discrimination involve White privilege and power orchestrated through gendered racial microaggressions' unrelenting acts of prejudice and discrimination against Black women individually, institutionally, and culturally (Franklin, 2016; Lewis & Neville, 2015). They are toxic stressors to Black women from many different sources, subjecting them to high degrees of gendered racism (Franklin, 2016; Lewis & Neville, 2015).

The proliferation of stress has a cumulative disadvantage predicting an ongoing exacerbation of diminished psychological well-being among Black women's victimizing experiences with incessant gendered racism perpetrated consciously and unconsciously within individuals, institutions, and society through gendered racial microaggressions (Franklin, 2016; Lewis & Neville, 2015). Accordingly, researchers have postulated that racism is toxic, as evidenced by its cumulative effects on Black women's lives. For example, empirical studies have found that perceived discrimination against one's social identity has adverse effects, such as the cumulative psychological distress related to the frequency of experiences with gendered racial microaggressions that increase over time

and are only experienced in this manner by Black women (Baalbaki, 2019; Goodman, 2015; Lewis et al., 2016; Lewis & Neville, 2015; Martins et al., 2020).

Lewis and Neville (2015) discussed their development of the GRMS to measure the frequency and stress appraisal of gendered racial microaggressions that Black women experienced to find the relationship between gendered racial microaggressions and psychological distress. This study's findings indicated that Black women who perceived a greater frequency of gendered racial microaggressions also experienced more psychological distress (Lewis & Neville, 2015). In particular, employing this framework is fundamental to understanding Black women's experiences with gendered racial microaggressions to explore their perceptions and described experiences of its cumulative effects on their psychological well-being due to their overlapping identities of race and gender, given that they are Black and also women.

Additionally, Black women's experiences with oppression, discrimination, objectification, and marginalization are perpetuated in this society to keep them subjugated because they do not fit White supremacy values (Carbado et al., 2013; Crenshaw, 1989; Rodgers, 2017). Therefore, intersectionality's analytical cultural aspects reflect the complexities of Black women's distinct social realities with double oppression, which uphold their dehumanization as individuals and as a group. Furthermore, intersectionality as a framework is vital to answering the study's research question, considering that its concentration is on the unique form of oppression that Black women experience during gendered racial microaggressions (Crenshaw, 1989; Essed, 1991; Holder et al., 2015; Jones et al., 2017; Lewis et al., 2016; Sue et al., 2007; Martins et al.,

2020). Hence, this study's intersectionality framework's application created an ethnologically appropriate exploration of Black women's perceptions of their experiences with the cumulative effects of gendered racial microaggressions on their psychological well-being. In Chapter 2, I will present a more in-depth elucidation of intersectionality's conceptualization relevant to this study.

Nature of the Study

This basic qualitative study focuses on participant's descriptions of their experiences according to what they perceived took place, seeking to discover the meaningfulness of the participant's viewpoint to develop an explanation of the phenomenon according to the participant's subjective knowledge, worldviews, and beliefs, to magnify the significance of understanding their interpretations (Creswell, 2009; Kahlke, 2014). Accordingly, qualitative research utilizes the researcher as the central instrument for collecting data during the semistructured interviews that will be conducted (Creswell, 2013; Kahlke, 2014).

As such, asking open-ended questions to explore the in-depth responses from the study's five participants and field notes for data analysis that will be "highly inductive; the use of open codes, and thematic analysis is most common" (Kahlke, 2014, p. 13). Yet, basic qualitative studies also can operate independently since they are "not guided by an explicit or established set of philosophical assumptions in the form of one of the known or more established qualitative methodologies" (Kahlke, 2014, p. 39). Therefore, a basic qualitative approach is optimal for understanding Black women's experiences with gendered racial microaggressions by exploring their perspectives on the cumulative

effects of gendered racial microaggressions on their psychological well-being (Pittman, 2010; Spates et al., 2019).

Definitions

Chicken necking: A term with negative connotations referring to a unique means of communication used by Black women when they purposefully move their heads back and forth to make a point, to indicate displeasure and feelings of being disrespected or threatened (Livingstone & Palmer, 2016).

Controlling images: Serve to make racism, sexism, poverty, and other forms of social injustice depicted seem commonplace and inevitable parts of everyday life (Lewis et al., 2016).

Cumulative effects: are specific elements tending to accumulate or arise from accumulation over an extended period (Martin et al., 2020).

Gendered racial microaggressions: are defined as "The subtle and everyday verbal, behavioral, and environmental expressions of oppression based on the intersection of one's race and gender" (Lewis & Neville, 2015, p. 292).

Intersectionality: Describes how an individual's race, gender, class, and other specific characteristics "intersect" with each other, resulting in an overlap of these distinct qualities (Crenshaw, 1989, p. 152).

Marginalized populations: Represent the process of relegating, downgrading, or excluding individuals, groups, and communities from the benefits of society due to inequities of power socially, culturally, economically, and politically (Dwivedi, 2007).

Psychological well-being: Involves the ability to enjoy being happy and content, engaging in autonomy, personal mastery, positive relationships, purposefulness in life, and personal growth and development (Dodge et al., 2012).

Assumptions

First, there was an assumption that this study's participants would be forthright in the responses they disclosed during the interview. I expected each participant's response to demonstrate their experiences, perceptions, and beliefs about the phenomenon. Second, I assumed that each participant would value their rigorous involvement in the study according to its criteria. Third, using a qualitative methodology of interviewing participants, I assumed that rich and robust in-depth accounts of participants' experiences would be obtained, thus answering the study's research question.

Fourth, I assumed that this basic qualitative study would be an appropriate platform to actuate Black women's voices about what they had experienced with gendered racial microaggressions and how it affected their psychological well-being, which might not be generalizable to this population at large due to the small sample size. Cleary et al. (2014) discussed issues concerning the dynamics that make up qualitative research, such as the importance of obtaining meaningful responses from participants during face-to-face interviews. Cleary et al. (2014) further argued that despite the small sample size of five participants in a research study, assuming that the researcher will gain an abundance of insight from its findings.

Scope and Delimitations

In this study, I explored women who "identified" as Black women of African descent born and raised *only* in North America. Therefore, this study's scope contained *only* Black women who self-reported their experiences with the cumulative effects of gendered racial microaggressions on their psychological well-being as listed on the demographic questionnaire (see Appendix A). Correspondingly, during the initial phone contact, I answered participants' questions, clarifying their concerns. I also discussed the study's conceptual framework, intersectionality, and the construct of gendered racial microaggressions. I explained in simple terms how they were associated with Black women's oppression, excluding those Black women who self-reported that they had not experienced this phenomenon. Although this study's delimitation was of Black women living in North American society, I will present the detailed steps taken throughout the research study's data collection and analysis for the study findings' transferability. Likewise, participants' rich, in-depth responses to my study's findings offer future researchers a means to compare conclusions regarding the study's finding's transferability.

Limitations, Challenges, and/or Barriers

This basic qualitative study's limitations included its exploratory underpinnings, which may collectively hinder the findings' transferability and generalizability to Black women. Likewise, the small study size inhibited the generalizability of the findings to Black women as a group. Researchers have discussed the tenets of qualitative research, highlighting sampling and its significance, suggesting that participants possess detailed

expert information about the topic when they are homogeneous. Since they were selected prudently, I gained pertinent data from such a small sampling (Cleary et al., 2014). Another limitation was being Black, a woman who had also experienced gendered racial microaggressions in this society, in that personal bias could have arisen in the study. Therefore, as the researcher, I was aware of how my positionalities, such as my role as the researcher, culture, background, and experiences, shaped the data collection and analyses and, thus, the scholarship's objective to mitigate emerging bias (Ravitch & Carl, 2016).

To stay connected to the study's goals, I upheld my collaborative relationships with my committee members and the study's participants, which helped to safeguard against researcher bias, therefore strengthening the analysis of the data collection and the credibility of the study's findings (Patton, 2015). Likewise, I did not expect the interview questions presented to exceed the probability and magnitude of similar physical and psychological reactions experienced in daily life physically and psychologically (Burkholder & Crawford, 2016; Dongre & Sankaran, 2016). Another limitation was the possibility of a participant having an emotional response and becoming distressed; if this had occurred, the interview would have ceased until the participant felt they could move forward comfortably. Subsequently, I sought to protect the participant's overall value throughout their involvement in this study. Moreover, I accordingly contacted each participant the day after the interview for debriefing (Creswell, 2009; Jamshed, 2014; Lewis et al., 2016; Queirós & Faria, 2017).

Significance of Study

       The significance of this study was that it presented an opportunity for social work professionals to raise both their personal and societal awareness of Black women's critical social and human conditions with the misrepresentation of their Blackness and womanhood in this society due to the discrimination of the intersection of their race and gender (Bent-Goodley et al., 2017; Broussard, 2013; Rodgers, 2017; Tatum, 1993). Moreover, the social worker, policymakers, and community members informed by this study's findings can also provide the psychosocial support Black women require according to the distinct oppressive challenges they face daily and in every setting in North America. It also evoked the social work professional's obligation to focus on empowering and meeting this vulnerable population's needs to enhance their well-being in this society, individually, interpersonally, and contextually (Hicks, 2015). Furthermore, through this study, I sought to identify the adverse effect of these disparaging challenges on Black women's social realities through oppression, subjugation, objectification, and marginalization with no reprieve (Baalbaki, 2019).

       The study served as a platform to support Black women's experiences with gendered racial microaggressions to discover their perceptions and described experiences of cumulative effects on their psychological well-being, thus giving voice to the dehumanizing living conditions in North America (Corbin et al., 2018). This study's findings will make a timely contribution to the social work scholarship regarding this previously unexamined phenomenon (Corbin et al., 2018). Additionally, with such insight, the social worker can address these social conditions on the micro, mezzo, and

macro levels within the social work education, community, policy, and political domains. Correspondingly, the social worker can advocate for long-term solutions to change Black women's lives. Do so effecting positive social change and the promotion of social justice on their behalf (Ashley, 2014; Broussard, 2013; Collins, P. H., 2000; Crenshaw, 1989; Griffin, 2012; Lewis et al., 2016; Martins et al., 2020; National Association of Social Workers, 2015; Reamer, 2006; Walley-Jean, 2009; Woodard & Mastin, 2005).

Summary

Chapter 1 provided an overview of Black women's experiences with gendered microaggressions' deleterious effects on their psychological well-being while living in North America due to discrimination involving the intersection of their race and gender. This chapter also illustrated that this study aimed to explore Black women's perceptions and described experiences of the cumulative effects of gendered racial microaggressions on their psychological well-being. Accordingly, I clarified the contributions to this study's scholarship in this chapter. Chapter 2 provides an exhaustive literature review on the topic of interest, including the iterative process beginning with the literature search strategies. A list of the library's search engines and databases and the key terms utilized to locate the available scholarship associated with the topic of inquiry are included.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

This study illuminated the distinct oppression that Black women experience during gendered racial microaggression assaults, insults, and invalidations because of discrimination related to their membership in two minority groups (e.g., race and gender), shaping what occurs during these interactions (Lewis & Neville, 2015; Lewis et al., 2016). Essed (1991) argued that Black women experienced racism personally and institutionally, demonstrating daily covert barriers, put-downs, and condescension. Essed further elaborated that racism was historically rooted deep in North American societal values and demeaning judgments about Black women's gender roles.

This study aimed to explore Black women's perceptions and described experiences of the cumulative effects of gendered racial microaggressions on their psychological well-being. This chapter will present Black women's experiences with gendered racial microaggression exchanges through an exhaustive literature review specific to their race and gender. I analyzed research specific to Black women's critical social conditions in this society perpetuated by discrimination involving their race and gender intersections. In this literature review, I also analyzed these pejorative assumptions that marginalized, subjugated, and objectified Black women's womanhood through stereotypes and controlling images. As an illustration, the angry Black woman stereotype deems Black women individually and as a group irascible according to North American standards of communication styles.

Black women's denial of their human rights to respect, dignity, and worth in this society as normalcy due to discrimination against their Blackness and their womanhood is arguable and must be addressed, which this study supported based on its findings (Lewis et al., 2015; Wright & Lewis, 2020). In this literature review, I examine Black women's experiences with gendered racial microaggression exchanges, discovering their perceptions and described experiences about the cumulative effects of this phenomenon on their psychological well-being.

Accordingly, this literature review was essential to understanding the complex nature of Black women's double oppression, the constant dehumanizing social interactions against them during gendered racial microaggressions, and the cumulative adverse effects of these exchanges on their psychological well-being. Chapter 2 provides an exhaustive literature review on the topic of interest. The chapter begins with an overview of the literature review search strategies, including the library search engines and databases used and a list of key search terms, which as the researcher, I utilized to locate the available scholarship associated with the topic of inquiry.

Literature Search Strategy

I conducted an extensive search of the existing literature and identified germane scholarship; I used Walden University's Library resources and Google Scholar's electronic library links. Primarily, I conducted this search for databases associated with the subject matter of the inquiry; these were prime resources for peer-reviewed journals, dissertations, and other associated studies about my topic. Key search words included *Black women*, *African American women*, *devaluation*, *oppression*, *power*, *privilege*,

racism, *sexism*, *microaggressions*, *People of Color*, *racial microaggressions*, *gendered racial microaggressions*, *gendered racism*, *controlling imageries*, *marginalization*, *oppression*, *discrimination*, *psychological well-being*, and the concept of intersectionality to find peer-reviewed articles. I also used SocINDEX, ERIC, Thoreau Multi-Database Search, SAGE Journals, and Google Scholar databases.

I found that Thoreau was an easy tool to conduct literature searches across library databases and locate articles related to my topic about Black women's perception and described experiences with gendered racial microaggressions over various social settings within a time frame from 1960–1970 to the present. However, this is not to imply that this was the baseline determination of the range of the literature review I utilized, as other timelines were also crucial to this study. I also analyzed contextual information on Black women's social struggles amid the civil rights movement, the feminist movement, and currently and examined whether the same oppressive challenges Black women experienced during those times are still as pervasive in contemporary society.

Notwithstanding, searching all areas of the scholarship related to Black women's experiences with gendered racial microaggressions' cumulative effects on their psychological well-being evidenced a lack of research in this area. I broadened the topic's potentiality by searching for each variable separately; for example, it was more effective to explore the cumulative effects of microaggressions rather than gendered racial microaggressions' cumulative effects due to the lack of supporting articles. Thus, I began to review literature that did not have the exact topic yet was still relative to the inquiry, which opened a plethora of detailed information that supported the study's purpose.

Therefore expanding the ability to utilize other components related to the topic of interest that I might have overlooked during my literature review. Also, by deconstructing the variables of the study's research question (What are Black women's perceptions and described experiences of the cumulative effects of gendered racial microaggressions on their psychological well-being?), I not only added to my word search list but also gained more articles related to my topic. For example, I not only reviewed the scholarship on Black women, but also checked the literature on African Americans, People of Color and microaggressions, and gendered racism and found data specific to Black women's experiences within these articles, which was the baseline for the search associated with the study's topic of interest. Then I merged all the relevant data I found on my topic of interest and established an exhaustive literature review.

Conceptual Framework

Intersectionality History

Intersectionality's historical context in Black feminism is inclusive of its predecessors, such as Anna Julia Cooper's first Black feminist book, *A Voice from the South*, published in 1892 (Cooper, 1892); the idea of "double jeopardy" illustrated in Beal (1970); "multiple jeopardy" efforts; and the Combahee River Collective, which first met in 1974 (Carastathis, 2014, p 305). Another Black feminist, Sojourner Truth, in 1851 a freed slave, delivered her infamous and still-controversial *Ain't I a Woman?* speech in Akron, Ohio, at the Women's Convention amid a tumultuous crowd occurring at a time when most women did not have the gall to open their mouths in a meeting, as such documenting intersectionality for the first time (Crenshaw, 1989). Sojourner Truth,

speaking in deep yet not loud tones, her words echoing throughout the house and the

surrounding areas outside, every ear attuning to her voice, proclaimed her experiences,

stating,

> Well, children, where there is so much racket, there must be something out of
>
> kilter. I think that 'twixt the negroes of the South and the women at the North, all
>
> talking about rights, the White men will be in a fix pretty soon. But what's all this
>
> here talking about? That man over there says that women need to be helped into
>
> carriages, and lifted over ditches, and to have the best place everywhere. Nobody
>
> ever helps me into carriages, or over mud-puddles, or gives me any best place!
>
> And ain't I a woman? Look at me! Look at my arm! I have ploughed and planted,
>
> and gathered into barns, and no man could head me! And ain't I a woman? I could
>
> work as much and eat as much as a man when I could get it and bear the lash as
>
> well! And ain't I a woman? (As cited in Crenshaw, 1989, p. 149)

Hence, the facets of being a woman were confronted by Sojourner Truth in this

speech specific to her experiences being Black and a woman, reflecting her race and

gender-exclusive mutuality (Bowleg, 2012). Truth questioned not getting helped into a

carriage, over a puddle of mud, or being given the best place. She further stipulated that

this could not be what it means to be a woman because she was a woman and never

received any of the allotments that women should receive (Bowleg, 2012; Crenshaw,

1989). Sojourner Truth, a 19th-century Black feminist, boldly confronted patriarchy and

White feminists seeking to enfold Black women's history while resigning their absolute

interest in whiteness. The question "Ain't I a woman?" echoes today, and "when feminist

theory and politics that claim to reflect women's experiences and the aspirations of women yet exclude Black women, Black women must declare, 'Ain't we women?'" (Bowleg, 2012, para. 8).

Intersectionality as a concept emerged as a pivotal influence of the women's movement from 1960 until the latter part of the 1980s; in this era, scholars began to use intersectionality's concepts in their practices. Such scholars included Dill (1983) and hooks (1981), who discussed the exclusions of Black women and critiqued the context of these exclusions in institutional practices. King (1988) addressed efforts regarding "interlocking oppression" (Crenshaw, 1989). Accordingly, Black feminists in the 1970s and 1980s viewed intersectionality through the lens of the material world and experiences as a means of replacement for single-axis viewpoints such as those that focused just on gender, race, or class and not taking into consideration the multiple types of oppression simultaneously that Black women experience due to their race and gender collectively (Jones & Sula, 2017).

Meanwhile, White feminist theorists failed to disclose that the privileges bestowed upon them based on their race, sexuality, and social class indicated their failure to acknowledge how their feminist notions also perpetuated racism, heterosexism, and classism (Crenshaw, 1989). Moreover, in response to the exclusion of Black women, Kimberlé Crenshaw, a Black woman who was also a law professor and an activist, introduced the term *intersectionality* as a metaphor to describe the social, political, and economical ways in which identity-based oppressive systems overlap, connect, and

influence one another, which had emerged from the elements deliberated in critical race

theory (Crenshaw, 1989).

Crenshaw (1989, 1991) described intersectionality as an interdisciplinary theory

stemming from Black feminist and critical race theory as a tool to understand the

marginalization of Black women bound in antidiscrimination law and antiracist theory.

McCall's (2005) discussion emphasized that feminist and anti-racist theories overlook

Black women's experiences, implying that all women are White and all Black people are

men, disregarding Black women's experiences. In her article "Demarginalizing the

Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine,

Feminist Theory, and Anti-Racist Politics," Crenshaw (1989) used a descriptive metaphor

of a traffic-jammed intersection to parallel Black women's experiences of discrimination.

Moreover, Crenshaw (1989) declared,

> Discrimination, like traffic through an intersection, may flow in one direction, and
>
> it may flow in another. If an accident happens in an intersection, it can be caused
>
> by cars traveling from any number of directions and, sometimes, from all of them.
>
> (p. 149)

Conversely, this metaphor revealed the incessant injuries that marginalized

populations such as Black women experience exclusively due to racism or sexism or

merely the cumulative racism and sexism from the outcome of multiple Black women's

experiences with oppression at the intersection where racism and sexism crash, critically

injuring Black women individually and collectively (Crenshaw, 1989; Nash, 2010).

Nevertheless, determining what caused the accident is not easy because the skid markings

and the injuries indicate what happened did so simultaneously, perplexing the determination of which of the drivers is responsible for the harm (Crenshaw, 1991).

Correspondingly, Black women's experiences with racism are not because they are Black, nor do they experience sexism because they are women (Crenshaw, 1989). Black women experience a distinct type of oppression because they are Black women. So, viewing these tenets through the lens of intersectionality, a racism-alone or sexism-alone scope, cannot acceptably encapsulate Black women's experiences. However, an intersectional framework reverberates their simultaneous experiences within the totality of both racism and sexism (Crenshaw, 1989).

Social Power

Social power is the capacity of dominant groups to control subordinate groups' social processes and outcomes by providing or withdrawing resources (e.g., employment, education, and housing; Fiske & Depret, 1996; Keltner et al., 2003; Magee & Galinsky, 2008). French and Raven (1959) postulated that social power has six components: reward power, coercive power, referent power, legitimate power, expert power, and informational power. Specifically, reward power demonstrates an entity's ability to render rewards to those individuals who follow their viewpoints—for example, an employer giving unique gifts only to those who rally around them, laughing at their jokes, and not to those who do not (Blass, 2015; French & Raven, 1959). Coercive power is operating when individuals yield in fear to avoid punitive actions; however, this assertion is short-term, given that it loses its effectiveness, creating resentments resulting in the relationship's dissolution (Blass, 2015; French & Raven, 1959).

Referent power occurs when individuals desire to be like someone in authority, identifying with that person as a role model based on their position and power. Moreover, this person esteems the person of power to the extent they embrace the person's values and normalcy of positive or negative behaviors (Blass, 2015; French & Raven, 1959). Legitimate power is indicative of the position a person holds over another person. Thus, this social power purports positional control; as an illustration, the person in power dictates that subordinates must listen to them because they have authority over them, as such legitimate power endorses an individual's devaluation in preference to their valued role of authority.

Expert power upholds the adage that knowledge is power (Blass, 2015; French, 1959). Furthermore, expert power points to expertise or an individual's specific knowledge as power. However, their specialist understanding is lacking in unfamiliar areas of competence; for example, a well-versed cardiologist cannot effectively advise a pulmonary patient about their lungs' condition based on their expertise as a cardiologist. Expert power denotes how individuals efficiently comply with advice based on their perception of the presenter's knowledge (Blass, 2015; French & Raven, 1959). The release of information shapes informational power, and it is the most transitory form of social power when disclosing information (e.g., a secret). By doing so, the person has also given an aspect of their emotional power away (Blass, 2015). Informational power differs from other kinds of social power, given that it is based on what is known about the disclosure of a specific situation. Other forms of social power are independent of the content (Blass, 2015; French & Raven, 1959).

Researchers have claimed that the social impetus of the possession and preservation of social power is highly sought after in North America, according to McClelland and Burnham (1977). Therefore, social power's implications regarding how individuals perceive their social realities are far-reaching. Thus, social power entities over resources (e.g., government institutions) regulate subordinate groups' access to resources on multiple levels of exchanges by communicating their preferences and indifferences on all societal levels about certain groups (Frijda & Mesquita, 1994; Keltner & Haidt, 1999; Van Kleef, 2009). As such, social power influences the emotions and behaviors of the individuals experiencing them and those perceiving them, thereby increasing the capacities of their social power to maintain power and restraint, thus revealing their true nature (Kraus et al., 2011; Van Kleef et al., 2004).

Given the discrimination against Black women's intersection of race and gender, they are the most devalued and unprotected women in North America (Crenshaw, 1989). Marginalized and oppressed, they are also directly confronted by the systematic power of the dominant group with the sole purpose of keeping them restricted and subjugated (Kraus et al., 2011; Van Kleef et al., 2004). Likewise, this leads to unfair practices involving the inaccessibility of resource allocations, instigated by White supremacy's interlaced hostilities about their racial group (Frijda & Mesquita, 1994; Keltner & Haidt, 1999; Van Kleef, 2009). Thus, because they are Black women, their dignity and worth as human beings are disregarded because they do not fit White supremacy values (Carbado et al., 2013; Crenshaw, 1989; DuMonthier et al., 2016; Lewis & Grzanka, 2016; Palmer et al., 2019; Rodgers, 2017; Williams, 2020).

The social structure of this society has perpetuated white supremacy's power through their ideologies and myths from slavery to date about Black women through stereotypes and controlling images that denounce their womanhood, such as the mammy, the matriarch, Sapphire, the angry Black woman, and the belief that all Black women are whores, as well as bull daggers (The Combahee River Collective Statement, 1977). These assumptions about Black women's womanhood are reflected during gendered racial microaggressions' racist and sexist nature, which targets Black women to devalue them culturally, politically, economically, and socially on every level of their existence in this country (Baalbaki, 2019; Crenshaw, 1991; Essed, 1991; Goodman, 2015; Lewis et al., 2017; Lewis et al., 2016).

Oppression

Oppression is the injustice that occurs when a specific social group is subordinated in contrast to another privileged group per their social norms, institutional rules, and misguided stereotypes about the subordinate group's differences (Taylor, 2016). To explore the complexities of Black women's lived experiences with their intersections of race and gender oppression, researchers have developed four intersectional perspectives to describe how Black women can experience racism and sexism (Lewis, 2016). First, the single-axis method assumes that Black women's racist experiences hold their gender steady, and similarly, their experiences of sexism hold their race steady (Lewis, 2016). Secondly, the double jeopardy method supposes that an equalizing effect of racism and sexism occurs and that these experiences are additive (Lewis, 2016).

Thomas et al. (2008) assumed that the double jeopardy method attempted to analyze racism and sexism separately by applying race and gender as independent variables. However, researchers also noted that this method would be problematic since Black women's interlocking racism and sexism cannot be captured by studying them separately (Crenshaw, 1989; Lewis, 2016). Thirdly, the interactional method researchers included race and gender; they also added an interaction term of race and gender to investigate each identity group's effect together and separately in the analysis (Moradi & Subich, 2003; Thomas et al., 2008). Fourthly, this intersectionality method highlights the interlocking identities and oppressions that simultaneously influence a person's life experiences (Cole, 2009).

Researchers also posited that Black women have similar experiences with racism and sexism that Black men and White women face (Crenshaw, 1989; Lewis, 2016). Crenshaw 1989; Thomas et al., 2008); concerted Black women can also experience double jeopardy or double oppression. Researchers also argued that Black women are vulnerable to experiencing race and gender oppressive interactions, and they can also experience a distinct form of oppression specific to the discrimination of the intersection of their race and gender (Crenshaw, 1989; Moradi & Subich, 2003; Thomas et al., 2008).

Black women's interlocking racial and group social identity oppression is disadvantaged as a double minority (Baalbaki, 2019; Crenshaw, 1991; Essed, 1991; Goodman, 2015; Lewis et al., 2017; Lewis et al., 2016). Black women's vulnerability to interpersonal bias, racial slurring, and violence is heightening; for example, Black women experience interpersonal discrimination inclusive of conscious and unconscious malice

because of their skin's Blackness and their ineffable womanhood, reflected in gendered

racial microaggressions' stereotypic denouncements by controlling images (Baalbaki,

2019; Crenshaw, 1991; Essed, 1991; Goodman, 2015; Lewis et al., 2017; Lewis et al.,

2016). Black women have been oppressed in North America as normalcy from slavery to

date, induced by the misrepresentation of their womanhood upheld by negative

stereotypical controlling images perpetuating their ongoing marginalization and the

devaluation of their social identities, race, and gender (Crenshaw, 1991).

   According to Collins, P. H. (1998), the dominant group uses controlling images to

justify Black women's oppression as commonplace to maintain control over their social

realities. Furthermore, Black women's womanhood has been redefined, and they are

targets of bigotry; despite their social status, misrepresenting them as less than human,

less elegant, and caring than other people (Baalbaki, 2019; Crenshaw, 1991; Essed, 1991;

Goodman, 2015; Lewis et al., 2017; Lewis et al., 2016). Therefore, Black women are

severely restricted officially and covertly by institutional influences individually and

collectively, resulting in unfair allocations of resources overlooking their respect, dignity,

and worth as human beings keeping them debased on the micro, mezzo, and macro levels

of their lived experiences are supporting the oppression of Black women systematically

culturally, politically, economically, and socially; thereby undefended inasmuch as they

are Black and a woman (Champlin, 2016; McMahon, 2018).

   Black women are held captive by North American ideologies of superiority and

inferiority interlaced with the notion of domination and subordination. Black women's

oppression is further illustrated by the racist stereotype of the "Black welfare queen,"

which portrays impoverished Black women's rationale for giving birth to children to
attain welfare checks from the government (Champlin, 2016; McMahon, 2018).
Moreover, this stereotype projected Black women as wicked and that their dangerous
reproductive activities were ripping off the taxpayers (Crenshaw, 2020). However,
empirical research indicated that policies in the welfare system restricted and punished
impoverished Black women's ability to control their reproductive futures (Champlin,
2016; McMahon, 2018). Accordingly, the government enacting these policies was
supposed to break their cycle of poverty, but in contrast, it drove Black women more
deeply into poverty and oppression (Champlin, 2016; McMahon, 2018). Likewise, the
welfare systems placed caps on how many children Black women could give birth to and
restricted the benefits of those who did not comply and who already had children and
received benefits (Champlin, 2016; McMahon, 2018).

Nonetheless, the welfare system also used welfare benefits to coerce Black
women for decades, preventing them from conceiving other children (Champlin, 2016;
McMahon, 2018). Nevertheless, the welfare system also restricted their access to
resources to avoid pregnancies creating an impossible situation for this vulnerable
population given they are Black, a woman, and impoverished; hence, they do not fit into
North American society's values (Champlin, 2016; McMahon, 2018). Researchers argued
that the government's oppressive welfare system's established laws, customs, practices,
and policing of Black women's bodies and sexualities systemically reflected and
produced inequities that deprived them of the right to have children through fear of losing

their benefits based on their race, gender, and socioeconomic status (Champlin, 2016;

McMahon, 2018).

Black women are also being murdered in their own homes unjustly, like Breonna

Taylor was on March 13, 2020, by the Louisville Metropolitan Police Department, on the

individual level of oppression in North America (Crenshaw, 2020). Specifically, Black

women, despite their social positions and diverse backgrounds, still experience gendered

racial microaggressions because their skin is Black and they were born female

(Crenshaw, 2020; Lewis, 2016). Intersectionality's utilization helps researchers

understand how social identities such as Black women's race and gender interlock,

creating different modes of oppression, privilege, and power to the advantage of the

dominant group (e.g., White people). However, Black women are disadvantaged,

individually and as a group, keeping them marginalized (Crenshaw, 1989).

The systematic oppression of Black women in North America causes them to face

a social structure rooted in white supremacy with no redress (Levchak, 2018).

Notwithstanding, Black women are subjugated to many forms of oppression deeply

rooted in this society, specifically gendered racial microaggressions is one such form of

oppression reflecting the subtle and everyday verbal, behavioral, and environmental

demonstrations centered on Black women's intersection of their race and gender

(Crenshaw, 1989; Thomas et al., 2008). Given Black women's experiences with

microaggressions, Moody and Lewis (2019) established that "internalized gendered racial

oppression moderated the relations between gendered racial microaggressions and

traumatic stress symptoms" (p. 201). Researchers further found that Black women's

perceived oppression concerning their interlocking race and gender, whereby the greater the frequency of their experiences with gendered racial microaggressions, the greater the cumulative adverse impact is on their psychological well-being will also become more significant over time (Moody & Lewis, 2019).

Privilege

Privilege is the unearned and unquestioned set of advantages, entitlements, benefits, and choices bestowed upon the dominant group solely because they are white and receive them without being conscious of it (Collins, C., 2018; Franks & Riedel, 2013). Scholars advanced the interplay between privilege and oppression and how both elements influence Black women's experiences (Collins, P. H., 1990). "Privilege" applies social and economic boosts given to the dominant groups to the extent that it upholds structural barriers imposed by prejudice on other groups (Collins, C. 2018; Collins, P., 1990; Franks & Riedel, 2013). Crenshaw (1991) highlighted the rationale of Black women's exclusion and offered a critique of what invoked these exclusions in institutional practices in this society. White privilege can have the best accessibility to resources and power, unlike Black people with the same need do not attain it (Franks & Riedel, 2013).

These privileges are symbolic of what this society refers to as "the power of normal," whereby White people are treated as individuals rather than a "racial" identity, receiving the benefit of the doubt for their mistakes (Collins, C., 2018, para. 24). Furthermore, privilege adversely affects minority groups. Black people face "dire consequences" such as stereotyping, racial profiling, and no reprieve grappling for the

needed resources (Collins, C., 2018, para .24). Correspondingly, Black women did nothing to invoke this "inequity" in treatment. White people did not "earn" disproportionate access to empathy and notability. Still, the scholarship indicated that Black women are uniquely disadvantaged and are viewed as a "racial identity" instead of a human being (Collins, C., 2018, para. 24); Franks & Riedel, 2013; Lewis et al., 2016). Accordingly, white supremacy values reinforced by institutional racism Black women's treatment as a subordinate group by denying them their human right to live without restrictions (Carastathis, 2014; Champlin, 2016; McMahon, 2018).

The literature clarifies that white privilege is a series of advantages for the dominant group. In comparison, White people can move through life without being unfairly profiled. However, minority groups such as Black women are uniquely disadvantaged because they are Black women; they are regarded as a "racial identity" instead of a human being (Collins, C., 2018, para. 24; Franks & Riedel, 2013; Lewis et al., 2016). White supremacy values and privileges reinforce institutional racism. As such, minority groups like Black women are treated as a subordinate group and denied their human right to live without restrictions (Carastathis, 2014; Champlin, 2016; McMahon, 2018). Black women cannot create their destiny beyond these systematic restraints, which are also manifested as negative stereotypes rooted in their oppression in this society about Black women's womanhood (Champlin, 2016; McMahon, 2018). Black women in North America are disadvantaged socioeconomically, politically, and culturally, unlike White women, who greatly benefit in all these domains, given they reside in a white-privileged-dominated society (Chinn et al., 2021; Collins, C., 2018). Notwithstanding, these benefits

are upheld across generations, creating privileges overtly and covertly in a cyclical fashion, which are not available to Black women, such as the wage gap differentials and the invisibility of whiteness, unlike the Black women who are constantly being reminded about their race in this society (Chinn et al., 2021; Collins, C., 2018).

The Application of Intersectionality

As a framework, intersectionality helps researchers understand how social inequality and systemic injustice are established on a multidimensional basis (Crenshaw, 1989). McCall (2005) argued that other texts had also presented the conceptual framework of intersectionality application using similar terms, such as Davis, A.Y., 1981; Smith, 1983; hooks, 1984; Glenn, 1985; Anzaldua, 1987; King, 1988; Mohanty, 1988; Spelman, 1988; Sandoval, 1991. Likewise, McCall (2005) examined studies that applied the concept of intersectionality and identified three well-defined methods associated with its tenets as follows: "inter-categorical, which requires accepting general analytical categories strategically while still upholding a critical attitude about them; intra-categorical, which is related to Black Feminism, concerning the specific social groups at overlooked points of intersection and anti-categorical regarding the deconstruction and rejection of social categories to question the boundary-making of categories by itself.

Researchers considered intersectionality's concepts the most applicable theoretical contributions to women's studies than any related field's contributions (McCall, 2005). Shields's (2008); Cole's (2009) articles endorsed the benefit of intersectionality in psychological research. Davis, K. (2008) argued that intersectionality's tenets had been significant to the humanities and social sciences. Murphy et al. (2009) stipulated the

importance of the profession of social work's application of intersectionality in their education, practice, policy, and research practices to, thus, instigate an essential change regarding how educators and social work practitioners perceive the distinctions of their profession. Choo and Ferree (2010) discussed intersectionality's value as a tool for feminist women's studies analyses. Dhamoons' (2011) efforts endorsed intersectionality for its unique contributions to understanding social and political life interpretations.

Researchers also indicated that only some ideas would perfectly capture all the complexities of the primary forms of difference as an alternative to intersections (Crenshaw, 2010). Walby and Strid (2012) indicated that intersectionality's practicality has implications for a policymaking discourse applicable to the real world. Lewis and Neville (2015) created the Gendered Racial Microaggressions Scale for Black Women. These researchers designed this quantitative, multidimensional scale to explore Black women's experiences with three core groups of gendered racial microaggressions. These groups consist of projected stereotypes, silenced and marginalized, and assumptions about style and beauty. The scale, as mentioned above, measures Black women's frequency and stress appraisal of the intersection of gender racial microaggressions they experienced (Lewis & Neville, 2015).

Collins, P. H. (2015) efforts highlighted three established points about intersectionality: first, as a field of study, intersectionality is situated in the bounds of the power interactions that it analyzes. Utilizing intersectionality as an analytical approach that incites critical thinking about social phenomena; likewise, intersectionality has the propensity to guide social justice projects as a critical praxis. Correspondingly, Crenshaw

(2016) propounded that employing intersectionality concepts was the optimal means of framing subgroups' inequalities that could otherwise be adjudicated as invisible. Intersectionality has also been engaged in psychology and social science and advanced in journal articles with a particular interest in its concept's applicability in psychological scholarship. Also noteworthy is that the American Psychological Association (APA) presents intersectionality in its guidelines regarding psychological practices found in training therapists' materials (Grzanka & Miles, 2016).

Hicks (2015) contended that the social work discipline had also rendered discourse on gender oppression in diluted frameworks of feminist practices that highlight personal empowerment rather than exposing the unseen structural forces that oppress Black women. Scholars have underscored the need for a change in thinking given that "the social work profession has often struggled with the issue of conceptual unity to find coherence across the dimensions of theory, policy, practice, [research] and education" (Thomas, 2004, p. 2). The literature demonstrated that intersectionality has the propensity "to capture both structural and dynamic consequences of the interactions between two or more axes of subordination," advancing social work's coherence (Crenshaw, 2000, p. 9; Murphy et al., 2009).

Therefore, intersectionality has an intricate value for discovering Black women's perceptions about the oppression they experience invoked by their race and gender's marginalization shaping their oppressive social realities (Cheshire, 2013; Cole, 2009; Collins, P. H., 2015; Crenshaw, 1989, 1991; Hancock, 2007; Lewis & Neville, 2015; Moradi & Subich, 2003; Sesko & Biernat, 2010; Stanley, 2009; Thomas et al., 2008). The

literature has resolved that intersectionality has the proclivity to evoke meaningfulness

that engages researchers and decision-makers to acknowledge the intrinsic complexities

amid social factors, relationships, and interactions. Thereby esteeming Black women's

inherent human rights to respect, dignity, worth, and womanhood by using

intersectionality (Bent-Goodley et al., 2017; National Association of Social Workers,

2015).

Suitably, intersectionality as a framework is well suited to answer the study's

research question about Black women's perceptions and described experiences of the

cumulative effects of gendered racial microaggressions on their psychological well-being.

Historically intersectionality has magnified the silencing of Black women's voices as they

do not fit immaculately into a meticulous vision for North American society. As such, it

translates intersectional activism into race, class, gender, sexualities, and intersectionality

studies across disciplines (Moradi & Grzanka, 2017).

Microaggressions

Chester Pierce, a renowned Black psychiatrist and author witnessed in 1969 that

Black people in North America experienced subtle and socially belittling racism. As a

framework, intersectionality helps researchers understand how social inequality and

systemic injustice are established on a multidimensional basis (Crenshaw, 1989). McCall

(2005) argued that other texts had also presented the conceptual framework of

intersectionality application using similar terms, such as Davis. A. Y., 1981; Smith, 1983;

hooks, 1984; Glenn, 1985; Anzaldua, 1987; King, 1988; Mohanty, 1988; Spelman, 1988;

Sandoval, 1991. Likewise, McCall (2005) examined studies that applied the concept of

intersectionality and identified three well-defined methods associated with its tenets as follows: "inter-categorical, which requires accepting general analytical categories strategically while still upholding a critical attitude about them; intra-categorical, which is related to Black Feminism, concerning the specific social groups at overlooked points of intersection and anti-categorical regarding the deconstruction and rejection of social categories to question the boundary-making of categories by itself.

Researchers considered intersectionality's concepts the most applicable theoretical contributions to women's studies than any related field's contributions (McCall, 2005). Shields's (2008); Cole's (2009) articles endorsed the benefit of intersectionality in psychological research. Davis, K. (2008) argued that intersectionality's tenets had been significant to the humanities and social sciences. Murphy et al. (2009) stipulated the importance of the profession of social work's application of intersectionality in their education, practice, policy, and research practices to, thus, instigate an essential change regarding how educators and social work practitioners perceive the distinctions of their profession. Choo and Ferree (2010) discussed intersectionality's value as a tool for feminist women's studies analyses. Dhamoons' (2011) efforts endorsed intersectionality for its unique contributions to understanding social and political life interpretations.

Researchers also indicated that no idea would perfectly capture all the complexities of the primary forms of difference as an alternative to "intersections" (Crenshaw, 2010, para. 5). Walby and Strid (2012) indicated that intersectionality's practicality has implications for a policymaking discourse applicable to the real world. Lewis and Neville (2015) created the Gendered Racial Microaggressions Scale for Black

Women. These researchers designed this quantitative, multidimensional scale to explore

Black women's experiences with three core groups of gendered racial microaggressions.

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Hicks (2015) contended that the social work discipline had also rendered

discourse on gender oppression in diluted frameworks of feminist practices that highlight

personal empowerment rather than exposing the unseen structural forces that oppress

Black women. Scholars have underscored the need for a change in thinking given that

"the social work profession has often struggled with the issue of conceptual unity to find coherence across the dimensions of theory, policy, practice, [research] and education" (Thomas, 2004, p. 2). As such, to advance the profession of social work's coherence across these dimensions above, the literature has overarchingly demonstrated that intersectionality has the propensity "to capture both structural and dynamic consequences of the interactions between two or more axes of subordination" (Crenshaw, 2000, p. 9; Murphy et al., 2009).

Therefore, intersectionality has an intricate value for discovering Black women's perceptions about the oppression they experience invoked by their race and gender's marginalization shaping their oppressive social realities (Cheshire, 2013; Cole, 2009; Collins, P. H., 2015; Crenshaw, 1989, 1991; Hancock, 2007; Lewis & Neville, 2015; Moradi & Subich, 2003; Sesko & Biernat, 2010; Stanley, 2009; Thomas et al., 2008). The literature has resolved that intersectionality has the proclivity to evoke meaningfulness that engages researchers and decision-makers to acknowledge the intrinsic complexities amid social factors, relationships, and interactions—as such, esteeming Black women's inherent human rights to respect, dignity, worth, and womanhood by using the concept of intersectionality (Bent-Goodley et al., 2017; National Association of Social Workers, 2015).

Suitably, intersectionality as a framework is well suited to answer the study's research question about Black women's perceptions and described experiences of the cumulative effects of gendered racial microaggressions on their psychological well-being. Intersectionality has historically magnified the silencing of voices of those who do not fit

immaculately into a meticulous vision translating intersectional activism into race, class, gender, sexualities, and intersectionality studies across disciplines (Moradi & Grzanka, 2017).

Pierce (1969, p. 303) asserted that these experiences were "offensive mechanisms" depicting the *crafty* ways this society "reduced, diluted, atomized, and encased the hapless that is, targeting and victimizing Black people through these experiences—to teach Black people destructively about their devalued social positioning in this society (Pierce, 1969, p. 303). Nonetheless, these proposed "offensive mechanisms" against Black people are considered a society's normalcy whereby this acceptance has upheld its damaging effects upon them historically (e.g., Black women) with no remedy (Pierce, 1969, p. 303; Smith, 2016). Pierce continued to refine the term "offensive mechanisms," and in 1970, became known today as microaggressions. However, to aid psychologists and psychiatrist's understanding of the complications and enormities of racism, he also sub-classified racial microaggressions, a term he also coined in 1970, denoting racism' subtle blows" that are "delivered incessantly" against Black people as part of offensive mechanisms, "which assures that the person in the inferior status is ignored, tyrannized, terrorized, and minimized" (p. 267). Pierce (1970, 1974) also argued that microaggressions targeted individuals (e.g., a Black woman) and their collective racial group; without conscious awareness, causing them emotional damage.

Accordingly, "offensive mechanisms" or microaggressions explain how racism targets specific populations shortening their life expectancies, given their bodies' response to acts of discrimination as a violent attack against it (Pierce, 1969, p. 303;

Smith, 2016). The adversity ensuing from the continuous delivery of these postulated

offensive blows of microaggressions whose subtle cumulative effects are hardly

noticeable or at least difficult to detect and is demarcated to be of the unimaginable

magnitude of harm to its targets (Pierce, 1970). Pierce contended that as targets, Black

people must recognize the offensive mechanisms used by the collective White society,

most often by amassing microaggressions upholding their pro-racist values of superiority.

Likewise, keeping Black people psychologically unaware of their status as the

disenfranchised people of North America, emphasizing that Black people must refute—

this evoked subjugation (Pierce, 1970, p. 472). As such, microaggressions are also

become what is understood as behaviors that disempower racial minorities ambiguously

(Cruz et al., 2019).

Moreover, according to Lilienfeld (2017), researchers' attention shifted from the

overt and blatant expressions of prejudice to the subtle everyday enactments of bias

during interpersonal communications, inciting scholarship interest in microaggressions

within the past several decades of this contextual framework to date. Microaggressions in

society today are described by more recent terms concerning this phenomenon's subtle

forms of bigotry, such as modern racism, covert racism, and aversive racism. More

recently, these subtle forms of discrimination have been conceptualized as

microaggressions (Nadal, 2011; Sue, 2010a; Sue et al., 2007).

Modern racism or old-fashioned racism is reflected in today's discrimination and

hostility expressed covertly or subtly against minority racial groups (American

Psychological Association, 2020). For example, contemporary racist individuals or group

practices demean the cultural values of those racial groups they consider discounted and thus the outgroup in this society. Covert racism is a disguised and subtle form of racial discrimination guiding the clandestine efforts of white supremacy attitudes and values against certain racial groups, most often by methods that appear passive or evasive (American Psychological Association, 2020).

Notwithstanding that racial discrimination is rationalized or hidden in decision-making processes as an accepted element disregarding the human rights of those vulnerable and oppressed populations in North America (e.g., Black women), causing them many problems in every area of their lives (American Psychological Association, 2020). Aversive racism is racial discrimination incited by individuals who openly embrace egalitarian views publicly yet harbor negative emotions during interactions when certain racial groups are present, specifically in an ambiguous situation (American Psychological Association, 2020). For example, a White employer upholds equality but always prefers White candidates over Black candidates during job interviews even when everyone's qualifications for the position have not been clarified (American Psychological Association, 2020).

Researchers contend that microaggressions involve the individual's subjective feelings about what they perceive during these demeaning interactions, yet the devastating hidden features of microaggressions are considered more than just the individual's emotional experiences (Williams, 2020). As such, researchers are now also interested in understanding the everyday subtleties of racial microaggressions and the brevity of their hidden indignations that perpetuate hostility and pejorative racial insults

vocally, socially, and characteristically by white supremacists, either on purpose or through incidental slights, yet injuring the psychological well-being of groups of marginalized people (e.g., Black women) (Nadal et al., 2014; Sue et al., 2007; Torres & Taknint, 2015).

Correspondingly, *verbal* microaggressions are manifested in a question or comment that is stigmatizing and hurtful to a specific marginalized individual or group of people, such as a white person saying, to a Black woman, "You are almost as smart as I am, for a Black woman" (Cuncic, 2021; Sue et al., 2007). Behavioral microaggression is reflected when a person collectively acts in a discriminatory or hurtful manner toward Black women (Cuncic, 2021; Sue et al., 2007). An occurrence *of a behavioral* microaggression is a store clerk ignoring a Black woman next in line at a bookstore, and the clerk, instead of asking the Black woman if she could help her, ask a White person who just came into the store if they could help them (Cuncic, 2021; Sue et al., 2007). On the other hand, an *environmental microaggression* is when a subtle microaggression manifests within the society (e.g., North America) when overt discrimination reflects in this environment that only names hospitals, schools, or other institutions after White people (Cuncic, 2021; Sue et al., 2007).

Microaggressions represent white supremacy worldviews and rules over what is considered superior, inferior, desirable, undesirable, standard, and sub-standard (Sue et al., 2007). Furthermore, these ideologies are the manifestations of oppression created and fostered in Northern America, forcing marginalized populations to be perceived by disturbing biased assumptions about their unique differences (Cuncic, 2021; Sue et al.,

2007). Meanwhile, enactments of wholesomeness and propriety on a conscious level are debunked, given that research asserted that it is easy to view oneself as a decent human being possessing good moral character (Sue et al., 2007).

However, the realization that many people in this society support a biased worldview is alarming; moreover, there is a preference in this environment to ignore, diminish, and not look at oneself honestly (Sue et al., 2007). However, microaggressions towards Black women living in this society evidence biases due to their Black skin and womanhood; the truth is that racist and sexist discrimination, beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors have been historically socialized into this society; by any means, these actions oppress and marginalize Black women, and this phenomenon must not be overlooked (Cuncic, 2021; Sue et al., 2007).

Microaggressions' Cumulative Effects

Microaggressions are insidious by nature, appearing to be brief and innocuous; however, these interactions over a lifetime becomes a *cumulative weight* with staggering damages (Pierce, 1970). Moreover, researchers supporting this claim conducted research studies to test this assertion, and their study confirmed that microaggression's cumulative effects injure Black women's mental health over time (Lewis & Neville, 2015; Martins et al., 2020; Moody Lewis, 2019; Nadal et al., 2014; Torres et al., 2010). Then again, Lewis and Neville's 2015 study utilizing the Gendered Racial Microaggressions Scale developed as a self-report instrument. This scale measured *subtle* gendered racism and its effect on mental health as it regards anxiety, traumatic stress, depression, self-reported

physical health, and low levels of salivary cortisol, indicating cumulative stress for Black women.

Moody and Lewis (2019) explored the association between traumatic stress symptoms, gendered socialization, gendered racism, and gendered racial microaggressions among Black women. Researchers also analyzed the simultaneous experiences of Black women of racism and sexism concerning the relations between gendered racism and anxiety (Moody & Lewis, 2019). Concerned researchers purposed to understand how racial microaggressions were reflective of a significant source of stress that Black women were enduring in this society; as such, researchers purposed to create the racial microaggression scale as a viable means of measuring the themes and categories as described in the literature to attain this goal (Torres et al., 2010).

Researchers also found that the fundamental ways that *Black* women are targeted and experience the impact of the burden of the effects on their psychological well-being are because of their frustrations of not understanding how to respond given microaggressions cause Black women to have self-doubt when they evidence a decline in their mental health (Sue et al., 2007). Moreover, the victim finds themselves in a *paradoxical state of mind*, and they begin to question themselves if what they just perceived was a deliberate or an unintentional slight. Likewise, what should my response be? I should think about it for a while or confront this person about it (Crocker & Major, 1989; Sue et al., 2007). Should I bring up the topic to them, but how do I prove it took place? Is it best to forget about it? Questions such as these are common in one form and very well a universal reaction to microaggressions a Black woman may experience due to

the subtleties of microaggression's evidence of their immediate adverse effects upon their psychological well-being (Sue et al., 2007).

Solorzano et al. (2000) asserted that Black women in North America were subjected to microaggression's cumulative damaging effects. Researchers determined that a significant association exists between microaggressions, ethnicity, identity, traumatic stress, and depression (Torres & Taknint, 2015). Researchers also reported that experiences with microaggressions resulted in a hostile racial climate and emotions, including frustration, self-doubt, and isolation on the part of victims, taking into consideration that Black women are exposed continually to microaggressions, and researcher's understanding of this phenomenon's psychological toll on their well-being has increased (Solorzano et al., 2000). Researchers contend that microaggressions involve the individual's subjective feelings about what occurred during interactions and are of paramount significance; even so, microaggressions are more than subjective experiences (Williams, 2020).

Microaggressions' effects on Black women's psychological well-being are traumatic, and Black women's response to what is taking place at that moment may also be induced by them re-living and responding to the symptoms of cumulative effects of other unresolved emotionally intense microaggressions they have encountered in the past (Bedard-Gilligan et al., 2015; Duckworth & Follette, 2012). Likewise, when Black women experience microaggressions in this society, they may also internalize the negative emotions at that time —nonetheless, the results compel a myriad of psychological effects, such as anxiety, depression, and trauma (Bedard-Gilligan et al.,

2015; Duckworth & Follette, 2012). These symptoms can also include sadness, worry, anger, feelings of worthlessness, resentment, regret, hopelessness, and self-doubt (Nadal, 2018). Notwithstanding, Black women become more vulnerable to developing mental health problems and a diminished ability to achieve personal growth and high levels of functioning socially (Nadal, 2018).

Consequently, many Black women may not recover from these intense emotional upheavals in microaggressions encounters (Duckworth & Follette, 2012; Nadal, 2018). Therefore, microaggressions can disrupt Black women's capacities to function well beyond their hurt feelings by precipitating chronic stress, anger, and anxiety (Nadal, 2018). Moreover, the frequency that Black women experience microaggressions establishes severe cumulative harm to their well-being, and even a single microaggression can cause negative emotional, behavioral, and cognitive responses in the target (Nadal et al., 2011).

Researchers further agreed that Black women's overall health is adversely affected due to these stressors psychologically, emotionally, behaviorally, socially, and physiologically (Anderson, 1989; Brondolo et al., 2009; Carter & Forsyth, 2010; Pierce, 1970, 1974; Ramos et al., 2003; Smith, 2008b). Therefore, unbeknownst to Black women, they are targets for attachments of microaggression's staggering effects (Pierce, 1970). For example, Black women experience adverse long-term cognitive, emotional, behavioral, social, and physiological effects that researchers postulated they could not dismiss (Sue, 2010b, pp. 3–25).

These effects can manifest as stress, depression, anguish, suicidal ideation, high blood pressure, restlessness, eating disorders, social withdrawal, substance abuse, and post-traumatic stress disorder (Anderson, 1989; Brondolo et al., 2009; Carter & Forsyth, 2010; Clark et al., 1999; Nadal, 2011; Sue, 2010a). Likewise, when Black women experience microaggressions, a dangerous environment is perceived, resulting in a stress response psychologically and physiologically (Clark et al., 1999).

Accordingly, cumulative effects of microaggressions reflect Black women's experiences with frustration, stress, dysfunctional coping strategies, aloneness, heart attacks, withdrawal, hospitalization, obsessive-compulsive disorder; substance abuse, impaired immune response, symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder, severe psychological distress, and microaggressions are proven to be *injurious and also deadly* to Black women in North America (Anderson, 1989; Banks et al., 2006; Berger & Sarnyai, 2015; Clark et al., 1999; Hollingsworth et al., 2017; Hurd et al., 2014; O'Keefe et al., 2015; Smith, 2008b; Williams, 2020; Williams et al., 2018; Williams et al., 2017).

Researchers with similar findings indicated that the harmful effects of microaggressions reinforce the very structural oppression that produces them, and even an isolated microaggression can cause negative emotional, behavioral, and cognitive responses in the target. Moreover, the frequency that Black women experience microaggressions establishes severe cumulative harm to their well-being (Nadal et al., 2011).

Racial Microaggressions

Racial microaggressions are the subtle invalidations or attacks perpetrated against a minority individual's race or ethnic group membership (Pierce, 1969, p. 303). Accordingly, Pierce, in his 1969 book entitled "Is Bigotry the Basis of the Medical Problems of the Ghetto,"? was the first time he called the subtle forms of racism Black people experienced during this era the term offensive mechanisms, pointing to the inefficiencies of the theories addressing the role of racism and race in the lives of Black people. Pierce further asserted the necessity of new frameworks to be constructed during this era, emphasizing that being Black in this society meant to be socially minimized, given that Black people were victimized by White people every day (p. 308).

Still, in 1970, after Pierce conferred the term racial microaggressions, he denoted the term to be understood as the ". . . subtle, stunning, often automatic, and nonverbal exchanges, which are 'put-downs' of Blacks by offenders" (p. 66). Davis, P. C., (1989) identified racial microaggressions as "stunning, automatic acts of disregard that stem from unconscious attitudes of White superiority and constituted Black inferiority." Likewise, Davis, P. C. (1989) provided a historical analysis in brief of North America's caste system, defining and exploring microaggressions from psychoanalytic and narrative scopes to scrutinize microaggressions within the legal system.

Profit et al. (2000) and co-authors explained that "race-inspired" microaggressions imposed significant stress on Black people constantly seeking to anticipate, distinguish, evaluate, and reject these automatic, subtle, stunning, innocuous messages, often non-verbal that devalue Black people. For example, a Black man and a White man enter an

elevator, at which point the single White woman passenger clenches her handbag and moves closer to the White man. Microaggressions demonstrate the significant and inescapable expression of racism in the United States and the toll its adverse cumulative stressing effects take on Black individuals (pp. 327–328).

Sue et al. (2007) re-examined the constructs of racial microaggressions and presented them within the framework of clinical practices and psychology. Researchers asserted that racial microaggressions were grounded in racism, covert and "brief, everyday exchanges that sent denigrating messages to Black people based on their racial minority group" (Sue et al., 2007, p. 273). Therefore, this demonstrates how researchers today study the context of racial microaggressions regarding the marginalization of various groups, such as Black women's experiences with every day interpersonal racism, instead of the racial oppression found in discriminatory policies and laws formalized in this society (Sue et al., 2007).

Sue et al. (2010) thus redeveloped the *concept* of racial microaggressions operationalized as the "everyday verbal, nonverbal, and environmental slights, snubs, or insults. Moreover, whether intentional or unintentional, which communicated hostile, disparaging, or negative messages to target persons based solely upon their marginalized group membership" (p. 24), such as Black women. Correspondingly, Sue et al. (2007, p. 276) had previously indicated three forms of microaggressions exist Black women can experience: *microinsults, microassaults, and microinvalidations*. Researchers have also suggested that nine categories exist regarding the basis of each of these racial microaggressions. Furthermore, themes identified linking this form of racial

microaggressions cover the categories (1) alien in one's land, (2) ascriptions of intelligence, (3) color blindness, (4) criminality/assumption of criminal status, (5) denial of individual racism, (6) myth of meritocracy, (7) pathologizing cultural values/communication styles, (8) second-class status, and (9) environmental invalidations (p. 276).

For example, though seemingly complimentary and harmless exchanges, micro-insults convey insensitivity and rudeness to debase a Black person's racial heritage or identity. A microinsult, for example, happens when a Black woman in a new employment position experiences a White person telling her that the job she held was not about race. Likewise, pronouncing that the most qualified person should have gotten the job (e.g., a White person), assuming her being hired was an enactment of affirmative action instead of her intellectual abilities, attains the position (Sue et al., 2007). These exchanges are insulting even if the perpetrator does not think so; the Black woman's perceived message was that she was not befitting of the position because she is Black and so-called inferior to Whites (Sue et al., 2007; Sue et al., 2008). Moreover, it assumed that white supremacy's values relate to Black women and that they must accept the ideologies and culture given that it is the only option offered by those in power (Sue et al., 2007; Sue et al., 2008).

Microassaults are understood as "old-fashioned" racism, such as during the Jim Crow era in North America, conveyed on the individual level, delivered during what is known today as gendered racial microaggressions. As such, White people uphold the ideology of minority groups assuming inferior statutes privately. Nevertheless, they are

displayed openly when they (a) are out of control and (b) in a safe setting to engage in a microassault (Sue et al., 2007). Sue et al. (2007) further described microassaults as an uninhibited racial belittling attack verbally or non-verbally to hurt the victim by calling them names and engaging in avoidant behaviors or "purposeful discriminatory actions" (p. 274). For example, a White man calling a Black woman a "*Black nigger bitch,"* or using any other racial epithets, notwithstanding a White clerk ignoring a group of Black women deliberately to serve White customers, are manifestations of microassaults (Sue et al., 2007; Sue et al., 2008).

Microassaults are also comparable to overt racism; they are conscious, deliberate, malicious, and pejorative acts against Black people; another example is "A store owner following a Black customer around the store" (Sue et al., 2007, p. 276). Microinvalidations exclude feelings and thoughts and devalue or deny Black people's experiences, such as White people making statements like "There is only one race, the human race" (Sue et al., 2007, p. 276). Moreover, it represents the vast negative racial experiences Black women endure daily in North America as normalcy (Mercer et al., 2011; Sue et al., 2008; Sue et al., 2007). These messages are subtle but very clear that Black women and their cultural viewpoints and behaviors are considered wrong and insufficient, and to be accepted, they must submit to change by aligning with white supremacy values to be received in this society (Sue et al., 2007; Sue et al., 2008).

Purposely, Sue et al. (2007) research study further addressed how racism in the form of racial microaggressions is also definitively an issue for therapists identifying and suggesting a taxonomic system for racial microaggressions propensities with potential

implications within therapeutic practices, training, research, and in particular, counseling

processes to illuminate racial microaggressions' impact on the therapeutic alliance (Sue et

al., 2007). These findings found no theoretical or conceptual model describing how racial

microaggressions affect the therapeutic course of action. However, these researchers

indicated the importance of empirical studies about the therapeutic relationship and the

interplay of racial microaggressions; this is not to say that racial microaggressions are not

found in other social interactions involving diverse races, genders, cultures, sexual

orientations, and disabilities (Sue et al., 2007).

Sue et al. (2007) also postulated that racial microaggressions occur inter-

ethnically and with people of color. Regarding therapy and counseling, these researchers

also asserted the value of understanding cross-racial dyads; for example, the client is a

Black woman, and the therapist is a White person. In addition, researchers suggested that

exploring combinations of cross-racial dyads would prove beneficial given the reality that

no racial/ethnic group in this society has not inherited racial biases. Therefore, upcoming

studies in these areas are fundamental to understanding the detrimental consequences of

all microaggressions (Sue et al., 2007). Sue et al.'s (2007) study were vital to

understanding the importance of acknowledging the forms of racism embedded in this

society. Moreover, without analysis and documentation gaining a more in-depth

understanding of microaggressions was unlikely. These proposed threats and the assaults

that justify overlooking and minimizing the impact on Black women's psychological

well-being represent a *conspired silencing* in North America enacted by white supremacy

for their proponents to act as if it never happened while maintaining Black women's

subordination in this society (Sue et al., 2007).

Racial Microaggressions Cumulative Effects

Given Sue et al.'s (2007) seminal article, researchers' interest in racial

microaggressions has dramatically turned more to the subtle everyday experiences of

racism. Moreover, Sue and co-authors (2007) discussed how blatant old-fashioned racism

has gradually shifted to a more widespread covert manifestation of racism. Sue and co-

authors further detailed that because of microaggression's propensity to be ambiguous,

understated, and often unintentional, they are viewed as aversive and snide by the

offended party. The examination of racial microaggressions builds on the earlier work of

Pierce et al. (1977), who examined subtle racism manifested toward and experienced by

Black people. Researchers postulated that racial microaggressions reflected white

supremacy's invisible worldview embodied in individuals, institutions, and the U. S.

culture at large, inducing tremendous psychological distress in Black people and other

people of color (Pierce, 1995).

Whereas Sue et al. (2007) re-examined the constructs of racial microaggressions

and presented them within clinical practices and psychology, researchers have for

decades determined that the cumulative effects of racial microaggressions consequently

incite decreased mortality, increased illness, and flattened confidence (Pierce, 1995). As a

result, creating disparities in employment, education, and healthcare for these targeted

groups (Sue, 2008). Accordingly, researchers argue that subtle interactions in racial

microaggressions are inescapable, as are the cumulative effects on their target's mental

health, physical health, and the disruptions of the minority's psychological well-being

(Lui & Quezada, 2019; Sue, 2010).

Primarily, Lui and Quezada's (2019) examination of the extent that racial

microaggressions served as an explanation of the distinct variances of negative affect, the

consumption of alcohol, and drinking problems while controlling for neuroticism and

overt discrimination among African American, Latinx American, and Asian American

college students (N=713). Likewise, these researchers tested the intervening roles of

psychological distress, associating microaggressions and overt discrimination with

adjustment outcomes (Lui & Quezada, 2019). Findings indicated that among Black

people (e.g., Black women), overt discrimination and racial microaggressions did

not *consistently* predict psychological adjustment. However, among Asian and Latinx

Americans, overt discrimination and racial microaggression predicted psychological

distress and negative affect (Lui & Quezada, 2019).

The impact of racial microaggressions on the lives of Black women has engaged

the scholarship over the past decade regarding their psychological and physical health

outcomes (Donovan et al., 2012). Donovan (2012) explored the prevalence of perceived

racial macroaggressions in Black women's lives and the association between perceived

racial microaggressions with symptoms of depression and anxiety in a sampling of 187

Black women undergraduate students. As an illustration, 96% of these participants

reported that they had encountered perceived racial microaggressions multiple times

within a year (Donovan et al., 2012). Thus, the study's findings suggested that perceived

racial microaggressions are commonplace interactions Black women experience and are

associated with adverse mental health outcomes. Moreover, this claim is more specific to

Black women residing in the Southern areas, considering the vast self-reports of their

negative experiences with racial microaggressions are more than Black women in other

regions of North America (Donovan et al., 2012).

Wong et al.'s (2014) research indicated that racial microaggressions are related to

diminished psychological well-being, anxiousness, decreased self-regard, and high blood

pressure. Furthermore, Black women perceiving racial microaggressions taking place

affect their psychological well-being. Subsequently, these experiences can lead to low

self-esteem, substance abuse, mental distress, diminished self-concept, and behavioral

control (Wong et al., 2014). The cumulative effect of racial microaggressions has many

proposed inquiries; as a result, researchers are developing research concerning the

adverse health outcomes and psychological distress associated with them (Wong et al.,

2014). Nonetheless, perceived stigmatization manifests as microaggressions and is linked

with mental health issues such as depression, anxiety, and all physical health concerns

(e.g., higher blood pressure), leading to diminished self-concept and disruptions of their

psychological well-being (Wong et al., 2014).

Nadal et al. (2014) asserted that higher cumulative experiences with racial

microaggressions might predict more mental health problems, depressive symptoms,

adverse emotional affect, and confusion with Black women's worldview. Correlation

analysis indicated a significant negative association among the variables, further

indicating that the greater the frequencies of racial microaggressions that participants

experienced, the more diminished their mental health levels developed (Nadal et al.,

2014). Nadal et al. (2017) investigated the relationship between racial microaggressions and physical health outcomes, claiming that the frequency of racial microaggressions has a negative association with role limitations because of emotional, physical, and social functioning problems. Researchers also denoted that racial microaggressions associated with increased fatigue and pain diminished emotional well-being and poorer health (Nadal et al., 2017).

The cumulative effects of racial microaggressions are also linked to illnesses, shortened lifespans, lack of self-confidence, lower motivation, trouble concentrating, excessive worrying, avoidance, hyper-vigilance, irritability, headaches, diabetes, fatigue, and muscle tension (Anderson, 1989; Smith, 2008b). According to Williams and Mohammed (2009), birth-related adverse outcomes (e.g., low birth weight and premature birth) are also the cumulative effects of racial microaggressions. Researchers also stipulated that racial microaggression's cumulative effects were associated with hyper-vigilance, sicknesses, diabetes, loss of quality of life, diminished self-assurance, powerlessness, disturbance in thoughts, anxiousness, avoidance, irritability, headaches, exhaustion, and general body tension (Corbin et al., 2018; Lewis et al., 2016; Lui & Quezada, 2019; Martins et al., 2020; Perry et al., 2013; Sue, 2010). Notwithstanding, researchers further indicated that racial microaggressions were psycho-pollutants and disrupted Black women's psychological well-being (Corbin et al., 2018).

Torres et al. (2010) explored the cumulative effects of racial microaggressions over the lifespan of high-achieving Black people and the factors' mechanisms by which these experiences adversely impacted their mental health. Accordingly, research specified

that these incessant microaggressions' cumulative effects are "racial battle fatigue," reflecting Black women's experiences from the cumulative social-psychophysiological onslaught of the racial microaggressions (Corbin et al., 2018, p. 630). Correspondingly, these researchers' findings evidenced the harmful effects of racial microaggressions on the psychological well-being and physical health of Black people (e.g., Black women) (Corbin et al., 2018, p. 630). Solórzano and Huber (2020) determined that racial microaggressions are cumulative assaults and take a psychological and physiological toll on the victim's mind, body, and spirit subtly and unconsciously.

Blume et al. (2012) suggested an association between students with different racial and cultural origins from the dominant group experiencing microaggressions, psychological distress, and alcohol usage at traditionally all-white educational institutions. The findings indicated that Black students who experienced higher microaggressions are at greater risk for high anxiety and binge drinking (Blume et al., 2012). Forrest-Bank & Cuellar's (2018) study indicated that racial microaggressions have damaging impacts on the emotional health of racial and ethnic minority young adults. Findings of existing research by Carter (2007); Clark et al. (1999); Harrell et al. (2003); Mays et al. (2007) suggested that perceived stigmatization about gender, race, and sexual orientation is associated with depression and anxiety symptoms, decreased psychological well-being, lower self-regard, and physical health issues (e.g., higher blood pressure).

Sue et al. (2009) asserted that the effects of racial microaggressions, subtle and ambiguous, subtle forms are diminished in the scholarship; to date, researchers prescribed that they are more common than blatant discriminatory incidence. Researchers also

reported that perceived psychological distress in racial and ethnic groups instigated low self-esteem and anxiety due to experiencing racial microaggressions (Crocker & Major, 1989). The literature indicated that ethnic and minority groups face perceived psychological distress associated with diminished self-esteem, anxiety, and decreased self-efficacy due to racial microaggressions in multiple settings (Constantine, 2007).

However, racial microaggressive experiences may also elicit stronger ethnic identity, which is a protective factor in the negative influences of these encounters on psychological well-being (Constantine, 2007). Nevertheless, Constantine (2007) created a 10-item measuring instrument to assess the role of racial microaggressions in the relationship between the client and the psychologist. Moreover, the findings with this instrument revealed that perceived racial microaggressions adversely affected the client's satisfaction with treatment, therapeutic relationships, and the perceived competence of the therapist (Constantine, 2007).

Constantine et al. (2008) examined Black faculty members' and women's experiences with racial microaggressions. Findings indicated that the racial microaggressions they experienced caused them feelings of hypervisibility (e.g., increased scrutiny) and invisibility (e.g., being overlooked in the workplace). However, Black women further described experiencing difficulties distinguishing whether the subtle discrimination they encountered was more specific to their race or gender or the mutuality of both; these findings indicated that microaggressions could be experienced due to the intersections of race and gender (Constantine et al., 2008). Moreover, some speculative research efforts have been proposed about racial microaggression's

experiences with the intersections of multiple identities; however, the scholarship lacks

the unique experiences of women of color (e. g., Black women), and the engagement of

this scholarship evokes evidence of the existence of racial microaggressions (Constantine

et al., 2008).

Consequently, more studies are necessitated to explore the adverse effects racial

microaggressions have on Black women's psychological well-being based on the

discrimination of their multiple social identities of race and gender (Sue & Capodilupo,

2008). Okazaki (2009) further maintained that the literature about racial prejudice, racial

bias, stereotypes, inter-group attitudes, and their often implicit and automatic nature is

scarcely found in scholarship addressing how these subtle racial biases affect Black

women. However, recent scholarships have emphasized that microaggressions and

stereotypical experiences are different for Black women based on their double minority

membership and can be delivered verbally, behaviorally, and environmentally every day

based on their race and gender (Lewis & Neville, 2015). As the scholarship on racial

microaggressions continued to evolve,

Researchers found that Black women's racial membership alone was inadequate

to capture the effect of racist and sexist oppression's subtle and covert forms of

discrimination (e.g., gendered racism) *construct*ed by societal stereotypes and

assumptions in North America (Lewis & Neville, 2015; Martins et al., 2020).

Nonetheless, delivered through the incessant microassaults (e. g., *gendered racial*

microaggressions), Black women suffer amassing psychological effects based on the

discrimination of their race and gender (Lewis & Neville, 2015; Martins et al., 2020; Settles, 2006; Thomas et al., 2008).

Gendered Racial Microaggressions

Lewis et al. (2013) described gendered racial microaggressions as the subtleties of manifestations of oppression that occur every day verbally, behaviorally, and environmentally based on the intersection of one's race and gender. Furthermore, Lewis et al. (2013) studied gendered racial microaggressions. They determined that Black women experiencing the intersection of racism and sexism was the modus operandi of oppression and referred to this phenomenon as gendered racism, reflecting their application of Essed's (1991) research on gendered racism and their application of Sue et al.'s 2007 research on racial microaggressions. Moreover, Essed (1991) argued that Black women's unique experiences with racism and sexism intersect simultaneously under certain conditions into one hybrid phenomenon (e. g., gendered racial microaggressions). Likewise, Essed (1991) further claimed that Black women's experiences with gendered racism were rooted in the constructed ideologies and stereotypes of Black womanhood.

According to Lewis and Neville (2015), Black women's experiences with gendered racism during gendered racial microaggressions are invoked by the discrimination of their interlocking race and gender, shaping what occurs during these interactions. The greater the frequency of *gendered racial microaggressions*, Black women self-reported experiencing heightening cumulative effects of psychological distress and adverse physical health outcomes. Lewis et al. (2016) research study of gendered racial microaggressions suggested that Black women experienced being

stereotyped as the angry Black woman, hypersexualized "Jezebel," and being silenced and marginalized in professional settings (e. g., the workplace, and academia).

These expressions are likely to result from stereotypical historical images still hunting Black women and their womanhood in modern-day culture in North America (Lewis et al., 2016). Moreover, white supremacy values, power, and privilege are upheld in this society yet promote negative assumptions about Black women's skin tone, natural hair, facial features, and unique manner of communication. Lewis and Neville (2015) also developed the Gendered Racial Microaggressions Scale (GRMS) to measure Black women's experiences of gendered racial microaggressions. The GRMS takes account of different forms of subtle gendered racism, including people making comments that are sexually inappropriate about a Black woman's body, being ignored in academic and workplace settings, and also assuming them to be "overly dominating" and "overly aggressive." Lewis and Neville (2015) found that the greater the frequency of Black women's experiences, the more diverse forms of *gendered racism*, for example, delivered through gendered racial microaggressions, the greater the psychological distress they experienced.

Lewis and Neville's (2015) study proposed that Black women, because of their race and gender, experienced distinct challenges from this form of gendered racism invoked by racist and sexist stereotypes used to control, marginalize, and objectify Black women in North America (Anderson, J. R., 2018; Collins, P. H., 1990; Lewis et al., 2016). Notwithstanding that, using the GRMS (Lewis & Neville, 2015) established four recurring themes of the gendered racial microaggressions Black women experienced.

Moreover, they also found that 92 % of Black women reported frequently experiencing the theme assumptions of Beauty and Sexual Objectification, 91 % of the women experienced being silenced and Marginalized, 87% of the women shared the strong Black woman stereotype, and 90 % of the women experienced the angry Black woman stereotype.

Furthermore, the angry Black woman stereotype causes Black women to feel pressured to censor themselves to avoid this debasing stereotype (Lewis et al., 2016). The scholarship revealed that Black women continue to be negatively evaluated, criticized, and disrespected even when they are not angry. Thus, they have internalized silencing and practicing passivity, acting non-threatening to relinquish being accused of being angry, engendering this stereotype (Pilgrim, 2012). However, the scholarship on the gendered racial microaggressions experienced by Black women is underdeveloped (Lewis et al., 2016).

In addition, these misrepresentations of Black womanhood are commonplace daily, oppressive enactments occurring during gendered racial microaggressions (Lewis & Neville, 2015; Sue et al., 2007). These expressions of oppression are perpetuated by gendered racism through existing stereotypes about Black women and the gendered racial group delivered during gendered racial microaggressions (Lewis et al., 2016). For example, Black women, as normalcy on every level of social settings in North America (e.g., workplace), are silenced and rebuked when they speak their minds passionately and stereotyped as the angry Black woman due to their unique ways f communicating regardless of the relevant content of their disclosures (Ashley, 2014).

Gendered racism attempts to capture the complexity of oppression experienced by Black women based on racist perceptions of gender roles. Essed (1991) asserted that Black women experience gendered and classed forms of racism based on the constructed ideologies and stereotypes of Black womanhood. Crenshaw (1989) postulated that to understand the ramification of Black women's subjugation, one must first understand that the aspects of intersectionality overarch the expanse of racism and sexism, thus any analytical processes not apt to this fundamental tenet, therefore, does not have the propensity to address Black women social realities of marginalization and oppression. Black women are not experiencing racism because they are Black or sexism being women, but a distinct form of oppression being Black women (Crenshaw, 1989).

Gendered racial microaggressions are the manifested sanctions of gendered racism's stereotypic erroneous messages that intentionally destroy Black women's womanhood in this society (Childers, 2019). For example, at the time, Michelle Obama was the nation's First Lady; she was called an "ape in heels" by Beverly Whaling, the former mayor of Clay, West Virginia, on Facebook. Consequently, her resignation was effective immediately, given the backlash over her post (Browning & Bever, 2016, para. 5). Moreover, after Donald Trump was elected president, another social media incident occurred when Pamela Ramsey Taylor, Clay, West Virginia, and the Clay County Development Corporation's director. After Michelle Obama's transition to Melania Trump was evident, Taylor commented about how refreshing it was that a classy, beautiful, dignified First Lady back in the White House; stating she was tired of seeing *an*

ape in heels referencing Michelle Obama; Taylor was removed from her position immediately (Browning & Bever, 2016).

The stereotype relating Black people to apes is profoundly entrenched in the political unconscious by popular culture, pseudo-science, and mass media (Parks & Heard, 2009). Moreover, it is still invoked in this society despite the *proposed* advances in civil rights, the ending of the eugenics movement, and the increasingly pervasive understanding of racial equality (Parks & Heard, 2009). Historically, when a Black person was called an "ape" by a White person, this racial slur is understood as promoting White supremacy and Black inferiority, dehumanizing former First Lady Michelle Obama's Black skin and her womanhood (Awad et al., 2015; Parks & Heard, 2009; Pierce, 1970). Notwithstanding, this misrepresentation inferred that Michelle Obama's blackness and unique beauty could never meet the United States standards for beauty and elegance, positioning her as a subordinate, ungraceful, less than human, and never suitable as the First Lady in the White House; unlike Melania Trump's whiteness superiority, femininity, grace, and beauty, declaring she was more befitting for the position (Awad et al., 2015; Pierce, 1970).

Holling (2019) found that when Black women who are faculty members in educational settings, representations, and communications are perceived as hostile or angry and are told, "you intimidate me" or "you are intimidating," this is the tenets of controlling imagery. Likewise, controlling images serve to perpetuate Black women's marginalization, subjugation, silencing, and objectification as normalcy across mainstream North American interactional conditions, which reinforces deleterious

societal perceptions about them collectively evidenced by the gendered racial

microaggressions exchanges they are challenged by incessantly in this society (Awad et

al., 2015; Lewis & Neville, 2015; Lewis et al., 2016).

The preponderance of empirical research findings indicated that the proliferation

of gendered racial microaggressions varies based on racial group membership. For

instance, Black women's experiences also include racial slurs about their cultural values,

intelligence, and citizenship (Lewis et al., 2016; Lewis & Neville, 2015; Martins et al.,

2020). Notwithstanding, the denial or minimization of racialized interactions involving

their social exclusions, avoidance, persecution, and societal stereotyping exemplified by

the angry Black woman's controlling imagery, evidenced by its negative distortions and

the rebuke of their unique expressions of anger during these brief injurious experiences as

aforementioned (Ashley, 2014; Bent-Goodley et al., 2017; Griffin, 2012).

The Black woman is considered by mainstream American society to be an angry

big-mouthed, "*oh no*, *you didn't,*" handclapping, feet stomping, finger-popping, *chicken

necking*, intimidating, in your face, furious, crazed Black female. Therefore, mockingly,

viewing Black women as having nothing good to say despite their diverse contexts, they

have been socially restricted and devalued in this society because she is Black and

woman. Moreover, her epic categorification has caused her prolific suffering and

psychological disruptions (Ashley, 2013; Broussard, 2013; Collins, P. H., 2000;

Crenshaw, 1989; Griffin, 2012; Lewis et al., 2016). Likewise, whether deliberate or

inadvertently provoked, these behaviors communicate hostile and pejorative messages,

which are subtle acts of white supremacy's standards in opposition to Black women's

womanhood collectively (Bent-Goodley et al., 2017; Lewis et al., 2016; Rodgers, 2017; Sue et al., 2007). Therefore, gendered racial microaggressions exchanges also injure the respect, dignity, and worth of Black women's womanhood by devaluing how they think and communicate while navigating through the effects of their persistent psychological stressors. Moreover, no other women living in North America have endured this (Lewis & Grzanka, 2016; National Association of Social Workers, 2015; Rodgers, 2017).

Gendered Racial Microaggressions' Cumulative Effects

The health of Black women is measured in their disproportionally poor health outcomes. Still, it results from a complex milieu of barriers to quality health care, racism, and stress associated with the distinct social experiences of Black womanhood in this society (e.g., gendered racial microaggressions). Black women currently comprise 7.0% of this society's population and 13.6% of all North American women. Although, on average, Black women are younger (36.1 years) than North American women overall (39.6 years) yet, they have a higher prevalence of many health conditions, including heart disease, stroke, cancers, diabetes, maternal morbidities, obesity, and stress (Chinn, et al., 2021). Lewis et al. (2017) explored the association between gendered racial microaggressions and Black women's experiences with anxiety and physical activity as a moderator of the link between gendered racial microaggressions and stress.

Nonetheless, Lewis et al. (2017) also extended Clark et al. (1999) biopsychosocial model of racism used as the conceptual framework for this study to explore coping as a mediator amid gendered racial microaggressions and depression symptoms. Moreover, to understand the biopsychosocial model of racism, adaptive and maladaptive strategies will

influence the range to which racial stressors can affect Black women's physiological and psychological outcomes. Whereas the concepts of intersectionality helped researchers understand gendered racial microaggressions roles in Black women's experiences of cumulating psychological distress, emotion dysregulation, depression, anxiety, and lower levels of self-concept (Lewis et al., 2017).

Wright and Lewis's (2019) investigation of the association of gendered racial microaggressions and adverse mental health outcomes found that incessant experiences of gendered racial microaggressions are significantly related to cumulative psychological distress, traumatic stress, ruminating thoughts, and depression (Lewis et al., 2017; Lewis & Neville, 2015; Moody & Lewis, 2019; Williams & Lewis, 2019). Likewise, researchers also found that stress appraisal of sexually objectifying gendered racial microaggressions interactions induces Black women's experiences with psychological distress (Lewis & Neville, 2015). Accordingly, researchers also claimed that Black women's experiences with such distress lead them to diminished body appreciation and self-worth (Sue, Capodilupo, & Holder, 2008).

Previous research found that survivors of traumatic experiences (e.g., intense gendered racial microaggressions) develop psychological symptoms inclusive of but not exhaustive of denial, shock, disbelief; feelings of guilt, shamefulness, self-blame; anger, mood swings; and sadness, irritability, and hopelessness (Sue & Sue, 2016). Moody et al. (2019) examined the relationship between gendered racial microaggression in the form of gendered racism, gendered racial socialization, and traumatic stress symptoms among 226 Black women in North America. Subsequently, researchers also found that Black

women's cumulative devaluation experiences of racial and gender discrimination, such as being involved in gender racial microaggression's oppressive interactions, leads to cumulative feelings of powerlessness, low self-esteem, psychological distress, depression, obsessive-compulsivity, somatic symptoms, cultural mistrust, and mental health issues (Perry et al., 2013).

Graham et al. (2015) claimed that the frequency of racist events, the greater the adverse effects related to evidence of anxious arousal, such as sweaty palms, psychological symptoms of anxiety, shortness of breath, and increasing heart rates. Gendered racial microaggressions predicted psychological distress leading to adverse mental and physical health outcomes associated with a greater frequency of perceived discrimination for Black women (Pascoe & Smart Richman, 2009; Pieterse et al., 2012; Thomas et al., 2008). Donovan et al. (2012) quantitative study concentrated on Black women's strategies for coping with gendered racial microaggressions and the degree of stressors they experienced. Lewis and Neville (2015) found that the greater experiences of gendered racial microaggressions were significantly related to greater psychological distress. Accordingly, Lewis et al. (2017) found that gendered racial microaggressions were significantly associated with Black women's adverse mental and physical health outcomes.

Gendered racial microaggressions research, established in the conceptual framework of intersectionality, indicated that gendered racial microaggression is related to experiencing body pain and psychological distress (Lewis et al., 2017). Likewise, researchers found stress appraisal of sexually objectifying gendered racial

microaggression interactions to positively associate with Black women's psychological distress (Lewis & Neville, 2015). Accordingly, researchers also claimed that Black women's experiences with such distress lead them to diminished body appreciation and self-worth (Sue, Capodilupo, & Holder, 2008).

Brondolo et al. (2009) identified a link between racism and psychological symptoms of anxiety, such as feelings of dread, panic or 'impending doom, racing thoughts, increased blood pressure, uncontrollable over-thinking, difficulty concentrating, dissociation, feeling irritability, sleeplessness, heightened alertness, loss of appetite, and feeling the need to escape to safety. Researchers found that survivors of traumatic experiences (e.g., intense gendered racial microaggressions) develop psychological symptoms inclusive of but not exhaustive of denial, shock, disbelief, feelings of guilt, shamefulness, self-blame; anger, mood swings; sadness, irritability, and hopelessness (Sue, & Sue, 2016).

Similarly, Martin et al. (2020) argued that Black women's psychological well-being microaggressions against their distinct womanhood. Donovan et al. (2012) quantitative study concentrated on Black women's strategies for coping with gendered racial microaggressions and the degree of stressors they experienced. Subsequently, researchers also found that Black women's cumulative devaluation experiences of racial and gender discrimination, such as being involved in gender racial microaggression's oppressive interactions, led to cumulative feelings of powerlessness, low self-esteem, psychological distress, depression, obsessive-compulsivity, somatic symptoms, cultural mistrust, and mental health issues (Perry et al., 2013).

Lewis et al. (2013) study explored the methods that Black women use to cope with gendered racial microaggressions based on the intersection of one's race and gender; thus, gendered racial microaggressions are insulting to Black women and are harmful to how Black women perceive themselves collectively (Dunn et al., 2019; Williams & Lewis, 2019; Lewis & Neville, 2015). Lewis and Neville's (2015) quantitative study also advanced the Gendered Racial Microaggressions Scale (GRMS) as an intersectional instrument to measure Black women's experiences with the subtleties of gendered racial microaggressions. The researchers claimed that Black women self-reported higher frequencies of experiences with gendered racial microaggressions and reported that they also experienced psychological distress to a higher degree and disparities in their physical and mental health outcomes (Lewis & Neville, 2015).

Moreover, the GRMS enabled Black women's unique experiences with the intersections of racial and gendered microaggressions to be captured by employing this tool's intersectional analytic framework (Lewis & Neville, 2015). The study also uncovered four tenets of gendered racial microaggressions that Black women experience during these exchanges, such as the assumptions of beauty and sexual objectification, being silenced, marginalized, and an expectation of being a strong Black woman stereotype, and the angry Black woman stereotype (Lewis & Neville, 2015). The findings revealed the significance of microaggression function in Black women's lives due to their race and gender, described by researchers as the biopsychosocial consequences of Black women's marginalization and their experiences with oppression resulting in barriers to

resources which convert into cumulative psychological distress to adversely impact their physical health, placing them at risk of personal illnesses (Lewis & Neville, 2015).

For example, Black women experience high rates of depression, anxiety, substance use, and blood pressure concerns associated with their experiences with gendered racial microaggressions due to the discrimination of the intersection of their race and gender (Lewis & Neville, 2015). Notwithstanding the prior research findings using the GRMS that asserted that Black women *self-reported* gendered racial microaggressions at a higher frequency also reported they experienced psychological distress at a higher degree along with disparities in their physical and mental health outcomes (Baalbaki, 2019; Lewis et al., 2017).

Martin et al. (2020) argued that Black women's mental health is deleteriously affected by gendered racial microaggressions. Moreover, the frequency of gendered racial microaggressions also predicted low mental health levels due to Black women's diminished protection factors of self-esteem and social identity during their experiences with the discrimination of their race and gender (Martins et al., 2020). Correspondingly, this study's findings also reflected prior research reports of an association between Black women's social identity's intervening role and the mediating role of self-esteem being adversely impacted by the harmful effects of their experiences with discrimination. Furthermore, they led to stress, mental disorders, thoughts of helplessness, paranoia, fearfulness, and symptoms of depression specific to Black women as a socially marginalized group. The findings further indicated that these gendered racial

microaggressions' direct effects were not significantly engaged; however, the indirect effects facilitated by self-esteem were noted considerably (Martins et al., 2020).

Martin et al., 2020 also posited that self-esteem was determined to be a protective tenet for mental health to buffer the effects of everyday discrimination that Black women in North America (Martins et al., 2020). Moreover, this study's findings highlighted the importance of considering "general psychological processes" to understand the associations between emotional tolerance of marginalized discrimination groups such as Black women. Martins et al.'s (2020) study findings' are relative to my research because it acknowledges Black women's experiences with gendered racial microaggression's cumulative effect on their psychological well-being and the importance of high self-esteem and social identity for this population.

Additionally, social workers are in the position to validate Black women's actual experiences with the cumulative effects of gendered racial microaggressions on their psychological well-being in their clinical practices. Social workers can achieve this by understanding that Black women's double oppression stems from the intersections of their race and gender, shaping their social realities. Furthermore, it can demonstrate respect for the inherent dignity and worth of this vulnerable group to effect positive social change and the promotion of social justice (Ashley, 2014; Bent-Goodley et al., 2017; Hicks, 2015; Lewis et al., 2016; Martins et al., 2020; Moradi & Subich, 2003; National Association of (Social Workers, 2015; Perry et al., 2013; Sue et al., 2007).

The literature review revealed an emergence of literature that explored Black women's deleterious experiences with gendered racial microaggressions that they face

every day of their lives in this society based on the discrimination of the intersections of their race and gender (Corbin et al., Lewis et al., 2016; Lewis & Neville, 2015; Martins et al., 2020). The literature review also indicated a gap in the scholarship that explored Black women's perceptions and described experiences of gendered racial microaggression's cumulative effects on their psychological well-being. Therefore, this study's exploration will address this gap to add new knowledge to the scholarship about this phenomenon. The present generic qualitative study aims to understand Black women's experiences by exploring their perspectives on the cumulative effects of gendered racial microaggressions on their psychological well-being. Accordingly, this study seeks to advance social work practitioners' and policymakers' educational processes about gendered racial microaggression's cumulative effects on Black women's psychological well-being.

Summary

In summary, this chapter presented a review of the literature regarding the subject matter of the study. The literature review revealed an emergence of literature that explored Black women's deleterious experiences with gendered racial microaggressions that they face every day of their lives in this society. Nevertheless, according to this review of the literature, to understand Black women's unique experiences in this society, one first must address the underlining issues associated with the double oppression of their intersections of race and gender, which shape what takes place during these interactions, unlike any other racial group in North America. The literature review also indicated a gap in the scholarship that explored Black women's perceptions and described

experiences of gendered racial microaggression's cumulative effects on their

psychological well-being. Therefore, this study's exploration addressed this gap to add

new knowledge to the scholarship about this phenomenon specific to Black women's

unique experiences. Chapter 3 addresses the study's methodologies, including the design,

the population, sampling, and data collection

Chapter 3: Research Method

Introduction

This basic qualitative study explored Black women's experiences with gendered racial microaggressions and their *perceived* cumulative effects on their psychological well-being. This chapter presents an outline of the research study's purpose and the research question. Chapter 3 justifies the research study's design, data collection, my role as the researcher, methodology, instrumentation, and data analysis plan. Chapter 3 also closes with a presentation of trustworthiness and ethical considerations discussion, a synopsis, and a transition to Chapter 4.

Research Design and Rationale

According to Kahlke (2014), a basic qualitative research study is optimal since it needs to be established on philosophical assumptions like most other qualitative methodologies. As such, a basic qualitative research study allowed me to advance an exploration that led to answering the study's research question: What are Black women's perceptions and described experiences of the cumulative effects of gendered racial microaggressions on their psychological well-being?

Rationale

I used a basic qualitative research approach for this study to answer the research question, given I also sought to discover the meaning of the phenomenon from the participant's perspective (Kahlke, 2014; Kennedy, 2016). Merriam (2009) argued for the importance of researchers understanding what basic qualitative research is by first understanding what it is not, given that all qualitative study inquiries started as a basic

generic qualitative approach and that the theoretical framework informed the methodology chosen as an added dimension to understanding the participant's experiences and how they are constructing the phenomena. As the central instrument in basic qualitative approaches, researchers maintained flexibility and awareness, drawing from traditional methods but not bound by their proposed goals (Bowen, 2008; Kahlke, 2014).

Notwithstanding, traditional qualitative approaches to theories and methodologies helped researchers effectively implement research studies to solve research problems (Bowen, 2008). For instance, grounded theory's experiential nature is associated with discovering or generating a theoretical base grounded in detailed information from participants' experiences (Bellamy et al., 2016; Lodico et al., 2010). A phenomenological research approach focuses on participants' lived experiences specific to what the researcher seeks to understand about the external content within the participants' lived experiences (Bellamy et al., 2016).

Ethnographic research involves the in-depth study of a culture's membership and systematic collection, description, and analysis of the detailed information used to develop cultural theories about their behaviors (Bellamy et al., 2016). Narrative inquiries involve gathering information for study through storytelling (Bellamy et al., 2016). A case study's detailed scrutiny of an individual, group, event, program, or activity occurs over time utilizing various data sources (Bellamy et al., 2016).

I proposed a basic qualitative research method to guide this study's purpose to understand Black women's perspectives and described experiences about the

phenomenon, and answered the research question accordingly (Bellamy et al., 2016; Hancock & Algozzine, 2017). According to Feyerabend (1975) in *Against Method*, "anything goes" in the scientific inquiry because it is the basis of carrying out practical tasks of comprehending the world and the individuals living there. Therefore, deconstructing old established rules and practices, for example, the stipulations for quantifying all research findings, that research is the basis of direct observation, and that testing all theories is necessary (Bowen, 2008). However, researchers' difficulties arise in `ascertaining which traditional research practices and rules to deconstruct and when to do so, creating liberty that guides researchers to innovative ideas and techniques (Bowen, 2008).

Justification for Research Design

This study provided an opportunity for the me to describe the phenomenon in its present condition, and not as it should be according to the bounds of the inherent rigidity of methodologies, such as grounded theory, phenomenology, ethnography, narrative, and a case study. For this reason, the research problem, purpose, and inquiries summons the flexibility of a basic qualitative approach which can also integrate the strengths of these qualitative designs (Bowen, 2008; Kahlke, 2014). Researchers need flexibility and creativity to improve accuracy and usefulness to accomplish the study's purpose and answer the research question, hence justifying a basic qualitative research design (Bowen, 2008). According to Percy et al. (2015), a basic qualitative inquiry investigates participants' disclosures of their subjective attitudes, beliefs, opinions, and reflections on what they are experiencing in their social realities.

Correspondingly, a basic qualitative approach was justified for this study because I interviewed each study's participants to generate descriptions in a report of findings. Patton (2015) resolved that the effectiveness of basic qualitative inquiries was reflected through researchers "skillfully asking open-ended questions of people and observing matters of interest in real-world settings to solve problems, improve programs, or develop policies" (p. 154). As such, this study's purpose and research question compelled a basic qualitative research approach because I sought to understand the participants' perceptions of their real-world issues. Merriam (2009) denoted that those basic qualitative studies investigate "(1) how people interpret their experiences, (2) how they construct their worlds, and (3) what meaning they attribute to their experiences" (p. 23).

Such a report does not require any theory and allows the freedom to describe a phenomenon as it is, not as it should be. Basic qualitative inquiry is essential when studying a chiefly invisible phenomenon (e.g., thoughts and feelings) (Rubin & Rubin, 2015). With that in mind, basic qualitative research has the propensity for creating a platform whereby participants can express their voices and convey their experiences (Creswell, 2014). Moreover, a basic qualitative research approach has been utilized for decades as an established practice for researchers seeking another alternative to grounded theory, phenomenological, ethnographic, narrative, and case study designs (Brink & Wood, 2001; Sandelowski, 2000). Indeed, this basic qualitative research design allowed me to work outside known methodologies to provide adaptations in methods befitting the discipline, the researcher, and the proposed research question to drive the method instead of the other way around (Kahlke, 2014). Thus, the cyclical process of this basic

qualitative research study reflected how the data collection evolved to construct the ideologies and experiences as prescribed by the participants, which were vital to this study's thematic inductive analysis of the data that was raised from codes to themes (Patton, 2015). As such, this basic qualitative study's empirical findings needed to be revised by theoretical assumptions (Bowen, 2008). Consequently, I had the liberty to describe this phenomenon accordingly to promote cultural competence, positive social change, and this vulnerable population's empowerment, which justifies a basic research design for this study.

Role of the Researcher

As the researcher and the interviewer in this basic qualitative research study, I exercised critical self-awareness by being constantly aware of my thoughts, emotions, and actions during the research procedures by using reflexivity as a framework and being honest about my power relations, hopes, beliefs, and potential for personal gain, which would remain undisclosed to participants (Kumar, 2008). Reflexivity is the researcher's acknowledgment of the influence they have on the research study and the participants, and at the same time, they also recognize how the research's processes affected them as the researcher (Gilgun, 2008). According to Jootun et al. (2009), reflexivity makes the researcher's and the participant's relationship explicit. Reflexivity is how the researcher exercises critical self-awareness during the research's procedures (Probst & Berenson, 2014).

I was aware of how my role as the researcher, my culture, that is, my belief systems, and my experiences as a Black woman living in North America shaped the data

collection and analyses and, hence, the study's direction; I employed reflexivity throughout the study to diminish researcher bias (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Ben-Ari and Enosh (2011) argued that reflexivity between researcher and participant constructs new knowledge to inform the research study. Consequently, without the researcher's recursive self-inquiry, assumptions masked as professional expertise could undermine the researcher's work, undermining the study's authenticity, from the topic's selection to which populations will be studied and the presentation and dissemination of the findings, thereby impacting how the research study would be conceptualized and experienced (Probst & Berenson, 2014). I suggest that my ongoing reflexivity was essential to this study as it caused my positionality to become more transparent, denoting accountability, trustworthiness, productivity, clarity, ethics, support, and personal growth, which benefited the integrity of the research.

Furthermore, researchers have suggested that debriefing about the challenges they face in the study with others, such as peers, helps the researchers see what they cannot see in their labors, holding them accountable for managing their reactivity and bias (Probst & Berenson, 2014). Nonetheless, this improved my interview skills of probing for more in-depth responses from participants and avoiding precipitous interpretations that underscored open-mindedness by following my interview guide during the interviews (McNair et al., 2008). Moreover, taking advantage of the interview guide's systematic outline ensured that I covered the topic areas outlined. Meanwhile, having the freedom to vary in the order of the questions and the wording, however, maintaining a reciprocal relationship with the participants, and improving the interview's in-depth content by

sharing the interview's authority and dialogue which supported the quality of the research study (McNair et al., 2008).

My role included protecting participants' privacy and confidential information. I also managed the participants' interviewing processes, audio recordings, transcriptions, coding, data collections, and data analysis, emphasizing a critical role that I diligently upheld in this study as its central instrument in qualitative research; this referred to the operational responsibilities I performed in the research processes as aforementioned (Creswell, 2009; Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995). To further augment my capabilities as the researcher to collect and analyze the data while reducing researcher bias, I utilized member checking to ensure the trustworthiness of my findings. Member checking is a validation technique that I used to bolster the study's credibility (Shenton, 2004). Member checks are related to o the data's accuracy and occur spontaneously throughout the data collection. Participants reviewed the transcripts of their statements, emphasizing whether the documentation was what they intended to infer or convey (Harper & Cole, 2012). I expected that my role would elicit my vulnerabilities and my collaboration with others who labored in this study, which also helped diminish researcher bias; thus, it strengthened my analysis of the data collection and, hence, the credibility of the study's findings.

Methodology

This section provides an elucidation of this basic qualitative research study. The participation selection logic, instrumentation, and data collection techniques are included. Also presented are highlights of how the coding and analysis of the data collections will be deliberated and the strategies applied to increase the study's trustworthiness.

Participant Selection Logic

Before beginning data collection, I acquired permission from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of Walden University. Upon approval, a recruitment letter and flyer with pertinent details about the research study were prepared, inviting only Black women who met the inclusion criteria to participate. I also employed the snowball sampling technique to identify study participants (Kolb, 2008). Moreover, this strategy is known as *chain referral sampling*, whereby one participant refers red others, and who, in turn, that person also makes referrals, identifying a chain of potential participants (Kolb, 2008). I planned to place an ad in the local newspaper; however, due to the rapid response from the recruitment flyer, it was optional. I posted the recruitment flyer across Central Florida. This ad was also presented through online public service announcements via social media, as mentioned below, and posted locally in public places such as libraries, community boards, shopping malls, college campuses in the State of Florida, and even on Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn, social media networks; seeking participants as necessitated for 30-–60 days.

One of the challenges for my proposed use of social media platforms for data collection activities was the need for more research on the pros and cons of using social

media platforms as a recruitment tool. The scholarship indicated that social media sites and other similar online spaces, such as Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn, are platforms for making connections, exchanging information, and sharing interests with the ability to maintain anonymity and physical distancing (Gelinas et al., 2017). Research on the use of social media for research recruitment further shows that social media is growing in popularity as a recruitment tool. Nevertheless, there needs to be more in the scholarship regarding specified regulatory guidelines for the IRB to uphold social media use for research recruitment (Gelinas et al., 2017). Researchers Gearhart (2017) and Gelinas et al. (2017) concurred that there is an increased use of these social media platforms in research, given that it has become an emerging way to locate and recruit participants for research studies. Gelinas et al. (2017) contended that social media might not be a stand-alone remedy for recruitment challenges but is becoming an essential tool in the recruitment arsenal.

Sampling and Recruitment

A purposive criterion sample of five participants was suitable in correspondence with qualitative methodologies recommendations. However, Kvale (1996) supported interviewing "as many subjects as necessary to find out what you need to know" (p. 101). The criterion of inclusion was women identifying as Black women. The five participants were aged 51 to 65 and up of African descent, born and raised *only* in North America, excluding those who did not fit these criterions. These Black women self-reported their experiences with gendered racial microaggressions' cumulative effects on their

psychological well-being per the demographic questionnaire's (see Appendix A) list of symptoms, excluding all others who did not fit this criterion.

Accordingly, this was an ideal-aged cohort, given that the frequency of discrimination experiences is cumulative, and the effects can become more harmful at diverse ages, resulting in adverse mental, physical, and social health well-being outcomes across their life courses (Gee et al., 2010). As such, this research study supports the culturally, socially, and historically unique experiences of Black women desiring to participate in this study regardless of their disabilities, marginalization, and stigmatization in other settings. Therefore, for all those individuals who expressed an interest in participating in the research and met the study's inclusion requirements, I contacted them personally to schedule appointments to discuss any concerns, answer questions, and schedule the interview time (see adjustments for Coronavirus Disease 2019 below).

Instrumentation

I collected data about the participant's age, race, gender, and education using a demographic questionnaire (see Appendix A) provided to each participant before the interview. Likewise, I followed the interview guide's protocol and related questions. Data collection for this basic qualitative study occurred during the semistructured interviews via Zoom meetings. The rationale for selecting face-to-face interviews was that interviews are considered one of the most valuable qualitative informational resources (Creswell, 2012). Baskarada (2014) argued that using a semistructured interview for data collection gives the interviewer the freedom to redirect and prompt questions when

something unique of interest emerges for exploration. I began the interviewing process with open-ended responses followed by prompts or clarification for the participants' answers (Creswell, 2009).

Under normal circumstances, face-to-face semistructured interviews would have occurred in a naturalistic setting to ensure participants feel safe enough to respond to the advancing open-ended questions to obtain rich, in-depth responses of their perceptions and experiences about the phenomenon necessary to answer the research question until saturation is reached (Jamshed, 2014). However, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic's restrictions and conducting face-to-face interviews, as the researcher, I informed participants about the feasible alternative methods for data collection through the study's recruitment flyer, invitation letter, and consent form. Moreover, the most feasible option was to conduct the interviews utilizing Zooms' virtual conference system, a cloud-based platform.

I explained to the participants that due to COVID-19, I would conduct virtual interviews via Zoom meetings for this study. As such, I set up face-to-face interviews with a timeline of *one and a half hours* for the initial interview, and any follow-up interviews will be used for researchers to contact participants to utilize the member-checking technique. Whereas the participant reviewed the researcher's data collection for accuracy quality, the researcher also asked questions during this *follow-up interview* that the researcher considered before within a planned timeframe of 30-45 minutes. To ensure the safety of myself and each participant, I adhered to the following guidelines set forward by Walden University IRB:

After March 12, 2020**,** all ongoing and future IRB applications must include COVID-19 considerations as part of the risk/benefit analysis, and COVID-19-related modifications must be reflected in the official documents reviewed and approved by the IRB. These researchers are advised to add alternative format options (such as phone, video conference, and online) on their study invitations, flyers, and consent forms as needed. It would be wise for these researchers to build in multiple format options such that a face-to-face format could be used when restrictions are lifted according to Walden University IRB guidelines.

Therefore, I determined to use the de-identification approach to protect the participants' confidentiality and privacy by using numbers and letters as codes to safeguard their identifying information. I applied an Alpha-Numeric identifying method (e.g., A001, A002) to protect the confidentiality and privacy of my study's participants. In terms of data access and analysis, my committee and I are the only individuals with access to the listing of the codes and participants' identities which assured confidentiality and privacy further. Furthermore, I will not disclose the participant's interviews, written or recorded, in any manner. As an ethical course of action for storing de-identified recorded data or audio tapes, I have kept the interview data on a password-secured personal computer I have control of in a secured location and planned to do so for at least five years after data collection for this study has been completed. I will then delete any stored data related to the study, per Walden University's stated policies on keeping data for student dissertation projects.

Data Analysis Plan

This study used Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-step thematic analysis to guide the

data and coding for this research. Accordingly, a thematic analysis was best suited to

answer questions concerning individuals about an effect or condition (Braun & Clarke,

2006). For instance, the research study's question asked, "What are Black women's

perceptions and described experiences of the cumulative effects of gendered racial

microaggressions on their psychological wellbeing?" Braun and Clarke (2006) suggested

that the flexibility of the thematic analysis is useful and served as a research instrument

capable of providing enriched, exhaustive, yet complex explanations of the data. The

thematic analysis supported this basic qualitative research study's design. It allowed me

to identify themes that enabled an improved understanding of the participant's

experiences, perceptions, feelings, understanding, and values about the topic of interest

that both the researcher and participant held (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

According to Braun and Clarke (2006), transcribing the text data was the first step

in the analysis process. After completing the interviews, I sent each Zoom interview of

the participant's audio recordings and submitted them to the data transcription service,

NVivo, to transcribe the interview. NVivo transcription services I determined, had a 12-

hour turnaround and a 99% accuracy rate, according to the details on its website.

Likewise, I reviewed the written transcripts for mistakes, listened to the audio recording,

took notes while reviewing the written versions, and made corrections. Secondly, I

familiarized myself with the interview recordings, which enabled me to perform the

analysis effectively. Thirdly, I generated initial codes or labels describing their content,

illustrating the context of the data significant to the research question (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Fourthly, I reviewed the codes I created to identify common themes, patterns, topics, and ideas that emerged repetitively (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Fifthly, I maintained and defined themes with realistic and significant patterns in the data specific to the study's inquiry discarding any vague codes. Finally, sixthly I ensured that the themes depicted were valuable and accurate representations of the data to inform the findings (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Qualitative research has a cyclical nature referred to as recursivity, where depending on the analysis results, researchers may still find it necessary to continue collecting data from a new source. Another analysis occurs once emerging relevant or fresh data is absent (Given, 2008). Moreover, this repetitive exploration cycle subsequently reflects that recursivity processes are systematic, analytical, and amassing, allowing the researcher to review the collected information holistically from an inductive inquiry (Given, 2008). The inductive analysis reflects the coding of data, taking place without the analytic preconceptions of the researcher or outlines of preexisting coding (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The deductive analysis provides a more in-depth data analysis, leading to surprising findings. However, the data descriptions could be more richness overall. Hence, this study's inductive examination method was central (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Recursivity assisted me as a qualitative researcher in revisiting the sample by meticulously alternating between data collection, analysis, and documentation, creating an audit trail that other researchers or peer debriefers can replicate, and supporting the

integration of new constructs within existing findings that fostered rationalizations for the conclusions drawn from the study's data (Given, 2008). Hence as necessitated, I returned to the data collection assure I noticed all details presented to me by participants during the interview, for example, whether the themes were identifiable in the data and what changes were necessary to enhance the themes' meaningfulness. I described how I performed this thematic analysis' data collection drawing from the study's five participants' semi-structured interviews. I addressed each final theme according to their represented frequencies, including examples from the data's evidence. Furthermore, I also included member checking to elicit the participants' feedback to establish the credibility of the *final themes*.

According to Kerr et al. (2010), thematic saturation or data saturation indicated that data collection has been exhausted since data becomes repetitive, and further data collection redundancy is evidenced. As it concerns thematic saturation, researchers also concluded it occurs by the 12th interview; moreover, that rudimentary component for themes presented by the sixth interview. However, researchers further concluded that a homogeneous sample, dedication to study objectives, and the semi-structured interview guide helped attain data saturation by the 12th interview. Nonetheless, this does not imply that using only 12 participant interviews as a sample size is optimal, given that saturation is also achieved depending upon, for example, the researcher's characteristics, study, and data (Hennink et al., 2017).

Issues of Trustworthiness

As a basic qualitative research study, there were essential steps that the researcher must engage in advancing the research's validity; moreover, these steps were vital components to comprehending the study's inquest (Ravitch & Carl, 2016; Shenton, 2004). Lincoln and Guba (1985) asserted that the research study's trustworthiness is essential for evaluating its worth. Trustworthiness confirms confidence in the truth of the finding's credibility (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Furthermore, trustworthiness issues are guided by credibility, transferability, and dependability pertaining to data collection and analysis. Credibility is the organizational processes and foundation utilized to engage a high degree of agreement amid the participants' articulations and the researcher's understanding of them (Given, 2008). Transferability indicates the finding's capabilities of being transferred to other contexts beyond the scope of this study's milieu (Given, 2008; Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Moreover, dependability establishes the study's consistency and trustworthiness, demonstrating that other researchers can replicate the study when they review the data's findings, ensuring they will accomplish similar findings, interpretations, and conclusions about the data. (Given, 2008). *Confirmability* is defined as the degree of neutrality or how the participant's and not the researcher's motivation, bias, or interest are associated with data collection and analysis (Given, 2008; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Confirmability is demonstrated when researchers justify their decision-making through data collection, analysis, and interpretation (Given, 2008; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). I also wrote down their thoughts during data collection and coding while detailing why they associated

specific codes. As such, these details are valuable to other researchers reviewing the findings, given that they provide an audit trail that is a reliable means of understanding how the themes were developed from the data. Trustworthiness issues are diminished given that the researcher addressed developing ethical concerns in the study's processes with immediacy.

Transferability

In this basic qualitative research study, I utilized descriptive statements that were both contextual and relevant, which were attained from the "thick" rich descriptions that participants delivered in their responses about their experiences and behaviors, which allowed me to analyze their perspectives according to as much information available (Ravitch & Carl, 2016; Shenton, 2004). As a result, this made elements of the study's design and findings transferable to another study setting, based on the reader's understanding of the diverse contextual components rather than purporting to reproduce the model and its conclusions.

Dependability

Dependability in this study is evidenced by the thorough presentation of systematic, definite, and supported courses of action specific to qualitative research (Ravitch & Carl, 2016; Shenton, 2004). An audit trail documented the research findings whereby future researchers can more likely repeat the proposed study based on this study's details of the results and the overall research process.

Confirmability

The confirmability of a qualitative research study is the extent to which the analysis of the study's data and proposed findings can be confirmed by other researchers (Ravitch & Carl, 2016; Shenton, 2004). Moreover, I continued developing the audit trail because of my data collection, which, in turn, demonstrated how my interpretations of the detailed information were concluded. Accordingly, this basic qualitative study's confirmability was also apparent since I maintained consistent prudence in my biases to explore and refute them instead of impeding the findings' authenticity.

Ethical Considerations

As a functioning social worker, I understood my role as a professional in a discipline that seeks to enhance vulnerable populations' well-being and quality of life through direct practices, research studies, and policy development. Moreover, this includes advocating for the community's well-being through community organizing, outreach services, and crisis interventions. Accordingly, during my research study, I further understood the importance of safeguarding participants' anonymity, confidentiality, and data collection. As such, I was committed to not placing the participants at elevated risk for neither psychological or physical harm during the study's processes, confident that they were not manipulated or deceived by any means (Burkholder & Crawford, 2016; Dongre & Sankaran, 2016).

Correspondingly, participants' benefits in this research were their opportunity to partake in a scientific inquiry specific to their racial group on a platform where their

voices were heard. Notwithstanding, empowering themselves by raising awareness about their critical social conditions in North America, thereby effecting social change. I further informed the participants that the interviews would be conducted via Zoom with their permission, recorded, and I told participants about the questions that I would ask during the initial interview, which were presented within an expected timeline of one and a half hours. *Follow-up* interviews were conducted while analyzing the data collection to obtain further clarification as needed using member checking, ensuring the accuracy and quality of the documentation of participant's experiences. Thus, supporting the study's trustworthiness, and this interview occurred within a planned timeframe of 30-45 minutes. I offered no monetary remuneration to participants in this research study; however, I presented each participant with a thank you note to display appreciation for their involvement in the study.

Informed Consent

As described in the Belmont Report, informed consent allowed the confirmation of autonomy among all research participants (Nijhawan et al., 2013). Researchers were responsible for ensuring that the study's participants had been educated about what to expect during the study. The informed consent document given to each participant contained all the details they needed to understand the capacity of their involvement in the research study (Nijhawan et al., 2013). These details included their potential risks, benefits, right to withdraw from the study at any time and for any reason, permission to audio record each interview, their rights to confidentiality, privacy and whom to contact to express concerns or ask questions (Nijhawan et al., 2013). Likewise, the participants

signed the informed consent, indicating that they fully understood all the pertinent details of their research disclosed by the researcher. As such, they had an opportunity to make an informed decision about their involvement in the study (Nijhawan et al., 2013).

Privacy

Privacy is the participant's right not to be intruded upon, especially in the advanced technological society on the web. So, *privacy* also included the right not to be under surveillance, communicate in private, and have autonomy and authority over one's body (Given, 2008). Whereas when researchers offer to respect participants' privacy, they have the right to decide how much information to share and its utilization. This discussion took place through informed consent (Given, 2008). The participants were assured of protecting their personal information from other parties and how the information they shared would be disseminated. Thus, I offered them confidentiality to establish the participant's privacy accordingly.

Confidentiality

I masked the participant's identities assuring confidentiality, by using the Alpha-Numeric identifying method to protect participants' identities from being revealed (e. g., A001, A002), preserving the research participants' privacy (Office for Human Research Protections, 2020). I am the only person who has access to the listing of the codes and participants' identities to which they have been coded. Bos (2020) postulated that as the researcher, and to protect the participants' confidentiality and privacy, I agreed not to disclose in any way what participants have shared that can publicly identify them as the source. Thus, centered on best practices, I stored recorded data or audio tapes on a

password-secured personal computer in a secure location. Moreover, only I have access to and will maintain them for at least five years, per Walden University, and they will then be deleted after these five years.

Zoom Confidentiality Guidelines

To ensure the study participant's confidentiality and privacy during the interview conducted through *Zoom Video Communications*, I acted as the researcher, interviewer, and host. Subsequently, I followed the following guidelines: I locked the meeting once it started, and no other entries could join, even if they had the required meeting ID and passcode (Zoom, 2019). Furthermore, the participants were protected from any undesired distractions or inappropriate gestures and noises since, as the host, I could turn videos off and block them. If any issues arose with privacy, I could have placed the participant on hold and disabled their video and audio connections; I then would have reported any problems to Zoom, who would have taken appropriate actions. To further ensure the participant's privacy, I recorded the interview to the cloud (Zoom, 2019). I also had control of the access to recordings and enabled or disabled a participant's recording. As the host, I could disallow the participants from sharing their screens and renaming their onscreen identity as necessitated.

Protocol for Emotional Responses

I was also aware that a participant could have reacted with emotions considering their experiences due to the distressing nature of the topic, such as crying, vocal changes, and sniffing (Labott, 2013). As the interviewer, I would have ceased the interview until the participant felt comfortable to continue, and the following protocol would have also

been adhered to address their need for support. Practicing sensitivity, I would have spent time with the participant to support them and discuss their concerns (Campbell et al., 2009). If the participants chose to discontinue, the choice was theirs. Nonetheless, I also would have provided a follow-up phone call the day after the interview to ensure the participant's welfare. Thus, the intent is to protect the participant's overall well-being within this study from beginning to end. Moreover, each participant was contacted the day after the interview for a debriefing accordingly, after which, if a participant experienced an extreme reaction to the questions triggered by recalling their encounters with microinsults, microassaults, and microinvalidations, a national hotline number was also provided for further support.

Dissemination of Findings

My strategies for disseminating my study's findings involved prudence and understanding of whom I observed as my audience, which I have considered. I proposed sharing my study's findings with all interested parties in those settings open to receiving my results. I extend and open my invitation to other social workers as my audience to communicate within our professional environments, such as local conferences and luncheons, to share my findings as a keynote speaker. Upon completing my dissertation, I plan to contact professional organizations that I am aware of who will be interested in my study's findings in other cities. I have also planned to facilitate a Blog talk show on social media, a viable opportunity to locate a diverse audience after graduating with my Ph.D. (Tripathy et al., 2017).

I also plan to publish books and journal articles about Black women's social realities in American society and share my findings through this means. Notwithstanding, those scholars interested in the same issues my findings proposed are well suited to engage as an audience. I am prepared to engage policymakers about the study's conceptualization to impact policy and practice changes throughout the research and advanced by its publication (Tripathy et al., 2017). I planned to engage state and federal policymakers as potential audiences to disseminate my research findings by contacting them by phone for follow-up guidelines. Policymakers' early involvement fosters a sense of responsibility and ownership, which is critical to effecting changes in practice and policy (Tripathy et al., 2017). As a social worker and a scholar, I have effected positive social change and promoted social justice for Black women in North America.

Summary

Chapter 3 described the basic qualitative research methodology and answered the study's research question. The participant recruitment process occurred through circulating recruitment flyers in public places. This chapter depicted my plans for data collection, which I obtained through face-to-face interviews lasting one and a half hours with five Black women participants who befitted the study's participation criterion. This chapter also included a narrative of how I managed the transcriptions throughout the coding and theme processes. Chapter 4 presents the proposed study's data analysis results after receiving IRB approval to proceed with the research.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

Through this study, I explored the perceptions of Black women aged 51 to 65

years old and up and their described experiences with gendered racial microaggressions'

cumulative adverse effects on their psychological well-being. I identified the complex

nature of Black women's social realities when experiencing discrimination and the

backlash of systematic oppression against their race and gender. Moreover, this study has

explicitly acknowledged Black women's unique experiences and the need to understand

their dynamics. In this chapter, I presented the findings of this study and how the data is

associated as it addressed the research question introduced in Chapter 1 and gave a

synopsis of each participant's demographic details. I discussed the data analysis,

including the codes, themes, and results, and the study's trustworthiness regarding the

elements I used to maintain this posture. I addressed the following research question in

this study:

> RQ1—Qualitative: What are Black women's perceptions and described
>
> > experiences of the cumulative effects of gendered racial microaggressions
> >
> > on their psychological well-being?

On 10/29, October 29, 2021, the Walden University IRB ((Institutional Review

Board) #0745208) approved the study. This chapter commenced with a description of the

data collection activities, followed by a description of the site, setting, participants,

demographics, and coding. I interviewed five Black women living in North America to

become the participants for my study, and I used a Zoom platform for conducting these interviews.

Setting

I emailed each participant an invitation to the Zoom meeting I used as the platform for the interview. Notwithstanding, the five participants provided the day, naturalistic settings, and time best for comfort, safety, and availability. Accordingly, I scheduled the interview as planned. These semistructured interviews were scheduled over three weeks. Specifically, each participant was interviewed as follows: Participant A001 was interviewed on 11/22/November 22, 2021; Participant A002 was interviewed on 11/10/November 10, 2021; Participant A003 was interviewed on 12/2/December 2, 2021; Participant A004 was interviewed on 12/7/December 7, 2021; and Participant A005 was interviewed on 12/10/December 10, 2021. As the interviews occurred, there were a few interruptions; for example, I heard voices, and I also saw a glimpse of a person standing in the background; the participant indicated the private nature of the interview, and the meeting progressed as planned. Therefore, these interruptions did not affect the interview's quality or focus. Correspondingly, no personal or organizational conditions existed that influenced participants, their experiences, and the interpretation of the study's results

Demographics

The study consisted of five Black women of African descent, born and raised *only* in North America, aged 51 to 65 and up. I assigned each participant an alpha-numerical identification (e. g., A001, A002, A003, and A004), which I used for reference

within the study. There were two single participants, two married participants, and one widowed participant. Two out of the five participants had children. The educational levels ranged from a high school diploma to a graduate doctoral degree. Salaries ranged from $25,000 to $100,000 (See Table 1). In this study, the five Black women who met the criteria and volunteered to become participants were asked to complete a demographic questionnaire.

Table 1

Participants' Demographic Characteristics

Participants	A001	A002	A003	A004	A005
Race/Ethnicity	Black	Black	Black	Black	Black
Age	65+	51–65	51–65	51–65	51–65
Education	Doctoral degree	Master's degree	Associate's degree	High school diploma	Associate's degree
Marital status	Married	Single	Single	Widowed	Married
Children	0	0	0	4	7
Employment	Retired	Employed	Employed	Disabled	Employed
Continent of birth	North America	North America	North America	North America	North America
Income	$75,001–$100,000	$40,001–$50,000	$40,001–$50,000	Under $25,000	$50.000–$75,000

I asked the participants about their race, ethnicity, gender, age, educational status, marital status, number of children, employment, and family income. I also asked each participant to check all the listed possible symptoms (not exhaustive) of the psychological and physical adverse cumulative effects they experienced due to gendered racial microaggressions. This list included headaches, hopelessness, mental health concerns, diabetes, low self-esteem, substance abuse, heart problems, confusion, anxiety, body tension, and paranoia.

Data Collection

I instigated the data collection plan for this generic research study after receiving,

on October 29, 2021, Walden University IRB approval #0745208 for the study. I

recruited five participants living in North America for my research by placing flyers in

public places such as shopping malls and universities. Interviews were conducted via the

Zoom platform; these were face-to-face interviews. Each participant for the interviews

was assigned an identifier corresponding to A001, A002, A003, A004, and A005. Each

interview lasted an hour and 10 minutes and was audio recorded through the Zoom

platform on my computer. I followed my interview guide and the foundational plan in

Chapter 3 regarding transcribing the five participants' interviews through NVivo, and I

found no unusual circumstances.

Data Analysis

Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-step thematic analysis guided the data and coding

for this research. I followed each of the six steps of thematic data analysis as the authors

above outlined. The six-step process was as follows: Step 1, the familiarization phase;

Step 2, the coding phase; Step 3, generating themes phase; Step 4, the recursive review

phase; Step 5, defining and naming themes phase; and Step 6, the write-up phase. The

following discussion describes each phase and how I analyzed and generated the codes

for this research study.

Step 1: The Familiarization Phase

After conducting the interviews, I began the data analysis by uploading the five

participants' audio recordings to NVivo to be transcribed verbatim. After NVivo

transcribed the audio recordings, I read each transcript. I listened to the five participants' audio recordings several times, familiarizing myself with what they had disclosed during the interviews. My primary purpose was to review the interviews in depth and work to recognize relevant information regarding my research question.

Step 2: Coding Phase

After I became familiar with the data, I began the coding process. I generated the initial codes and color-coded them onto an Excel spreadsheet and in a Microsoft Word document with an alphanumerical identification, identifying the participants as A001, A002, A003, A004, and A005**.** Next, I examined the extracts from the transcripts for words, sentences, and paragraphs that the participants had shared to answer the research question. Finally, I used NVivo coding to derive *codes* from the data collection to create codes for the raw data.

Step 3: Generating Themes

After completing the coding of each transcript from the participant's responses to the interview, I began the data analysis. I compiled a listing of collated codes in Step 2 relevant to the emerging primary themes from the data extracts based on the relationship between codes and how they reflected each participant's responses to the interview questions.

Step 4: The Review of Themes Phase

During this phase, I reviewed themes at a deeper level. I started combining, refining, separating, and dismissing initial themes and reviewing the data within themes for distinctions, coherence, and meaningfulness. I confirmed the relationship between the

codes, extracts, themes, and those that needed more detail to stand alone as potential subthemes. For example, I combined potential subthemes "stereotyped" and "intersectionality" into the primary theme "gendered racism," given that they each are elements of the discrimination against Black women's intersections of their race and gender. Therefore, all the subthemes I identified did not demonstrate overarching relevance for answering the research question; I dismissed them. I further scrutinized these codes, ensuring that the actuality of a relationship between the themes and the overall data set was undeniable.

Step 5: Defining and Naming Themes

As part of the data analysis process, I started with identifying initial codes to explore perceptions of the experience under inquiry, which then led me to identify patterns and categories of ideas presented. I defined the final listing of themes by identifying the unique meaningfulness of each theme and how it helped in understanding the comprehensive dataset to answer the research question. I named each theme.

Step 6: The Write Up

I ensured that the themes and subthemes depicted were valuable and accurate data representations to inform the findings. I identified six key themes that captured participants' perceptions of their experiences with gendered racial microaggressions on Black women's psychological well-being. I also used those final themes to make meaning of the participants' experiences.

Themes

The emergence of six core themes distinct to the perceptions and described experiences of the participants, as drawn from their data collection, were as follows: (a) gendered racism experiences, (b) Black women are in a crisis, (c) grief and loss, (d) physical health issues, (e) mental health issues, and (f) invisibility and silencing. Moreover, these predisposed themes are further explained as gendered racism experiences, which illuminates that every participant experienced gendered racism overtly or covertly. The theme "Black women are in a crisis of oppression" magnified that these, Black women are constantly operating in a fight-or-flight state of mind living in this society as a means of survival.

Themes Categorized with Interview Questions

RQ1: What are Black women's perceptions and described experiences of the cumulative effects of gendered racial microaggressions on their psychological well-being?

Theme 1: Gendered Racial Experiences

- What are some of the challenges you face in the United States as a Black woman when you are at work?

- Describe experiences/situations where you felt disrespected, and that disrespected was related to you as a woman?

- What do you think are stressors you experience daily as a Black woman in North American society?

- Describe when something was said or done that made you feel uncomfortable.

- What do you perceive others say about Black women's experiences collectively in American society?

Theme 2: Black Women Are in a Crisis of Oppression

- Describe how being a Black woman has affected your physical and mental health.

- Describe when something was said or done that made you feel uncomfortable.

- Describe what you think hinders you as a Black woman living in North America.

- What are your perceptions and experiences with being sexualized? Is this in any way related to you being a Black woman in North American society?

Theme 3: Grief and Loss

- Describe instances where an interaction with another person or other types of situations felt negative and you believe it was because you were a Black woman.

- Describe experiences/situations where you felt disrespected, and that disrespect was related to you as a woman? As a Black woman?

- Describe your experiences with feeling like you have been put down because you are a Black woman. Give examples of the situation and how you felt.

- What do you perceive others say about Black women's experiences collectively in North American society?

- What are your perceptions and experiences with others making assumptions about Black women as individuals and collectively in North American society?

- What do you think are stressors you experience daily as a Black woman in North American society?

Theme 4: Gendered Racism Physical Health Issues

- Describe how being a Black woman has affected your physical and mental health.

- What do you think are stressors you experience daily as a Black woman in North American society?

Theme 5: Mental Health Issues

- Describe how being a Black woman has affected your physical and mental health.

- What do you think are stressors you experience daily as a Black woman in North American society?

Theme 6: Invisibility and Silencing

- What are your perceptions and experiences with others making assumptions about Black women as individuals and collectively in North American society?

- How important is your social identity as a Black woman to you in North American society?

- Describe how you deal with the stressors you marked previously as a Black woman in American society.

Discrepancies

I identified two discrepant cases in the analysis whereby Participant A004 shared an intense account of her rejection as a child because of her dark skin. Therefore, at an early age, Participant A004 realized that she was treated differently by White people, yet because she lacked the understanding of gendered racism and discrimination, her mental state as a child was affected adversely. Nevertheless, other participants had not reported experiencing it, thus producing a discrepant case in the analysis. On the other hand, Participant A001 conveyed that her family was interracial and grew up with no bias about her skin color. However, in her adulthood, she began to perceive discrimination inflections as the only Black woman in the workplace, changing her mindset about White people. As such, these six themes effectively unveiled the advancing anguish that Black women can expect as it is inescapable in this racist and sexist society. Likewise, Black women are being held captive in North America, undeniably dismissed and despoiled, by the raging oppression against their vulnerabilities of being a Black woman living in a White supremacist society, as reported, with no way out.

<div align="center">

Evidence of Trustworthiness

</div>

In a basic qualitative research study, there are essential steps that I engaged in advancing the research's validity; moreover, these steps are vital components for comprehending the study's inquest (Ravitch & Carl, 2016; Shenton, 2004). Lincoln and Guba (1985) asserted that the research study's trustworthiness is essential for evaluating

its worth. Trustworthiness confirms confidence in the truth of the findings' credibility (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Credibility is the organizational processes and foundation utilized to engage a high degree of agreement amid the participants' articulations and the researcher's understanding of them (Given, 2008). Correspondingly, I accomplished an exhaustive review of the extant literature, which supported and conflicted with my findings. Indeed, the value of engaging the research's exploration is reflected in the data collection and my willingness to share my being a novice researcher as my efforts to ensure further credibility were exemplified. I aspired to accurately encapsulate what the study's participants had relayed to me regarding their perceptions and described experiences of the phenomenon.

Transferability indicates the finding's capabilities of being transferred to other contexts beyond the scope of this study milieu (Given, 2008; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Moreover, dependability established the study's consistency and trustworthiness, demonstrating that other researchers can replicate the study when reviewing the data's findings, ensuring they will accomplish similar findings, interpretations, and conclusions. (Given, 2008). Confirmability is defined as the degree of neutrality or how the participant's and not the researcher's motivation, bias, or interest are associated with data collection and analysis (Given, 2008; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Confirmability is demonstrated when researchers justify their decision-making through data collection, analysis, and interpretation (Given, 2008; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). I wrote down my thoughts during data collection and coding while detailing why they were associated with specific codes. As such, these details are valuable to other researchers. Reviewing the

findings, given they provided *an audit trail* that is a reliable means of understanding how, I developed the themes from the data and diminished trustworthiness issues by addressing potential ethical concerns in the study's processes with immediacy.

Transferability

I attained transferability by utilizing the thick and rich descriptions of the data collection I gathered from the five participant's interviews (Ravitch & Carl, 2016; Shenton, 2004). As a result, the study's design and findings are transferable to another study's setting, based on the reader's understanding of the diverse contextual components rather than purporting to reproduce the model and its conclusions (Ravitch & Carl, 2016; Shenton, 2004).

Dependability

Dependability in this study will be evidenced by a thorough presentation of systematic, definite, and supported courses of action specific to qualitative research (Ravitch & Carl, 2016; Shenton, 2004). An audit trail documented the research procedures and findings whereby future researchers can more likely repeat the proposed study based on this study's details of the results and the overall research process.

Confirmability

The confirmability of a qualitative research study is the extent to which the analysis of the study's data and proposed findings can be confirmed by other researchers (Ravitch & Carl, 2016; Shenton, 2004). Moreover, I continued developing the audit trail due to my data collection, which, in turn, demonstrated how my interpretations of the detailed information were concluded. Accordingly, this basic qualitative study's

confirmability is apparent since I maintained consistent prudence in my biases to explore and refute them instead of impeding the findings' authenticity.

Findings

Qualitative Interviews

As discussed in Chapter 3, the participant's actual names for identification during the interviews were not used. However, all five participants were assigned identifiers such as A001, A002, A003, A004, and A005. I developed themes to guide the data analysis using Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-step thematic analysis to generate the following data from the participant's interviews. I identified six core themes from the initial and axial coding process. Those themes were as follows: Theme 1: Gendered Racism Experiences, Theme 2: The Black Woman is in Crisis, Theme 3: Grief and Loss, Theme 4: Physical Health Issues, and Theme 5: Mental Health Issues and Theme 6: Invisibility and Silencing. These six core themes are interrelated, overlapping ideas that directly addressed the main research question for this study: What are Black women's perceptions and described experiences of the cumulative effects of gendered racial microaggressions on their psychological well-being? The following sections offer examples of each participant's extracts that support each theme; this section also includes tables highlighting the themes and participant example responses.

Theme 1: Gendered Racism Experiences

Gendered racism is described as the interlocking forms of structural inequalities and oppression, making sense of Black women's experiences with discrimination in this society. Gendered racism suggests that Black women experience unique forms of

oppression because they are Black and women simultaneously. All five study participants expressed that they experienced gendered racism and provided specific details about what they perceived as gendered racial microaggressions, microinsults, microassaults, and microinvalidations in the workplace. Table 2 highlights examples of what participants perceived as gendered racism.

Table 2

Alignment of Interview Extracts to Codes Generating Theme 1: Gendered Racism Experiences

Interview extracts examples	Codes
Participant A001 When I first started working with them, he told me, well, when I was being interviewed, he told me, well, you know, if you just do what I say, I'll make sure you climb the ladder. Well, I wasn't the one, for I'm not really the one to do that, OK? I felt somewhat of being abused sexually even though it was a mental type thing.	Limited personal growth and development Fear of losing job Discriminated Sexualized Disrespected Stereotyped
Participant A002 They have a lot of stereotypes about Black women, sexual stereotypes, degrading stereotypes, they tried to label me. She has so many boyfriends, so many this year, so many that. . . well, and you don't have a phone number or a person who you can identify. As a person who was my boyfriend, you can't even name three, you don't have three numbers or three names. Give me three. Give me two. You can't do it. But yet, oh, this over-sexualized Black woman. I don't even care anymore because I know it's not true. I know it's just something that you're saying to justify your actions, you know, so I said, I'm not even going to entertain it anymore. I'm not going to think about it. I'm not going to try to address it.	Limited personal growth and development Fear of losing job Discrimination Sexualized Disrespected
Participant A003 I'm applying for this position; in the back of my mind, I think you know, you are a Black woman facing the stereotype that I would be, difficult to get along with, or that I am a person who has the wrong attitude. But in my mind, all I am thinking is that I'm applying for this position trying to get ahead.	Oppressed Disrespected Limited personal growth and development Stereotyped Discrimination `
Participant A004 The primary challenge of just being marked and treated different, very different because of your racial genotype." "You know, it's just you get used to it, you almost get anesthetized to it because it happens so often and it happens in so many ways. Sometimes it's very innocuous, and sometimes it's very direct. And when it's very direct, you have to step up and go into defensive mode. You know, if it's something that is making you feel uncomfortable.	Fear of losing job Disrespected Stereotyped Sexualized Limited personal growth and development Discrimination
Participant A005 "Sad to say as a Black woman the level of your color, because, you know, as far as if you're light, if you're dark if you're, you know, medium in certain areas definitely can be offensive." "We don't win, you know, we can't win."	Sexualized Limited personal growth and development Fear of losing job Discrimination Disrespected

For example, Participant A001 reported,

When I first started working with them, he told me, well, when I was being interviewed, he told me, well, you know, if you just do what I say, I'll make sure you climb the ladder. Well, I wasn't the one, for I'm not really the one to do that, OK? I felt somewhat of being abused sexually even though it was a mental type thing.

Another Participant, A002, reported,

They have a lot of stereotypes about Black women, sexual stereotypes, degrading stereotypes, they tried to label me. She has so many boyfriends, so many this year, so many that. . . well, and you don't have a phone number or a person who you can identify. As a person who was my boyfriend, you can't even name three, you don't have three numbers or three names. Give me three. Give me two. You can't do it. But yet, oh, this over-sexualized Black woman. I don't even care anymore because I know it's not true. I know it's just something that you're saying to justify your actions, you know, so I said, I'm not even going to entertain it anymore. I'm not going to think about it. I'm not going to try to address it.

Additionally, Participant A004 reported,

Oh, that's all the time. That was all the time. Some men tend to say things, you know, they're ruthless and, you know, descriptions just the way women look at being sexualized. Because I have, you know, I'm kind of hefty on the top. I remember walking into the office and a White male just grabbing me and hugging me just because, you know, trying to, you know, feel me up. This is not good, not good and violated in that way is seen as a threat, but it was a joke to them you

know, it was a joke to them, but it wasn't funny because, you know, if my brother

did that to your sister, that would you know, he might wind up with some

problems.

Participants each reported being disrespected, violated, degraded, and angered due to

being sexualized in the workplace. Participant A003 stated,

I'm applying for this position; in the back of my mind, I think you know, you are a

Black woman facing the stereotype that I would be, difficult to get along with, or

that I am a person who has the wrong attitude. But in my mind, all I am thinking

is that I'm applying for this position trying to get ahead.

Another Participant, A004, reported,

The primary challenge of just being marked and treated different, very different

because of your racial genotype. You know, it's just you get used to it, you almost

get anesthetized to it because it happens so often and it happens in so many ways.

Sometimes it's very innocuous, and sometimes it's very direct. And when it's very

direct, you have to step up and go into defensive mode. You know, if it's

something that is making you feel uncomfortable.

Participants, A001, A002, and A004 reported being disrespected, violated, degraded, and

angered due to being sexualized in the workplace. All Participants, A001, A002, A003,

A004, and A005, each reported experiencing barriers to personal growth and

development due to gendered racism. A different Participant, A005, reported: "Sad to say

as a Black woman the level of your color, because, you know, as far as if you're light, if

you're dark if you're, you know, medium in certain areas definitely can be offensive."

For example, Participant A001 reported,

> I didn't get pay raises; I didn't get promoted as a Black woman, I didn't. . . it was
> very stressful. And so, then he told me that I can take some college courses. And
> so, then that's what I did. But the boss over him went to him and yelled at him
> and said, why are you sending her to college? You know, to take some business
> courses. Why are you doing that? And so, then I'm like well, Jeff told me I could
> and so then he went in there and he yelled at Jeff, and then Jeff told him, that he
> didn't tell me to do it.

Participant A002 stated,

> Well, I feel as though I was denied the endorsement to advance my career because
> I am a Black woman, and if I had been other *than,* there would not have been a
> problem with me getting my endorsement.

Participant A003 specified,

> I had to complete some personal documents and PII information; I sealed the
> envelope and addressed it to who was supposed to receive it. And I put it in that
> person's box, and I discovered later that when I went back to work, someone had
> opened it. And when I tried to address the issue of my concern for my privacy. It
> was like I became the problem; though my tone was correct, I wasn't able to
> express it. You know how I felt as far as someone going into my personal
> information, my social was there, my banking information, and the manager just
> wanted to brush it off as though it was nothing, and that made me feel as though it
> was the fact that I was a Black woman, that my information getting out there or

them looking at my information was no big deal. My thoughts were, had it been

me doing that, it would have been a different story; I had to stop addressing the

issue, even though they never looked into it.

Participant A004 communicated,

I was in an environment that was racially and gendered challenged by others.

They would talk amongst themselves when opportunities to move up the elevator

were being offered. White co-workers bypassed me, which meant no wage

increases, no merit promotions, and you were there on your own, in the same

space with the same kind of people who were moving up ahead of you.

Participant A005 explained, "Sometimes I ask, well, why did I spend this money to get

this education if I can't use it? As far as in the workforce, as a Black woman; w*e

don't win, you know, we can't win*." Participant A005 also reported:

I can remember as a Black woman, being with a friend, a European in a grocery

store and going through and basically, people walking by looking at us like *what

are you doing with her*? And then she was told, Oh, you *a nigger* lover?

Another Participant, A004, reported, "I felt disrespected, and I felt my integrity was

being compromised. "*She accused me of stealing money*." "I was flabbergasted."

Findings of the study indicated that participants, each reported experiencing

marginalization due to gendered racism in the workplace because they are Black women.

For example, Participant A001 reported, "I was the only Black in the office...they

actually tried to get rid of me."

Participant A002 reported,

I was overlooked, I was deserving; yes, I was angry, ashamed, frustrated, and I

cried because it made me sad . . . I have invested my life as a Black woman in

ministry, and I did what I was supposed to do, but *I still did not measure up*.

Participant A003 stated,

I can't say that I've ever experienced any unbiased; I think that causes some

adverse long-term effects when it comes to you being in the workplace

environment. And when issues do come up that involve you, it is already known

in your mind having had that experience before that, because of your race, the

problem is not going to get resolved.

Another Participant, A004, said,

White folks don't want you there in those positions and are doing everything in

their power to *get on your nerves on purpose*. Sometimes it's very innocuous, and

sometimes it's straightforward. And when it's straightforward, you have to step

up and *go into defensive mode* if it's something *making you feel uncomfortable*.

Theme 2: The Black Woman Is in a Crisis of Oppression

The theme "the Black woman is in a crisis of oppression" describes how the

discrimination of Black women's race and gender causes them to experience a distinct

form of oppression rooted in gendered racism and perpetrated by racist and sexist

stereotypes used to control, marginalize, and objectify the Black woman in North

America. Further, it describes the ongoing difficulties Black women must endure to

navigate a White supremacist society. Table 3 highlights examples of what participants

perceived as a Black woman in a crisis of oppression.

Table 3

Alignment of Interview Extracts to Codes Generating Theme 2: The Black Woman Is in a Crisis of Oppression

Interview extracts examples	Codes
Participant A001	Chronic stress
I wasn't. I wasn't. I wasn't good enough, to be in that office, I wasn't good enough to manage the office. OK, the manager wanted to make sure I felt that because I wasn't going to cave in to him. But I started having a sleep disorder because, in my mind, I'm trying to figure out how I'm going to handle the next day and how I'm going to do things differently the next day. So, it was a constant. . . I was trying to trying to evolve out of this whatever they were trying to constantly, keep me cave in as a Black woman.	Low self-esteem Dominated by White people Discrimination Oppressed
Participant A002	Debilitated
"I like to exercise. But I think when you think about all the stuff and trouble and trauma, it's like you don't want to exercise, you know, where is the energy going to come from for you to exercise even though you know you need to or you should. A lot of times you struggle mentally. . . I'm only dealing with the trauma of the after-effects of the stress that I've been through."	Sexualized Low self-esteem Chronic stress Oppressed
Participant A003	Low self-esteem
"I can't say that I've ever experienced any unbiased in think that can cause some negative long-term effects when it comes to you being in the workplace environment."	Chronic stress Oppressed
Participant A004	Chronic stress
I was in an environment that was racially and gendered challenged by others. They would talk amongst themselves when opportunities to move up the elevator were being offered. White co-workers bypassed me, which meant no wage increases, no merit promotions, and you were there on your own, in the same space with the same kind of people who were moving up ahead of you. . .Oh well, they winded up giving me my boss's job and putting her at another department, which already right there created problems because, you know, she didn't think that that was going to happen. I don't know why it did happen, but that's what happened. Now you know, she was very resentful of the fact that I had her position, you know, and I didn't ask for the position. I wasn't chiseling, like some women in the office will have sex with people. And so, I get to go up the golden elevator; I came in, just did my job to the best of my ability to learn skills. But that created animosity and anger when I was elevated and given her position. But I winded up leaving there because there was so much racism. First of all, you got White men or those resentful of a Black woman in a position of any kind of authority. Race was always a factor. Every time that I got a raise or something like that, other people would just go into beast mode.	Sexualized Oppressed
Participant A005	Low self-esteem
Every day, from the time we wake up to the time we go to sleep, even while we are sleeping, the stress is that we have as Black women in the United States . . . is to find out that White people did not make the system for us to succeed in our crafts and our careers, it was not. No matter how hard we work, we still must work *harder*, and they underpay us, and *we have to accept it*.	Dominated by White people Discrimination Oppressed

For example, Participant A001 reported,

> I wasn't. I wasn't. I wasn't good enough, to be in that office, I wasn't good enough
>
> to manage the office. OK, the manager wanted to make sure I felt that because I
>
> wasn't going to cave in to him. But I started having a sleep disorder because, in
>
> my mind, I'm trying to figure out how I'm going to handle the next day and how
>
> I'm going to do things differently the next day. So, it was a constant. . . I was
>
> trying to evolve out of whatever they were trying to do constantly, keep me cave
>
> in as a Black woman.

Another, Participant A002, reported, "I'm at the point now where I must be free, and I must live for me. And I no longer can live under your ideologies, your insecurities, I can no longer do it." Participant A002 questioned, "*Should I have done backflips or somersaults*?"

> Participant A003 reported,
>
> I worked a night shift, and as a result of a prior situation, I kind of shut down, and
>
> I didn't communicate much. So, my words were short and straight to the point,
>
> being mindful of my tone because I was a Black woman. Our tone is
>
> misconstrued, where we're perceived as the angry Black woman, and I
>
> communicated with the staff worker to ask whether or not they wanted to take
>
> upstairs or downstairs when it comes to position and explain to them a situation
>
> regarding the work, as far as the routine. My manager said to me, I've heard that
>
> you're difficult to get along with. My response to her, I'm not sure how that is
>
> because the only thing I communicate is work-related. I asked the individual if

they wanted to do upstairs or downstairs. I had no other conversations, and I don't

do personal conversations with them. I was stressed and frustrated because when

you hold on to stuff like that, now you have a job you're not happy about because

you know what happened. But, you know, you have to make a living, so you

continue to do what you have to do to pay your bills. Again, definitely frustrated;

I thought as though it was discriminatory, I felt like they were discriminating, and

I felt discriminated against as a Black woman coming across as though, again, the

angry, difficult Black woman stereotype. It's just you feel like you're being

discriminated against in your sense of yourself, OK? If I were not a Black woman,

the communication would have been different. In fact, it may not have even taken

place.

Participant A004 reported,

I was in an environment that was racially and gendered challenged by others.

They would talk amongst themselves when opportunities to move up the elevator

were being offered. White co-workers bypassed me, which meant no wage

increases, no merit promotions, and you were there on your own, in the same

space with the same kind of people who were moving up ahead of you. . .oh well,

they whined, up giving me my boss's job and putting her at another department,

which already right there created problems because, you know, she didn't think

that that was going to happen. I don't know why it did happen, but that's what

happened. Now you know, she was very resentful of the fact that I had her

position, you know, and I didn't ask for the position. I wasn't chiseling, like some

women in the office will have sex with people. And so, I get to go up the golden

elevator; I came in, just did my job to the best of my ability to learn skills. But

that created animosity and anger when I was elevated and given her position. But

I winded up leaving there because there was so much racism. First of all, you got

White men or those resentful of a Black woman in a position of any kind of

authority.

Participant A005 reported,

Every day, from the time we wake up to the time we go to sleep, even while we are

sleeping, the stress is that we have as Black women in the United States . . . is to

find out that White people did not make the system for us to succeed in our crafts

and our careers, it was not. No matter how hard we work, we still must

work *harder*, and they underpay us, and *we have to accept it*.

Theme 3: Grief and Loss

The theme "grief and loss" describes how the frequency of discriminatory

experiences against Black women's social identities (e.g., race and gender) acts as a

chronic stressor leading to mental health issues, physical health issues, and a shortened

lifespan. All five participants expressed grief and loss experiences on the personal and

professional levels of their lives, unlike any other group of women has ever endured in

this society. Table 4 highlights examples of what participants perceived as grief and loss

experiences.

Table 4

Alignment of Interview Extracts to Codes Generating Theme 3 Grief and Loss

Interview extracts examples	Codes
Participant A001	Always at fault
"He didn't do it to the White girls in the office. *He only did it to me*, it was degrading, it made me feel dirty because he did everything to get my attention and to see if I will go to bed with him and because I didn't, he did stuff that make me feel dirty."	Sexualized Discriminate Powerlessness
Participant A002	Always a fault
"They don't face the same struggles that I face." "The things that I've accomplished to get through the door or to get the position are not valued."	Powerlessness They don't like me Stereotyped Discrimination
Participant A003	Always a fault
"My manager said to me. I'm hearing or I've heard that you're difficult to get along with. My response to her, I said, I'm not sure how that is, I said the only thing I communicate is work related . . . because there are no other interactions that took place with me, with that individual who is of the opposite race. I personally felt confident that that statement was set for me being a Black woman."	Powerlessness They don't like me Stereotyped Discrimination
Participant A004	Always a fault
"There was this white young lady trying to set me up for a racial harassment suit, saying that I was racially harassing her, and she was documenting anything and everything I said and was going to the H.R. director with it...of course, the H.R. director called me in I got written up and had to go to the EAS program, which is a program for employees that are, you know, going through X, Y, Z. And the next day that she came in, she was laughing at me; it was so stressful. There was nothing I could do, so I just had to put up with it...my race was always a factor"	Powerlessness They don't like me White people get on your nerves on purpose
Participant A005	Set up for failure
"I would have to play it down and act like I am a little naive about things to get the point across, which is downgrading not to be able to say, I know how to fix this, but I have to act like this to be able to get it fixed."	They let you know you are Black I was treated like a slave

For example, Participant A001 asserted,

> He didn't do it to the White girls in the office. *He only did it to me*, it was degrading, it made me feel dirty because he did everything to get my attention and to see if I will go to bed with him and because I didn't, he did stuff that make me feel dirty.

Another Participant A002, reflecting her grief and loss experiences reported,

> Ok, I would say I face being promoted, I face challenges as far as being promoted for advancement in terms of being overlooked or not recognized as a Black

woman in the workplace. It makes me feel like the things that I've accomplished to get through the door or to get the position are not valued. And then the work that I do. I feel as though it's not valued or it's less than others. When I say others, I'm referring to either White males, Black males or White females; they don't face the same struggles that I face.

Participant A003 reported that her grief and loss experiences centered in the workplace, and she reported grieving the loss of her respect, dignity, honor, worth and psychological well-being, stating,

Well, you can't really enjoy your life because now you've got this burden on your shoulders instead of you going out into your life doing your normal routines, this burden has you to a point where you can't resume doing things what you normally do because it can be almost depressing. You know, it's like now this is bothering you, you're upset, it drains you. It's negative energy. So, you don't have the energy, to normally go out there and do the things that you would normally do because it's been interrupted. . . I mean, it's very, very, very stressful.

Participant A004 described being treated differently because of her race and gender throughout her life, causing her grief and loss experiences in every setting in this society, stating,

Being marked and treated differently because of your racial genotype. You know, it permeates every aspect of society; whether you're talking about from primary grade school throughout the university, the experiences were equally as bad . . . *my race was always a factor*. You get some of this guff and microaggressions

from the dominant culture against people they perceive as lesser than. There are

so many incidents, and my White peers told me, I'm more important than you are,

so if anybody has to go, you will.

Participant A005 stated,

One challenge that I just experienced recently is being able to speak up at certain

times when you know things. *I would have to play it down* and act like I am a little

naive about something to get the point across, which is *downgrading* not to be able

to say, I know how to fix this, but have to act like this to be able to get it fixed.

Theme 4: Physical Health Issues

The theme of physical health issues describes how Black women's vulnerabilities

to the subtle forms of gendered racism delivered during gendered racial microaggressions

damage their physical health. Furthermore, gendered racism's cumulative adverse effects

are associated with the chronic stress they experience in North America's public and

private social settings, especially in the workplace. This theme captured how gendered

racism experiences covertly cause Black women to face life-threatening health care

disparities. Nonetheless, the chronic stress of gendered racism invokes severe physical

health issues that worsen over time, leading to shortened lifespans, unlike any other

group of women in North American society experience. All five participants reported

experiencing ongoing physical health issues. Table 5 highlights examples of what

participants perceived as physical health experiences.

Table 5

Alignment of Interview Extracts to Codes Generating Theme 4 Physical Health Issues

Interview extracts examples	Codes
Participant A001	High blood pressure
	Body Tension
I was *diagnosed* with *high blood pressure* . . . I never had high blood pressure before until I started working with them. I've held my stress in the core of my body . . . for 13 years. I physically couldn't *sleep* . . . and so then high blood pressure . . .because of the stress. As far as my work performance, it played havoc on my work performance, and I even had to take Ambien, but I didn't like taking it because it could be habit-forming, so I got off of that**.**	Chronic Stress
	Sleeplessness
Participant A002	High blood pressure
	Body Tension
"I have high blood pressure; tension in my shoulders, and neck. I may even have the tension in my face, you know, the stress." "I have the tension probably in areas of my body that I'm not even aware of because I'm a little overweight right now."	Overweight
	I overeat
Participant A003	High blood pressure
	I overeat
"I've got knots in my stomach, which is the biggest one, just getting knots in the stomach. Drinking more than what you would normally do."	Substance Abuse
	Digestive issues
Participant A004	
"There were days when I did have a headache from just thinking about, I've got to deal with this today. I have rheumatoid arthritis and I walk with a cane"	Headaches
	Rheumatoid Arthritis
Participant A005	High blood pressure
	Body Aches
"I have high blood pressure; diabetes, and I'm aching." "I know I am going to have a headache every day."	Headaches
	Diabetes

For example, Participant A001 reported,

> I was *diagnosed* with *high blood pressure* . . . I never had high blood pressure
>
> before until I started working with them. I've held my stress in the core of my
>
> body . . . for 13 years. I physically couldn't *sleep* . . . and so then high blood
>
> pressure . . .because of the stress. As far as my work performance, it played havoc
>
> on my work performance, and I even had to take Ambien, but I didn't like taking
>
> it because it could be habit-forming, so I got off of that.

Another Participant, A002, also declared her physical health issues:

I have high blood pressure, tension in my shoulders and my neck. I may even

have the tension in my face, you know, the stress, and I have tension probably in

areas of my body that I'm *not even aware* of because I *overeat* . . . I am a

bit *overweight*.

Participant A003 stated,

I've got *knots in my stomach*, which is the biggest one, just getting knots in the

stomach. And you feel *tense*. You feel tight. And then you say to yourself, it's got

to calm down. You got to relax. It's hard to shake off. *It hurts*. It comes home with

me . . . drinking more than what you would normally do.

Another example, Participant A004, reported, "There were *days* when I did have a

headache from *just thinking about*, oh I've got to deal with this today . . . I've got to prep

myself so that I can function and not pop off." "I have rheumatoid arthritis, and I walk

with a cane." Participant A005 disclosed her physical health issues reporting: "I know I'm

going to have a headache at least every day. Participant A005 further stated, "I lost

weight." "I have high blood pressure, diabetes, and even my bones ache."

Theme 5: Mental Health Issues

Theme 5, "mental health issues," describes the associations between

discrimination and Black women's race and gender, generally referred to as gendered

racism. This theme further revealed Black women's vulnerabilities to mental health

issues due to their chronic stress in diverse settings, especially the workplace. All of the

study participants expressed experiencing mental health issues every day. Table 6

highlights examples of what participants perceived as experiencing mental health issues.

Table 6

Alignment of Interview Extracts to Codes Generating Theme 5: Mental Health Issues

Interview extracts examples	Codes
Participant A001 And then it was like as far as my work performance was, the stress played kind of *havoc* on my work performance. However, it was more stressful for me to do my work and make sure my work was excellent. It had to be no errors, on point, and it had to be tight. I didn't give them a reason to *fire me*.	Hypervigilance Anger Dépression
Participant A002 Even though the event or the occurrence is gone, the impact of the trauma, the stress, *leaves a mark,* and therefore, *I am angry.* But I wouldn't have been angry had you put me in leadership in 2010 because I didn't know what angry words were. But now that I've experienced it for the last *11 years or so now*, I do, and it's appalling, shocking, disrespectful, and disgraceful, so when I bring my whole self, yes, I am angry, and it's *long overdue*.	Hypervigilance Anger Dépression Disappointment
Participant A003 Well, you can't really enjoy your life because you've got this burden on your shoulders."	Hypervigilance Anger Depression Disappointment
Participant A004 "You know, I saw so many things." "Some days, I get a little bit down."	Hypervigilance Feeling hated Anger Dépression
Participant A005 "The everyday battle is understanding that if I don't be careful, I will lose my mind."	Depression Hypervigilance Anger Dépression

For example, reporting Participant A001 expressed:

And then it was like as far as my work performance was, the stress played kind

of *havoc* on my work performance. However, it was more stressful for me to do

my work and make sure my work was excellent. It had to be no errors, on point,

and it had to be tight. I didn't give them a reason to *fire me*.

In the same way, Participant A002 stated,

Even though the event or the occurrence is gone, the impact of the trauma, the

stress, *leaves a mark,* and therefore, *I am angry.* But I wouldn't have been angry

had you put me in leadership in 2010 because I didn't know what angry words were; I didn't know what anger was. But now that I've experienced it for the last *11 years or so now*, I do, and it's appalling, shocking, disrespectful, and disgraceful, so when I bring my whole self, yes, I am angry, and it's *long overdue*.

Another Participant, A003, stated,

Individuals that I was working with, there were things that they would do that were unethical. And it was never addressed, me and a co-worker who is also Black. We often had discussions because we knew some of the things that were going on that the individuals continued to get away with—and knowing that if the shoe was on the other foot. I think a big deal would have been made about it. It really affected me mentally. That's all I thought about.

Participant A004 disclosed, "You know, I saw so many things." "Some days, I get a little bit down." Similarly, Participant A005 reported, "Being a Black woman in the United States, I have to take on everything; the everyday battle is understanding that if I am not careful, *I will lose my mind*."

Theme 6: Invisibility and Silencing

Theme 6, invisibility and silencing, describes Black women's struggle in North America to be visible and have their voices heard in this society. Invisibility and silencing are not new phenomena, given that Black women have been historically overlooked and unheard, unlike any other group of women in society, due to the discrimination against the intersection of their race and gender. All five participants

reported experiencing physical health issues. Table 7 highlights examples of what

participants perceived as invisibility and silencing experiences.

Table 7

Alignment of Interview Extracts to Codes Generating Theme 6: Invisibility and Silencing

Interview extracts examples	Codes
Participant A001	Overlooked
"Because I was Black, because I didn't get recognized." "They talked among themselves like I was not even there. So, I was the invisible Black woman."	Silenced I am the invisible woman Double standards
Participant A002	Overlooked
"My voice was invalidated, silenced, and hushed because I was sharing experiences that had happened to me that I saw with my own face. I was overlooked." "The Black woman has no voice or shouldn't have a voice."	Silenced Shamed
Participant A003	Overlooked
"I'm trying to explain to them what's being disregarded. It wasn't even being listened to, so you're sitting there, and you have to take everything they do". "I feel like we're not being respected as Black women."	Silenced Double standards
Participant A004	Overlooked
". They would talk amongst themselves when opportunities to move up the elevator, was being offered."	Silenced Double standards
Participant A005	Overlooked
"As a Black woman, you know, just by not being understood, not being heard, not being able to use our voice."	Silenced Double standards

For example, based on her disclosures, Participant A001 reported, "Because I was

Black, I didn't get recognized." "They talked among themselves like I was not even there.

So, I was the invisible Black woman." Another Participant, A002, sadly reported, "My

voice was invalidated, silenced, and hushed because I was sharing experiences that had

happened to me that I saw with my face being overlooked." Participant A002 further

asserted,

> The Black woman has no voice or shouldn't have a voice. She should be the
>
> mama with her head, with the thing on her head cooking, raising the children, and
>
> not running a corporation, and not having the brainpower or the willpower or the
>
> mind to lead.

Participant A003 reported, "I'm trying to explain to them what's being disregarded. It wasn't even being listened to, so you're sitting there, and you have to take everything they do … I feel like we're not being respected as Black women." This study also found that these five participants reported being restricted socio-economically. For example, Participant A004 said,

> I was in an environment that was racially and gendered challenged by others. They would talk amongst themselves when opportunities to move up the elevator were being offered. White co-workers bypassed me, which meant no wage increases, no merit promotions, and you were there on your own, in the same space with the same kind of people who were moving up ahead of you. It made me feel terrible because then there was always the thing that we're never competent enough. For instance, my last job was at the lowest base pay, and over the years, as I learned the skills that were requisite to be in that department, they elevated me, and it was a little more money, but it was never enough to really do the kinds of things that would enable you to have some degree of economic freedom and self-determination.

Another Participant, A005, further disclosed, "As a Black woman, you know, just by not being understood, *not being heard*, not being able to use our voices; downgrades Black women."

Participants shared experiencing chronic stress associated with gendered racism, especially in the workplace. Participants felt locked into what they perceived as a crisis of oppression because they are Black and women they are discriminated against and

continue to be negatively evaluated, criticized, and disrespected. Participants disclosed feelings of not being able to create their destinies beyond the restraints of society's norms, institutional rules, and misguided stereotypes about their womanhood. The participants, as Black women, are grieving the loss of their unique sense of self, autonomy, voice, presence, respect, honor, dignity, and worth individually and collectively. Participants reported experiencing physical and mental health issues that are worsening every day. Participants shared experiences of being overlooked, rebuked when they speak out, and accused of being angry Black women.

Summary

In Chapter 4, the findings suggested that the five participants of the study, as Black women, are experiencing chronic stress related to the discrimination they perceived against their race and gender. The five participants disclosed their perceptions and described experiences about the adverse social conditions they endure daily in North America. These participants explained the inescapable barriers they face as Black women due to the discrimination and oppression of their race and gender intersections. This discrimination in the workplace setting was instigated by White men, White women office managers, and White co-workers. Subsequently, each participant also reported that they believed the discrimination they experienced during gendered racial microaggressions was because they were Black women. Chapter 4 was my presentation of the following elements of the study: the six themes I selected that emerged from the data I gathered, the transcription processes, the data analysis processes, and the interpretations of the data I gathered from the five participants. Chapter 5 will discuss the

study's understanding of the findings according to the five participants' disclosures, the

study's limitations, recommendations for research studies of future best practices, the

study's implications for effecting social change, and the conclusion.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Introduction

This basic qualitative research study was conducted to explore North American Black women's perceptions of their experiences with gendered racial microaggressions' cumulative adverse effects on their psychological well-being. Researchers indicated that Black women are experiencing a distinct form of oppression due to discrimination against their race and gender (Crenshaw, 1989; Moradi & Subich, 2003; Thomas et al., 2008). Results revealed the need for a more comprehensive exploration of Black women's perceptions and experiences with gendered racial microaggressions' cumulative effects on their psychological well-being. Previous studies showed that gendered racial microaggressions had cumulative adverse effects on Black women's psychological well-being (Lewis & Neville, 2015; Perry et al., 2013; Smith et al., 2016; Williams et al., 2017), which the five participants disclosed in this study. Key findings of this research study also specified that Black women's experiences with discrimination against their race and gender incited social losses. In Chapter 5, I present the interpretation of these results, the limitations of the study, my recommendations for future research, the implications, and the study's conclusion.

Interpretation of Findings

The findings of this study revealed that gendered racial microaggressions are the expressions of gendered racism against Black women's race and gender, causing cumulative adverse effects on their psychological well-being. The participants reported that their interactions with gendered racism led to chronic stress and adverse effects on

their physical and mental health, which can lead to shortened lifespans. These findings

aligned with earlier research studies (Lewis & Neville, 2015; Smith et al., 2016; Williams

et al., 2017). Findings of the current study, for instance, revealed that three of the five

Participants, A001, A002, and A004, reported experiencing the *Jezebel* stereotype, which

presupposes that all Black women are promiscuous. As a result, Participants A001, A002,

and A004 experienced being sexualized in the workplace by White males.

These daily inequities were rooted in the discrimination and oppressive practices

participants perceived and talked about at length. They recognized were creating unstable

social living conditions that kept them restricted and subjugated, especially in the

workplace. Participants each reported experiencing chronic stress in the workplace,

disrupting their psychological well-being daily as Black women; these participants also

reported monitoring the tones of their voices in the workplace to avoid the stress of being

stereotyped as angry Black women. The participants also reported being stereotyped as

less intelligent, challenging to get along with, aggressive, and angry Black women. These

five participants reported practicing self-silencing to avoid being stereotyped as such in

the workplace and other settings.

Participants reported that, as Black women, they were targets and that White

supremacist ideologies disregarded their dignity and worth as human beings.

Subsequently, the participants believed they were treated unequally as normalcy in this

society. The current study's findings aligned with earlier research studies (Carbado et al.,

2013; Crenshaw, 1989; DuMonthier et al., 2016; Lewis & Grzanka, 2016; Palmer et al.,

2019; Rodgers, 2017; Williams, 2020). Crenshaw's (1989) findings suggested that Black

women are not experiencing racism because they are Black or sexism because they are women. Nevertheless, they experience a distinct form of oppression being Black women, which the five participants also reported experiencing.

For example, Participant A001 reported,

I was still making good money, but at the same pay for 13 years, and so then they will always come to me and tell me that we didn't make enough money and we didn't make enough for a bonus, but what I found was that they weren't giving me any of it. They were dribbling around in the office and wouldn't give me any money.

Another Participant, A002, reported being overlooked when a higher position in the workplace was available for socioeconomic advancements due to gendered racism in the workplace: "When the opportunities came for me to either pastor the church, either locally or out of town, it was given to someone else . . . I was overlooked." Participant A003 disclosed how the ongoing stress due to gendered racism caused her to leave her position, affecting her long-term socioeconomic status:

I ended up quitting . . . my last stop, phenomenal I loved the job. But the stress that I was going through from feeling as though I was being targeted as a Black woman. . . wasn't worth it. It affects your long-term wealth because where I could have had a nice pension or savings set up for me when I retire. But because of the stress that was so ongoing, I had to leave.

Research Themes

I generated the following themes from the data analysis process to answer the central research question: "What are Black women's perceptions and described experiences of the cumulative effects of gendered racial microaggressions on their psychological well-being?" Theme 1: (Gendered racism experiences) illuminated that each of the five participants had experienced gendered racism overtly or covertly in the form of gendered racial microaggressions. Theme 2: (The Black woman is in a crisis of oppression) demonstrated that Black women living in this society are constantly operating in a fight-or-flight state to survive. Theme 3: (Grief and loss) explains that Black women are also grieving the loss of their sense of self, autonomy, voice, presence, respect, honor, dignity, and worth as human beings, individually and collectively. Theme 4: (Physical health concerns) described the harmful cumulative physical effects that Black women living in North America experience linked to gendered racism. Theme 5: (Mental health concerns) reflected the cumulative effects of gendered racial microaggressions on Black women's psychological well-being. Theme 6*: (Invisibility and silencing)* captured the invisibility and silencing of the Black woman in North America due to the discrimination of the intersection of their interlocking race and gender.

Theme 1: Gendered Racism Experiences

Theme 1 revealed participants' beliefs and described experiences, which directly addressed the main research question. The participants also shared experiencing chronic stress associated with gendered racism experiences while living in North America due to the discrimination against their race and gender as Black women. Participants disclosed

that being assaulted, insulted, and invalidated verbally, behaviorally, and

environmentally, especially in the workplace, by White male and female office managers

and white coworkers was stressful.

 For example, Participant A003 reported,

> My manager said to me, "I'm hearing or I've heard that you're difficult to get
>
> along with." My response to her, I said, "I'm not sure how that is," I said the only
>
> thing I communicate is work related . . . because there are no other interactions
>
> that took place with me, with that individual who is of the opposite race. I
>
> personally felt confident that that statement was set for me being a Black woman.

Further, participants disclosed that the White value system of protocols does not accept

them, confirming that Black women's interlocking race and gender are viewed as a

disadvantage in Northern American society (Baalbaki, 2019; Crenshaw, 1989, 1991;

Essed, 1991; Goodman, 2015; Lewis et al., 2017; Lewis et al., 2016; Lewis & Neville,

2015). For example, Participant A004 declared, "They don't like us." Another

participant, A005, shared, "Sad to say as a Black woman the level of your color, because,

you know, as far as if you're light, if you're dark if you're, you know, medium in certain

areas definitely can be offensive."

Theme 2: Black Women Are in a Crisis of Oppression

Participants disclosed that Black women living in North America were

experiencing a crisis of oppression due to systematic restraints keeping them

marginalized. The participants reported experiencing subtle, everyday verbal, behavioral,

and environmental displays of gendered racism, which disrupted their psychological well-being. For example, Participant A005 asserted,

> Every day, from the time we wake up to the time we go to sleep, even while we are sleeping, the stress that we have as Black women in the United States. . . is to find out that the system was not made for you to succeed in your craft in your career, it was not.

Participants also reported experiencing oppression, power assertion, subordination, and chronic stress associated with gendered racism in the workplace, which prior research confirmed (Bent-Goodley et al., 2017; Dunn et al., 2019; Lewis & Neville, 2015). The participants shared that no matter what they set to achieve, systematic barriers hindered them (Frijda & Mesquita, 1994; Keltner & Haidt, 1999). Earlier research confirmed that Black women expect daily stressors incited by racist and sexist references about their intelligence and inferiority (Lewis et al., 2016; Lewis & Neville, 2015; Martins et al., 2020). Black women remain oppressed, facing gendered racism with no remedy (Lewis & Grzanka, 2016; National Association of Social Workers, 2015; Rodgers, 2017). Black women face the double jeopardy of their race and gender intersections, shaping what happens to them due to gendered racism (Crenshaw, 1989, 1991). The five participants were expected to be discriminated against, stressed, victimized, and traumatized.

Theme 3: Grief and Loss

The five participants reported being traumatized, angered, saddened, and stressed due to the ongoing loss of the quality of their lives. Participants also reported cumulative adverse effects on their psychological well-being. Other studies confirm this present

study's findings (Ashley, 2014; Awad et al., 2015; Holling, 2019; Lewis et al., 2016;

Martins et al., 2020; Parks & Heard, 2010). Participants further reported grieving the loss

of their Black womanness, which they described as their sense of beauty, inclusion,

humanity, freedom of speech, safety, hope, and power of autonomy (Ashley, 2014;

Crenshaw, 1989). For example, Participant A003 reported,

> Well, you can't really enjoy your life because now you've got this burden on your
>
> shoulders instead of you going out into your life doing your normal routines, this
>
> burden has you to a point where you can't resume doing things what you normally
>
> do because it can be almost depressing. You know, it's like now this is bothering
>
> you, you're upset, it drains you. It's negative energy. So, you don't have the
>
> energy, to normally go out there and do the things that you would normally do
>
> because it's been interrupted. . .. I mean, it's very, very, very stressful.

The participants also mentioned feeling locked into stereotypical controlling

imageries such as the angry Black woman. According to participants, their ongoing grief

and loss experiences keep them powerless to change the systematic restraints of

discrimination upheld against their race and gender, confirming earlier research

(Crenshaw, 1989, 1991).

For example, Participant A002 stated,

> I am familiar with loss, and as the Bible talks about and acquainted with grief.
>
> Loss is like intangible it's almost like you're trying to capture water, but it keeps
>
> slipping through your fingers. You get to a point where you live with it every day;

it lives in your body. Even though the event or the occurrence is gone, the stress

and the impact of the trauma leaves a mark.

This study's findings also revealed that participants were still grappling for their human

rights in the 21st century with no help, as confirmed by previous research (Awad et al.,

2015; Broussard, 2013). Participants reported feeling devalued, neglected, unprotected,

and vulnerable, which was confirmed by prior research (Awad et al., 2015; Lewis &

Grzanka, 2016; Rodgers, 2017).

Theme 4: Physical Health Issues

According to the five participants, Black women in North America face a

disproportionate risk of shortened lifespans due to the high incidences of physical health

issues leading to the cumulative adverse effects of personal illnesses (Chinn, et. al.,

2021). Theme 4 outlines the participants' ongoing physical health concerns due to the

cumulative adverse effects of stress associated with the consistent discrimination against

their race and gender.

For example, Participant A001 disclosed, "I was diagnosed with high blood

pressure; I couldn't sleep, I lost weight." Another Participant, A002, asserted, "I have

high blood pressure; tension in my shoulders, and my neck. . .. I may even have the

tension in my face, you know, the stress."

Participant A003 stated,

I've got knots in my stomach, which is the biggest one, just getting knots in the

stomach. And you feel tense. You feel tight. And then you say to yourself, it's got

to calm down. You got to relax. It's hard to shake off. It really hurts. It comes

home with me. Drinking more than what you would normally do.

Participant A004 shared, "There were days when I did have a headache from just

thinking about, oh I've got to deal with this today. I have rheumatoid arthritis, and I walk

with a cane." Participant A005 disclosed, "I know I'm going to have a headache at least

every day. I have high blood pressure; diabetes, and I'm aching." Earlier studies have

similarly described these health-related issues as the biopsychosocial consequences of

experiences with oppression, which causes Black women to become overweight and

worsening adverse health outcomes (King, 1988; Thomas et al., 2008).

Participant A002 stated, "I have tension probably in areas of my body that I'm not even

aware of because I'm a little overweight right now." Other health concerns included

exhaustion, incessant headaches, heart problems, high blood pressure, diabetes, body

tension, obesity, fatigue, sleep disorders, arthritis, and foot problems, which were

confirmed by prior studies (Pascoe & Smart Richman, 2009; Pieterse et al., 2012;

Thomas et al., 2008). Participants also acknowledged their vulnerabilities to stress-related

personal illnesses, such as restlessness and eating disorders, worsening every day, as

confirmed by earlier studies (Anderson, 1989; Brondolo et al., 2009; Carter & Forsyth,

2010; Clark et al., 1999; Nadal, 2011; Smith et al., 2016; Sue, 2010a; Williams et al.,

2017).

Theme 5: Mental Health Issues

Participants have each reported mental health issues due to the social conditions

they are living in in a white supremacist society that adversely affects their psychological

well-being due to exposure to ongoing stressors in their daily existence. Participants

disclosed that, as Black women, they are in a constant battle to maintain their sanity.

Theme 5 outlined the mental health issues each of the five participants experienced,

inclusive but not exhaustive of their experiences with hopelessness, dissociation,

checking compulsions, substance abuse, anger, low self-esteem, confusion, tension,

anxiety, social withdrawal, post-traumatic stress, and paranoia. Graham et al. (2015)

claimed to confirm participant's disclosures about how the frequency of racist events

causes them, as Black women, to experience greater adverse effects related to evidence of

anxious arousals arise, such as sweaty palms, psychological symptoms of anxiety,

shortness of breath, and increasing heart rates reflecting participants' disclosures about

experiencing these symptoms.

For example, Participant A002 shared: "Even though the event or the occurrence

is gone, the trauma, the stress, impact leaves a mark." Likewise, revealing their

vulnerabilities to the overarching stress they have endured in diverse settings, especially

the work setting.

Clarifying her emotional distress, Participant A002 also noted,

I feel as though my body has captured those things, and they are *locked in my*

body. It doesn't feel free, and the energy might be stagnant; I feel heavy; it's more

like a layer on top of a layer stress, on top of a layer of stress that built up over

time.

Conversely, based on Participant A002's further responses on the demographic

questionnaire indicated that she also experiences hopelessness, mental health issues,

perceived threats, low self-esteem, confusion, anxiety, and paranoia due to her experiences with gendered racial microaggressions in her work environment. According to Nadal (2018), these symptoms can also include sadness, worry, anger, feelings of worthlessness, resentment, regret, hopelessness, and self-doubt, as each participant also disclosed. Participants also shared their vulnerabilities to developing mental health problems and their diminished abilities to achieve personal growth and elevated levels of functioning socially due to disruption of their psychological well-being Associated with gendered racism in the workplace.

When analyzing the participants selected to interview, extracts regarding Black women's mental health issues have been articulated. Correspondingly, prior scholarship's investigation of the association of gendered racial microaggressions and adverse mental health outcomes found that incessant experiences of gendered racial microaggressions are significantly related to cumulative psychological distress, traumatic stress, ruminating thoughts, and depression (Lewis et al., 2017; Lewis & Neville, 2015; Moody & Lewis, 2019; Williams & Lewis, 2019). According to researchers, the cumulative effects of microaggressions confirmed that these *Black women* also were *at risk* of facing frustration, stress, dysfunctional coping strategies, aloneness, withdrawal, hospitalization, obsessive-compulsive disorder, substance abuse, symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder, severe psychological distress, and microaggressions are proven to be *injurious and also deadly* to these participants being Black women living in North America (Anderson, 1989; Banks et al., 2006; Berger & Sarnyai, 2015; Clark et al., 1999; Hollingsworth et al., 2017; Hurd et al., 2014; O'Keefe et al., 2015; Smith, 2008b;

Williams, 2020; Williams et al., 2018; Williams et al., 2017). As an illustration,
Participant A005 disclosed: "Being a Black woman in the United States, I have to take on
everything; the everyday battle is understanding that if I don't be careful, I will lose my
mind."

The findings of this current study were confirmed by earlier research claims that
Black women living in North America face the cumulative effects of chronic stress
worsening over time (Lewis & Neville, 2015; Pascoe & Smart Richman, 2009; Pieterse et
al., 2012; Thomas et al., 2008). Researchers also confirmed the participants' disclosure
that as Black women experience gendered racial microaggressions in this society, they
can also internalize the negative emotions at that time —nonetheless, compelling a
myriad of psychological effects, such as anxiety, depression, and trauma (Bedard-
Gilligan et al., 2015; Duckworth & Follette, 2012). Notwithstanding, these symptoms
also include participants' expressions of sadness, worry, anger, worthlessness,
resentment, regret, hopelessness, and self-doubt, consistent with other findings (Nadal,
2018). Each participant also confessed to becoming immobilized psychologically in the
workplace to keep their sanity as a means of survival.

For instance, Participant A001 stated: "The stress played kind of havoc on my
work performance. . . I needed my job . . . I didn't, I didn't give them any reasons to fire
.me" On the other hand, Participant A002 shared: "Even though the event or the
occurrence is gone, the trauma, the stress, impact leaves a mark." Brondolo et al. (2009)
identified a link that confirmed these five participants disclosed experiences between
racism and psychological symptoms of anxiety such as feelings of dread, panic or

'impending doom, racing thoughts, increased blood pressure, uncontrollable over-thinking, difficulties concentrating, dissociation, feeling irritable, sleeplessness, heightened alertness, loss of appetite, and feeling the need to escape to safety.

For example, Participant A003 disclosed, "Well, you can't really enjoy your life because you've got this burden on your shoulders." Consequently, the participants equally shared their understanding of the complexities of being Black women in North America, suggesting that the discrimination of their race and gender intersections indeed causes them overwhelming suffering psychologically (Lewis & Neville, 2015; Smith et al., 2016; Williams et al., 2017).

Theme 6: Invisibility and Silencing

The study found Black women face a unique form of oppression only Black women experience due to the discrimination against their race and gender, keeping them marginalized and devalued. Nonetheless, disregard their human rights because they are Black and women through marginalization and subjugation. Consequently, causing them to experience invisibility on every level of their lives in this society. Notwithstanding, Black women are also experiencing silencing, unlike any other group of women in this society. Participants have expressed practicing self-censoring to avoid the idea that all Black women are angry as a means of day-to-day survival in this society. Theme 6 captured the invisibility and silencing of the Black woman in North America, which is not new; they have been historically overlooked and unheard, unlike any other group of women in this society, due to the discrimination of the intersection of their interlocking race and gender.

For example, Participant A001 declared: "Because I was Black, I didn't get recognized." "They talked among themselves like I was not even there. So, I was the invisible Black woman."

When examining the participant's selected interview excerpts, the issue of invisibility and silencing is articulated. Further, the five participants have described their experiences of not being able to create their destiny beyond these systematic restraints, which are also manifested as negative stereotypes rooted in the oppression in this society of their Black womanness—which they understood as their intrinsic ability to embrace the totality of their womanhood unapologetically. For example, Participant, A005, disclosed: "As a Black woman, you know, just by not being understood, not being heard, not being able to use our voices; Willie Lynch is where you can definitely see that, we were downgraded as women." Another illustration, Participant A003 disclosed:

> As a result of the prior situation, I kind of shut down and didn't communicate much. So, my words were short and straight to the point, being mindful of my tone because I was a Black woman our tone is misconstrued, and we're perceived as the angry Black woman.

The participants of this current study reported that they are experiencing systematic injustices that have silenced and excluded them on every level of this society, especially in the workplace, as Black women in North America. For instance, Participant A002 makes known:

> My voice was invalidated, silenced, and hushed because I was sharing experiences that had happened to me that I saw with my own face. I was

overlooked." "The Black woman has no voice or shouldn't have a voice. She should be the mama with the thing on her head cooking, raising the children. Not running a corporation, not having the brainpower or the willpower or the mind to lead.

Earlier scholarship revealed that Black women are disadvantaged because they are Black and also women; hence they are regarded as a racial identity instead of a human being (Collins, C., 2018; Franks & Riedel, 2013; Lewis et al., 2016). Disconfirming evidence also appeared in the scholarship regarding how, White people are privileged to be treated as individuals rather than having a "racial" identity (Collins, C., 2018, para 54). Correspondingly, researchers contend as Black women, as are the participants of the current study, did nothing to invoke this inequity in treatment, and White women did not "earn" disproportionate access to empathy and notability (Collins, C., 2018). As such, white privilege is the unquestioned and unearned set of advantages, entitlements, benefits, and choices bestowed upon people solely because they are White (Collins, C., 2018). All five of the study's participants shared experiencing the devaluation of being treated as a racial identity because they are Black women.

Conceptual Framework

The findings of this present study were consistent with the conceptual framework of intersectionality. Intersectionality historically magnified the voices of those who have been silenced and those who do not fit immaculately into a meticulous vision for societal standards (Matsuda, 1987). Crenshaw (2016) also propounded that employing an intersectionality concept was the optimal means of framing subgroups' inequalities that

could otherwise be declared invisible. Intersectionality has the proclivity to evoke meaningfulness that engages researchers and decision-makers to acknowledge the intrinsic complexities amid social factors, relationships, and interactions.

Moreover, intersectionality as the study's conceptual framework magnified the unique form of oppression that Black women are experiencing due to the discrimination of the intersection of their race and gender (Crenshaw, 1989; Essed, 1991; Holder et al., 2015; Jones et al., 2017; Lewis et al., 2016; Martins et al., 2020; Sue et al., 2007). The disclosures of these five participants reporting their vulnerabilities were illuminated through intersectionality. Crenshaw (1989) postulation confirmed the support of the findings of this current study based on participants' disclosing their experiences as Black women in this society. Researchers asserted that Black women's experiences with racism are not because they are Black, nor were they experiencing sexism because they are women, but because of sharing a distinct type of oppression as *Black women* (Crenshaw, 1989). Which the participants of this current study also reported.

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Limitations of the Study

This basic qualitative study's limitations were the small study size, including five Black women as participants, inhibiting the generalizability of the findings of Black women as a group. According to Kerr et al. (2010), thematic saturation or data saturation indicated that data collection had been exhausted since data becomes repetitive, and further data collection redundancy is evidenced, which was achieved in this study. However, as it concerns thematic saturation, these researchers argued that the rudimentary component of saturation for themes presented by the sixth interview, given the study's thematic analysis of five participants, evidenced this postulation in this study. Hennink et al. (2017) concluded that saturation is also achieved depending on the researcher's characteristics, analysis, and data, which was also evidenced in this study. Researchers contend that when participants are homogeneous, selected with prudence, and possess detailed information about the research topic, the researcher can draw pertinent data from such a small sampling, as evidenced by this study (Cleary et al., 2014). Another limitation of the study was that one of the five participants I sent an email request to participate in member checking to add to the study's trustworthiness and to ensure I documented the information disclosed correctly; did not respond to my request. I listened to the participant's audio recordings to manage the study's credibility.

I reviewed the transcript with their responses about what Black women experienced multiple times, which allowed me to analyze her perspectives according to as much information available. An added limitation was that the study only included Black women born and raised in North America. However, this restriction did not infer that this group of Black women had only experienced gendered racial microaggressions as if other Black women had not. Another limitation of this study was that I am also a Black woman who has experienced gendered racial microaggressions within this society, and I diminished bias through my awareness of how my positionalities, such as my role as the researcher, culture, background, and experiences, shaped the data collection analyses and, thus, the scholarship's objective to mitigate emerging bias (Ravitch & Carl, 2016).

To stay connected to the study's goals, I upheld my collaborative relationships with my committee members and the study's participants, which helped to also safeguard against researcher bias, therefore, strengthening the analysis of the data collection and the credibility of the study's findings (Creswell, 2014; Patton, 2015). I also sought to safeguard the trustworthiness of the research. Therefore, I continuously invoked the study's credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Lincoln and Guba (1985) asserted that the research study's trustworthiness is essential for evaluating its worth. Trustworthiness confirms confidence in the truth of the finding's credibility (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Therefore, indicating the finding's capabilities of being transferred to other contexts beyond the scope of this study milieu (Given, 2008; Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Recommendations

Future research efforts should replicate this study to explore and understand how Black women from different nations who do not live in North America (e.g., Caribbean Black women) ages 51-65 years old and up perceived their experiences with gendered racial microaggressions' cumulative effects on their psychological well-being. Moreover, the researcher followed the detailed steps throughout the study's data collection and analysis for the study's finding's transferability. Likewise, attending to participants' rich, in-depth responses to my study's findings is offered to future researchers to compare conclusions regarding the study's transferability. Another recommendation is to utilize the benefits of a survey for data collection, thus enhancing the data collection and sample size. Moreover, another suggestion is for future studies to recruit Black women who are *social workers t*o explore their perceptions and described experiences with gendered racial microaggressions' cumulative effects on their psychological well-being in the work environment.

Implications

My study's findings offer implications for social change for Black women individually and collectively. The research findings purposed to inform social workers about Black women's experiences with gendered racial microaggressions and the difficulties they face being two minorities, Black and women living in North America (Bent-Goodley et al., 2017). For example, Black women encounter barriers to resources, invisibility, and presumptions about their cultural differences in this society (Bent-Goodley et al., 2017; Frijda & Mesquita, 1994; Keltner & Haidt, 1999). Thus, the

importance of illuminating cultural competencies in all social work practices on the micro, mezzo, and macro levels of practice ethics (Bent-Goodley et al., 2017). Further, this study helps social workers as change agents to understand the context of Black women's experiences with gendered racism due to the discrimination at the intersection of Black women's race and gender, which shape what occurs during gendered racial microaggressions (Bent-Goodley et al., 2017; Lewis et al., 2016; Martins et al., 2020).

As such, it was critical to discover and understand Black women's perceptions and described experiences best to understand the cumulative adverse effects of gendered racial microaggressions on participants' psychological well-being due to the gendered racial microaggressions like assaults, insults, and invalidations (Lewis et al., 2016; Martins et al., 2020; Sue, 2007). Likewise, another implication was discovering and understanding Black women's perceptions and described experiences with gendered racial microaggressions to understand the cumulative effects of these interactions on their psychological well-being (Lewis et al., 2016; Martins et al., 2020; Sue, 2007). Moreover, closing the gap in the scholarship by acknowledging Black women's challenging experiences living in this society (Crenshaw, 1989).

Notwithstanding, giving Black women a platform to voice the challenging experiences they are enduring without rebuke and shaming Black women's *passion and anger* about the adverse social and human conditions pressed upon them living in North America (Anderson et al., 2018; Ashley, 2014; Crenshaw, 1989; DuMonthier et al., 2016). Thomas et al. (2008) argued that Black women have had to withstand historical oppression not likely to be experienced by any other group and, thus, has reduced

society's view of a Black woman's humanity through the lens of white supremacy. Hence, Black women are at risk more than any other woman of *being* racially profiled, brutalized by police, and murdered (DuMonthier et al., 2016). Likewise, the social worker, and policymakers, informed by this study's findings, can also provide the psychosocial and political support Black women require according to the distinct oppressive challenges they face daily and in every setting in North America (Bent-Goodley et al., 2017).

It can also evoke the social work professional's obligation to empower and meet this vulnerable population's needs (Bent-Goodley et al., 2017). Further, to enhance their well-being in this society, individually, interpersonally, and contextually (Hicks, 2015). Therefore, in addressing these social conditions, social workers reflect advocacy measures supported by empirically based knowledge (Bent-Goodley et al., 2017). Necessarily, the implications of this study's findings can invoke a timely contribution to the social work scholarship regarding an unexamined phenomenon impacting social workers' clinical applications when working with this population's knowledge (Bent-Goodley et al., 2017). Additionally, the social worker can assist in addressing Black women's adverse social conditions within social work education, policy, and political domains with insight and knowledge (Bent-Goodley et al., 2017).

Conclusion

This study revealed that each of the five participants, as Black women living in this society, is experiencing chronic stressors incessantly. These stressors are associated with the discriminatory practices of gendered racism being delivered during gendered racial microaggressions. These stressors purposely target Black women, systematically to

keep them restricted and subjugated, inciting cumulative adverse effects on their physical and mental health, negatively impacting their psychological well-being. These five participants reported experiencing discrimination and oppression from white male and female managers and co-workers in the workplace. The participants also reported being discriminated against in public places by strangers while shopping. This platform supported Black women's perceptions and described experiences they reported about the intense difficulties they only experience living in North America because they are Black women and do not fit into white-supremacy ideologies.

Before this study, minimum research had been conducted on Black women's perceptions and described experiences with gendered racial microaggression cumulative effects on Black women's psychological well-being. Therefore, this study helped to lessen the gap in the literature by advancing Black women's perceptions and described experiences about this phenomenon, as mentioned above. Accordingly, the data collected during the interviews identified the codes and themes related to their experiences with the cumulative effects of oppressive and discriminatory practices delivered against Black women during gendered racial microaggressions, thereby answering the study's research question. The findings of this current study were confirmed by earlier research conclusions about the intense difficulties that only Black women are experiencing in Northern American society because of the discrimination against their race and gender.

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Appendix A: Demographic Questionnaire

BLACK AND A WOMAN RESEARCH PROJECT

Melva Dorsey, MSW, Ph.D. Candidate

Walden University

Please fill in the blanks or place an X or
check mark next to the word or phrase
that best matches your response.

Participant Alpha /# ID_____

Date: _____

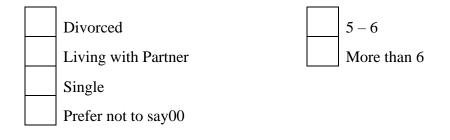What is your gender?

☐ Female

Were you born and raised
only in the United States?

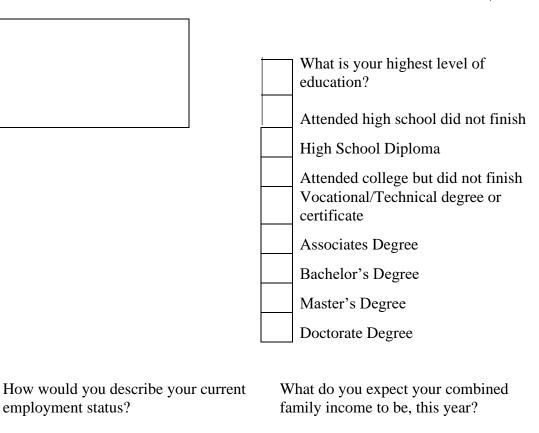Check one: Yes _____No_____

How many children are
there in your family?
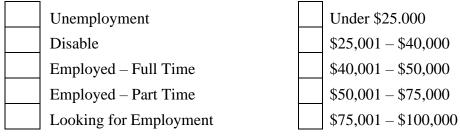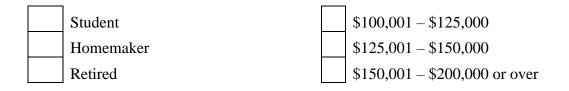
What is your marital status?

☐ Married

☐ Widowed

☐ Separated

☐ 0

☐ 1 – 2

☐ 3 – 4

| | Divorced
| | Living with Partner
| | Single
| | Prefer not to say00

| | 5 – 6
| | More than 6

What do you identify as your race/ethnicity?
Please write your response in the box below

nicity?

| | What is your highest level of education?
| | Attended high school did not finish
| | High School Diploma
| | Attended college but did not finish
| | Vocational/Technical degree or certificate
| | Associates Degree
| | Bachelor's Degree
| | Master's Degree
| | Doctorate Degree

How would you describe your current employment status?

| | Unemployment
| | Disable
| | Employed – Full Time
| | Employed – Part Time
| | Looking for Employment

What do you expect your combined family income to be, this year?

| | Under $25.000
| | $25,001 – $40,000
| | $40,001 – $50,000
| | $50,001 – $75,000
| | $75,001 – $100,000

☐ Student

☐ Homemaker

☐ Retired

☐ $100,001 – $125,000

☐ $125,001 – $150,000

☐ $150,001 – $200,000 or over

The effects of Gendered Racial Microagressions are inclusive of but not exhaustive of the following issues listed below. Have you perceived an increase in or the addition of any of the following issues over time after experiencing what you qualify as a "gendered racial microagression?"

<u>Please Check all that apply</u>

Headaches	
Hopelessness	
Mental Health Concerns	
Diabetes	
Low self-esteem	
Substance abuse	
Heart Problems	
Confusion	
Anxiety	
Body Tension	
Paranoia	

Appendix B: Interview Questions

BLACK AND A WOMAN RESEARCH PROJECT

Melva Dorsey, MSW, Ph.D. Candidate

Walden University

Themes Categorized with Interview Questions

RQ1: What are Black women's perceptions and described experiences of the

cumulative effects of gendered racial microaggressions on their

psychological well-being?

Theme 1: Gendered Racial Experiences

- What are some of the challenges you face in the United States as a Black

  woman when you are at work?

- Describe experiences/situations where you felt disrespected, and that

  disrespected was related to you as a woman?

- What do you think are stressors you experience daily as a Black woman in

  North American society?

- Describe when something was said or done that made you feel

  uncomfortable.

- What do you perceive others say about Black women's experiences

  collectively in American society?

Theme 2: Black Women Are in a Crisis of Oppression

- Describe how being a Black woman has affected your physical and mental health.

- Describe when something was said or done that made you feel uncomfortable.

- Describe what you think hinders you as a Black woman living in North America.

- What are your perceptions and experiences with being sexualized? Is this in any way related to you being a Black woman in North American society?

Theme 3: Grief and Loss

- Describe instances where an interaction with another person or other types of situations felt negative and you believe it was because you were a Black woman.

- Describe experiences/situations where you felt disrespected, and that disrespect was related to you as a woman? As a Black woman?

- Describe your experiences with feeling like you have been put down because you are a Black woman. Give examples of the situation and how you felt.

- What do you perceive others say about Black women's experiences collectively in North American society?

- What are your perceptions and experiences with others making assumptions about Black women as individuals and collectively in North American society?

- What do you think are stressors you experience daily as a Black woman in North American society?

Theme 4: Gendered Racism Physical Health Issues

- Describe how being a Black woman has affected your physical and mental health.

- What do you think are stressors you experience daily as a Black woman in North American society?

Theme 5: Mental Health Issues

- Describe how being a Black woman has affected your physical and mental health.

- What do you think are stressors you experience daily as a Black woman in North American society?

Theme 6: Invisibility and Silencing

- What are your perceptions and experiences with others making assumptions about Black women as individuals and collectively in North American society?

- How important is your social identity as a Black woman to you in North American society?

- Describe how you deal with the stressors you marked previously as a Black woman in American society.