Walden Dissertations and Doctoral Studies

Walden Dissertations and Doctoral Studies Collection

2023

Racial Discrimination and Toxic Cultures at Work: Professional Black Employees and the Great Resignation

Annselmer Thomas Owens
Walden University

Walden University

College of Management and Human Potential

This is to certify that the doctoral dissertation by

Annselmer Thomas Owens

has been found to be complete and satisfactory in all respects,
and that any and all revisions required by
the review committee have been made.

Review Committee
Dr. Labrina Jones, Committee Chairperson, Management Faculty
Dr. David Goodman, Committee Member, Management Faculty

Chief Academic Officer and Provost
Sue Subocz, Ph.D.

Walden University
2023

Abstract

Racial Discrimination and Toxic Cultures at Work:

Professional Black Employees and the Great Resignation

by

Annselmer Thomas Owens

M.Phil.M, Walden University, 2022

MSM, Troy University, 2006

BS, Morris Brown College, 1999

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Management

Walden University

September 2023

Abstract

White-collar Black employees were more likely to seek different jobs during the Great

Resignation because of a lack of career advancement, employer failure to promote

diversity, equity, and inclusion, employer's unethical behavior, feeling disrespected, and

perceived toxic work culture. As the Great Resignation's professional, social, and ethical

consequences were only emerging, scholars identified a literature gap to position Black

employees' narratives of racial discrimination and perceived toxic work culture in the

literature as mechanisms for joining the Great Resignation. The purpose of this

qualitative, narrative inquiry study was to gain a deeper understanding of how

professional Black employees' daily experiences with racial discrimination and perceived

toxic work culture were triggers for joining the Great Resignation. This study is grounded

in Montaudon-Tomas's concept of the Great Resignation and toxic work culture and

Feagin and Eckberg's concept of racial discrimination. Interview data were collected

from six professional Black employees. The critical event approach was the data analysis

strategy, from which four conceptual categories emerged: (1) events driving professional

Black employees to join the Great Resignation, (2) experiences of professional Black

employees with racial discrimination on the job, (3) experiences of professional Black

employees with toxic work culture on the job, and (4) lessons learned by professional

Black employees after the Great Resignation. The participants expressed hope that their

voices may drive positive social change by raising awareness of Black American

employees' experiences and issues that must be diligently addressed to counter long-

standing toxic cultures and racial disparities in the U.S. workplace.

Racial Discrimination and Toxic Cultures at Work:

Professional Black Employees and the Great Resignation

by

Annselmer Thomas Owens

M.Phil.M, Walden University, 2022

MSM, Troy University, 2006

BS, Morris Brown College, 1999

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Management

Walden University

September 2023

Dedication

I dedicate this research study to my beautiful adult daughter Llandess Owens, who has always been my biggest cheerleader, source of support, anchor, and motivation, my wonderful Dad, Dr. Grady L. Cornish, whom I adore and my inspiration for wanting to begin and complete this journey and lastly, but most importantly, my heavenly Father, who has granted me the strength and ability to take on this expedition. The kind words, the support, and the persistent reminders from my village regarding the need to complete this journey are immense. During my life endeavors, my ability to pursue my academic pursuit avidly and successfully commanded abundant encouragement and motivation, which piloted me to complete this accomplishment. For that, I say thank you! To each of my brothers, my beautiful cousins, Sorority Sisters of The Alpha Kappa Alpha, Inc., and friends, thank you for your patience and understanding and for encouraging me throughout this journey. I appreciate each of you immensely!

Acknowledgments

      This study would not have been possible had it not been for His grace and mercy, my Savior, Jesus Christ, and I must humbly acknowledge him first. Through this process, I had the pleasure of two wonderful chairs, Dr. Daphne Halkias, and Dr. LaBrina Jones, and I owe them both more gratitude than words can express but for now, I want to say thank you both for your continued support, encouragement, and directions throughout this journey. Without your continued guidance, answering emails, calls and always making yourself available no matter what, I considered going above and beyond, and without it, the completion of this doctoral study would not have been possible. Dr. Halkias, you promised to stay with me throughout this journey until completion, and I cannot thank you enough for seeing me through. Also, I would like to thank my committee member Dr. David Goodman, and my URR committee member, Dr. Kenneth Levitt for your guidance and support. As a final note, I would like to thank Walden University staff members for their support throughout this journey.

Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

An estimated eight million Black Americans left their jobs in 2021 and joined the

Great Resignation movement, leaving early-and-mid-career jobs in droves due to barriers

to advancement, racial microaggressions, and a lack of recognition and growth

opportunities (Taylor, 2022). Although the notion has acquired relevance during the

COVID-19 pandemic and is connected to reassessing or evaluating work and the fragility

of life, the term *The Great Resignation* was first developed in 2019 by Professor Antony

Klotz of Texas A&M University. The Great Resignation movement itself, driven by

perceived toxic work culture on job sites, entails the massive voluntary resignations or

mass exodus of workers that have been taking place in different organizations across the

globe. Different factors associated with this phenomenon were described by Klotz, along

with changes that will occur in the world of work to deal with The Great Resignation

(Montaudon-Tomas et al., 2022).

In 2021, more than 47 million workers quit their jobs, many searching for an

improved work-life balance and flexibility, increased compensation, and strong company

culture (Hirsch, 2021; Jeong et al., 2022; Williams et al., 2022). While the pandemic

shutdown temporarily paused employee turnover, organizational leaders missed an

opportunity to retain their employees by not recognizing and changing factors that led to

preexisting employee turnover intention (Montaudon-Tomas et al., 2022). The limited

research on Black employees leaving their jobs by the millions during the COVID-19

pandemic called for empirical research using a qualitative, layered account approach to

develop Black employees' narratives of racial discrimination and toxic work culture as

catalysts for joining the Great Resignation (Chordiya 2021; Wicker, 2021). Forty-eight percent of Black women quitting their jobs since 2021 reported disengagement and demoralization at work as they regularly needed to provide more evidence of their competence, as opposed to 28% of White women (Brown, 2022; McKinney et al., 2022; Williams et al., 2022a). More in-depth empirical research is needed to understand how professional Black employees' daily experiences with racial discrimination and toxic work culture became catalysts for joining the Great Resignation (Kuzior et al., 2022).

This chapter presents an introduction and background of the study, the problem statement, the purpose of the study, the research question, the conceptual framework, and the study's nature. The chapter also includes the definitions, assumptions, scope and delimitations, limitations, significance, and summary.

Background of the Study

The COVID-associated lockdowns gave people a unique opportunity to pause and reevaluate their life's purpose, relationship to work, and, most importantly, professional self-identity – the degree to which workers identify themselves as members of their professional group (Robertson, 2021; Serenko, 2022). At the same time, the hardest hit industries were apparel retail, fast food, specialty retail, and the restaurant industry, where workers of color received 56% lower earnings when compared to equally qualified White workers (Dunaway-Seale, 2022) with the Great Resignation affecting blue-collar and white-collar sectors with equal force.

The Great Resignation created numerous individual, organizational, and national knowledge-related impacts (Serenko, 2022). Organizational effects of the Great

Resignation include knowledge loss, reduced business process efficiency, damaged intra-organizational knowledge flows, lower relational capital, lost informal friendship networks, difficulty attracting the best human capital, undermined knowledge transfer processes, and knowledge leakage to competition. Countries may also witness the depletion of national human capital. The United States experienced the Great Resignation in 2021 when 4.4 million American workers quit their jobs, the most significant employee resignation spike in recent history. Tessema et al. (2022) posited that many of the pre-pandemic era's human resources policies and practices may not apply to the pandemic and post-pandemic periods and must be adjusted.

The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly influenced the work world. One of the most visible impacts on employee lifecycles was the Great Resignation, a massive wave of workers quitting across industries in 2021 after easing the first pandemic restrictions (Kuzior et al., 2022). Roberson (2021) wrote that organizational leaders influenced the high 2021 turnover rates amid the COVID-19 shutdown and contributed to employee turnover intention before the pandemic as a result of negative leadership behaviors and toxic organizational cultures (Sull et al., 2022). In the context of institutionalized White dominance, workers of color may experience race-based cultural exclusion, identity threat, and racialized workplace emotional expression and be burdened by racialized tasks (Chordiya 202). As the professional social, ethical, and personal consequences of the Great Resignation emerged, scholars identified a literature gap that calls for empirical research using a layered account approach to position Black employees' narratives of

racial discrimination and toxic work culture as catalysts for joining the Great Resignation (Kuzior et al., 2022; Wicker, 2021).

Problem Statement

The COVID-19 pandemic significantly influenced employee lifecycles among Black workers during the rise of the Great Resignation (Klotz, 2022), a massive wave of workers quitting across industries that began in 2021, leaving behind them a wake of labor shortages (Hansman, 2022; Oxford Analytica, 2022; Piacentini et al., 2022). An estimated eight million Black Americans left their jobs in 2021 as part of the Great resignation movement with this mass exodus of workers driven by perceived toxic work culture and racial discrimination in the workplace (Taylor, 2022). Labor studies scholars have noted that of those joining the Great Resignation, over 80% of Blacks and indigenous people of color have experienced microaggressions and toxic leadership behavior in the workplace (Skinner-Dorkenoo et al., 2021; Williams, 2022). The social problem is that Black employees joined the Great Resignation movement, leaving early-and-mid-career jobs in droves as a result of barriers to advancement, racial microaggressions, and a lack of recognition and growth opportunities (Taylor, 2022).

Researchers at the MIT Sloan School of Management identified a toxic corporate culture as the strongest predictor of industry-adjusted attrition for all demographic groups and is ten times more important than compensation in predicting turnover (Mountadon-Tomas et al., 2021; Sull et al., 2022). White-collar Black employees were more likely to seek different jobs during the Great Resignation because of a lack of career advancement, employer failure to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion, employer's unethical

behavior, feeling disrespected, and toxic work culture (Coqual, 2019; Rosinski, 2022). As the professional, social, and ethical consequences of the Great Resignation were emerging, scholars identified a literature gap for empirical research using a layered account approach to position Black employees' narratives of racial discrimination and toxic work culture as catalysts for joining the Great Resignation (Chordiya 2021; Kuzior et al., 2022; Wicker, 2021). The specific management problem is that professional Black employees' daily experiences with racial discrimination and toxic workplace culture as catalysts for joining the Great Resignation remain poorly understood (Gonzales, 2022; Hirsch, 2022; Kyere & Fukui, 2022).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative, narrative inquiry study was to gain a deeper understanding of how professional Black employees' daily experiences with racial discrimination and perceived toxic work culture were incentives for joining the Great Resignation. A narrative inquiry approach was used to collect data through storytelling to meet the study's purpose and provide data to fill the literature gap on Black employees' narratives of racial discrimination and perceived toxic work culture as impetus for joining the Great Resignation. The narrative inquiry approach highlighted participants' daily lives, cultures, and livelihoods and allowed the exploration of lived experiences, including their past, present, and future, focusing on the meanings of the stories they tell (Clandinin, 2022).

The final sample size in this qualitative study was determined by data saturation evaluated from the verbatim interview transcripts of participants' stories (Fusch & Ness,

2015). The two-step critical event narrative analysis approach was used for analyzing the collected data (Webster & Mertova, 2007). Although triangulation is often used to ensure the trustworthiness of data when conducting qualitative research, Webster and Mertova (2007) stated that triangulation is not feasible or necessary in narrative studies since it is "almost impossible to achieve" (p. 91).

Research Question

How do professional Black employees narrate their daily experiences with racial discrimination and toxic work culture as catalysts for joining the Great Resignation?

Conceptual Framework

This study is framed by two key concepts that focus on the significance of developing empirical research on professional Black employees' daily experiences with racial discrimination and toxic work culture that became catalysts for joining the Great Resignation: 1) Montaudon-Tomas's (2022) concept of *the Great Resignation and toxic work culture* and 2) Feagin and Eckberg's (1980) concept of *racial discrimination*.

The Great Resignation and Toxic Work Culture

Montaudon-Tomas et al.'s (2022) research explained the Great Resignation as a term coined by Professor Antony Klotz for Texas A&M University before the pandemic reshaped the nature of work. Klotz anticipated that there would be a vast resignation movement due to various factors that were endemic to the modern workplace, and many employees would have resigned from their jobs with or without the COVID-19 pandemic (Kaplan, 2021). Montaudon-Tomas et al. (2022) grounded their research on The Great Resignation in the anti-work theory, which postulates work as an unfair system that

deprived workers of the total value of their output. The Great Resignation is a self-styled anti-work movement that seeks to shift from the economic order that limited current work-related practices which people have been protesting, such as fair income, dignity at work, working conditions, workplace safety, and well-being (O'Connor, 2022).

Racial Discrimination

Feagin and Eckberg (1980) defined racial discrimination as "actions or practices carried out by members of dominant racial or ethnic groups that have a differential and negative impact on members of subordinate racial or ethnic groups" (pp. 1–2). Regardless of the definition, the conceptualizations of discrimination indicate that, in essence, discrimination involves excluding specific individuals or groups from other persons or resources. In later writings, Feagin (2013) used his systemic racism theory to describe "a form of racism that is embedded in the laws and regulations of a society or an organization and is manifested as discrimination in areas such as criminal justice, employment, housing, health care, education, and political representation" (p. 1). Workplace racial discrimination led Feagin to extend systemic racism theory as a roadmap for how an individual perception of unfair workplace treatment of Black workers by the dominant White group is rooted in racial prejudice at all social levels (Cazenave, 2017).

<div align="center">

Nature of the Study

</div>

The nature of this study is qualitative since quantitative research methods are outcome-based, with a tendency to overlook the depth of human experiences. As such, it can lead to ineffective results by disregarding the significant characteristics of themes and

occurrences (Tracy, 2019). Qualitative approaches work well when investigating a topic such as how Black employees narrate their daily experiences with racial discrimination and toxic work culture as incentives for joining the Great Resignation by presenting detailed, thick descriptions rather than focusing on testing a prior hypothesis (see Merriam & Tisdell, 2015).

Human beings primarily communicate amongst themselves through storytelling (Polkinghorne, 1988). Social constructivists such as Gergen (1998) wrote that narrative emphasizes the contextual construction in social relations and daily life experiences (Merriam & Grenier, 2019). Narrative inquiry allows for presenting detailed participant descriptions through storytelling and can also be a valuable research method for developing a detailed understanding of human experiences as they are being lived daily (Clandinin, 2022; Webster & Mertovar, 2012).

In the narrative inquiry tradition, I expected participants' stories to be interesting and rich in information, including a social context to answer the research question. This study was grounded in a hermeneutic approach that focuses on how human experience is mediated through storytelling (Clandinin, 2022). Hermeneutics is based on deciphering, interpreting, and translating ideas by examining language and considering multiple meanings that include my perspective. The moving back and forth between the researcher's and participant's perspectives on stories to uncover inherent meanings is termed the "hermeneutic circle" (Polkinghorne, 1988). This approach increased the likelihood of obtaining findings that can become significant research material (Webster & Mertova, 2007).

I conducted online interviews and recordings of the daily experiences of a purposeful sample of six participants. The sample population for my study met the following inclusion criteria: adults over the age of 18; identifying as professional Black or African American; employed in a U.S.-based organization for a minimum of 3 years before resignation; identity as joining the Great Resignation movement during the peak years of the COVID-19 pandemic (2020-2022); and, able and willing to provide in-depth information on the phenomena under study (see Tracy, 2019).

After data collection, I answered my research question through a rigorous data analysis process. The first step of the data analysis was the process of restorying (reconstructing), a narrative data analysis method used by the researcher to gather data on participant stories (e.g., time, place, plot, and scene) and then rewriting the data into a narrative form (Clandinin, 2022). The second step of the data analysis was the critical events approach, where the summation of critical events experiences of the whole sample group provides further details on place, time, characters, and significant events essential to the study. A critical event narrative analysis was used to model the events in narratives to investigate human stories and strengthen the trustworthiness of data in this study (Webster & Mertova, 2007).

Definitions

The definition of terms section provides clarity of the intended meaning of specific key terms and phrases used in the study to increase comprehension of the research phenomenon. The definitions of the words and phrases used in this work are consistent with peer-reviewed literature.

Catalyst: This term refers to many of the significant changes that have taken place in businesses during the pandemic (Bonney, et al. 2022)

Great Resignation: This term refers to a self-styled anti-work movement that seeks to shift from the economic order that limits current work-related practices which people have been protesting, such as fair income, dignity at work, working conditions, workplace safety, and well-being (O'Connor, 2022).

Hermeneutic approach: This term refers to deciphering, interpreting, and translating ideas by examining languages through storytelling (Clandinin, 2022).

Racial discrimination: This term refers to actions or practices carried out by members of dominant racial or ethnic groups that have a differential and negative impact on members of subordinate racial or ethnic groups (Feagin & Eckberg, 1980)

Racial microaggression: This term refers to why Black employees joined the Great Resignation movement leaving jobs in droves (Taylor, 2022).

Systemic racism theory: This term refers to a roadmap for how an individual perception of unfair workplace treatment of Black workers by the dominant White group is rooted in racial prejudice at all social levels (Cazenave, 2017).

Toxic leadership behavior: This term refers to destructive leadership behaviors. (Skinner-Dorkenoo et al., 2021; Williams, 2022) states that over 80% of Blacks and indigenous people have joined the Great Resignation due to this form of behavior

Toxic work culture: This term is the strongest predictor of industry-adjusted attrition for all demographic groups and is ten times more important than compensation in predicting turnover. In a perceived toxic work culture, employees are disengaged and

angry toward their employer, who practices unethical behavior and failure to enact diversity, equity, and inclusion policies driving employees to feel disrespected and demoralized (Mountadon-Tomas et al., 2021; Sull et al., 2022).

Assumptions

The first assumption is that the research participants will provide detailed stories of their daily experience working in an environment that can be viewed as toxic work culture.

The second assumption is that the research participants will provide detailed information on their previous interactions with experiences with toxic leadership behaviors and be open and honest in answering the interview questions.

The third assumption is that the participant's information will be helpful to the human resource department when implementing improved leadership training for employee retention.

The fourth assumption is that the interviews will be documented, accurately recorded, and accurately transcribed without any biases.

The final assumption is that the database used to record the collected data will be an effective qualitative data collection instrument.

Scope and Delimitations

Delimitations determine certain constraints of the research study's scope yet define the boundaries; however, the researcher controls the delimitations (Simon & Goes, 2013). Also, according to Meivert and Klevensparr (2014), boundaries used to define a study are conscious exclusionary and inclusionary decisions. This research used a

qualitative narrative inquiry study to understand how professional Black employees'
daily experiences with racial discrimination and toxic work culture were as motivation
for joining the Great Resignation.

The scope of this study consisted of an accurate and data-rich narrative study. The
scope of this study included online interviews and recordings of the life experiences of a
purposeful sample of 10-15 participants. The sample population for my study met the
following inclusion criteria: adults over the age of 18; identifying as Black or African
American; employed in a U.S.-based organization for a minimum of 3 years before
resignation; identified as joining the Great Resignation movement during the peak years
of the COVID-19 pandemic (2020-2022); and, able and willing to provide in-depth
information on the phenomena under study (see Tracy, 2019).

Limitations

Limitations of the study included potential shortcomings or weaknesses beyond
the control of the researcher's control, which may be related to the selected research
design, statistical model constraints, funding constraints, or other factors that may affect
the results and conclusions of the study (Theofanidis & Fountouki, 2018). The analysis
data for my study were based on self-reported data, as I relied on spontaneous answers
from all interviewed participants. While this limitation of a research study is a factor that
a researcher has no control over (Baron, 2010), subjectivity, the influence of personal
biases, and connection or the lack thereof of researching theory are all potential
limitations or barriers of a qualitative study.

The limitations relevant to this study are the data collection methods due to factors such as time, financial resources, and other processes such as the participants' responses, which may be conditioned based on their perceived notions of organizational loyalty (Tracy, 2019). However, for this study, other limitations may include the ability to recruit the specific criteria of professional participants due to topic sensitivity and the knowledge of how the Great Resignation affected an array of individuals and ethnicities. Lastly, because the interviews were virtual, the ability to monitor the participant's nonverbal cues may not be as visible as in person, therefore leading to participants being reluctant to provide all of what they would share face to face and possibly withholding information or providing biased perceptions, which restricted the study's findings.

Significance of the Study

Significance to Practice

This study is significant in that findings may contain information that provides managers insight into the phenomenon known as the great resignation or the big quit, which entails the massive voluntary resignations or mass exodus of workers that have been taking place in different organizations across the globe, and to highlight how organizational leaders influenced the high 2021 turnover rates among Black employees amid the COVID-19 shutdown. (Montaudon-Tomas et al., 2022; Robertson, 2021). According to Robertson (2021), while the pandemic shutdown temporarily paused employee turnover, organizational leaders missed an opportunity to retain their employees by not recognizing and changing factors that led to preexisting employee turnover intentions. The significance of my study to professional practice may inform

employers on how the pre-pandemic era's human resources policies and practices needed to reflect the lessons learned on the toxic work cultures and racial discrimination driving Black employees to a mass job exodus. (Tessema et al., 2022).

Significance to Theory

White-collar Black employees were more likely to seek different jobs during the Great Resignation because of a lack of career advancement, employer failure to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion, unethical behavior, a toxic work culture, and feeling undervalued or disrespected (Coqual, 2019; Rosinski, 2022; Sull et al., 2022a). This study contributes to the management theory by better understanding and exploring several factors that contributed to Black employee turnover intention before the pandemic and how unresolved leadership behaviors and toxic organizational cultures exacerbated circumstances leading Black employees to The Great Resignation of 2021. This study may be significant to theory extension by contributing original, qualitative data to address a significant gap in the literature of empirical research on the experiences of Black employees in the workplace that drove millions to exit their jobs and join the Great Resignation (Chordiya 2021; Kuzior et al., 2022; Wicker, 2021).

Significance to Social Change

The global impact of COVID-19 is likely to leave a lasting mark for years on the U.S. labor market. The gap between numerous streams of research about Black employees joining The Great Resignation is founded on the lack of research that positions Black employee's narratives of racial discrimination and toxic work culture as catalysts for joining the Great Resignation (Chordiya 2021; Kuzior et al., 2022; Wicker,

2021). This study is significant as it may drive positive social change by raising

employers' awareness of Black American employees' experiences and issues that must

be diligently addressed to counter long-standing toxic cultures and racial disparities in the

U.S. workplace.

Summary and Transition

An estimated eight million Black Americans left their jobs in 2021 and joined the

Great Resignation movement, leaving early-and-mid-career jobs in droves due to barriers

to advancement, racial microaggressions, and a lack of recognition and growth

opportunities. As the professional social, ethical, and personal consequences of the Great

Resignation are only just emerging, scholars have identified a literature gap that calls for

empirical research using a layered account approach to position Black employees'

narratives of racial discrimination and perceived toxic work culture as triggers for joining

the Great Resignation. The specific management problem explored by this study is that

professional Black employees' daily experiences with racial discrimination and toxic

culture at work as impetus for joining the Great Resignation remain poorly understood.

This qualitative, narrative inquiry study aimed to understand better how professional

Black employees' daily experiences with racial discrimination and perceived toxic work

culture were as incentives for joining the Great Resignation.

A narrative inquiry approach was used to collect data through storytelling to meet

the study's purpose and provide data for the literature gap on Black employees'

narratives of racial discrimination and perceived toxic work culture as incentives for

joining the Great Resignation. The final sample size in this qualitative study will be

determined by data saturation evaluated from the verbatim interview transcripts of

participants' stories. The two-step critical event narrative analysis approach was used for

analyzing the collected data (Webster & Mertova, 2007). Using the conceptual

framework to ground this study, I presented theoretical propositions that further

explained the problem facing the sample of participants. This chapter also presented the

study's nature, assumptions, scope, delimitations, and limitations while identifying its

significance to theory and positive social change.

      In Chapter 2, I will provide the literature search strategy and the conceptual

framework upon which the research rests. To present knowledge within a narrative

literature review on the specific problems, I will review the existing literature on

additional encounters that volunteers experienced during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The specific management problem is that professional Black employees' daily experiences with racial discrimination and toxic workplace culture as catalysts for joining the Great Resignation remain poorly understood (Gonzales, 2022; Hirsch, 2022; Kyere & Fukui, 2022). An estimated eight million Black Americans left their jobs in 2021 as part of the Great resignation movement with this mass exodus of workers driven by toxic work culture and racial discrimination in the workplace (Taylor, 2022). Black employees reported joining the Great Resignation movement due to barriers to advancement, racial microaggressions, a lack of recognition, and job growth opportunities (Taylor, 2022).

Professional, white-collar Black employees were likelier to seek different jobs during the Great Resignation because of a lack of career advancement, employer failure to promote diversity, feeling disrespected, and toxic work culture (Coqual, 2019; Rosinski, 2022). As the professional, social, and ethical consequences of the Great Resignation are only just emerging, scholars have identified a literature gap for empirical research using a layered account approach to position Black employees' narratives of racial discrimination and toxic work culture as catalysts for joining the Great Resignation (Chordiya 2021; Kuzior et al., 2022; Wicker, 2021)

Chapter 2 provides the literature search strategy and the conceptual framework that grounds this study. Following, I present a synthesis of knowledge and critical analysis of selected literature review on topics related to the problem and purpose of the study, including professional Black employees' experiences with racial discrimination

and perceived toxic work culture as fuel for joining the Great Resignation. The literature review of this chapter are titled as follows:

- Foundational Literature of the Study

- What is the Great Resignation

- How Corporate Toxic Culture Triggered the Great Resignation

- Toxic Leadership Behaviors and the Great Resignation

- Racial Discrimination in the American Workplace

- Why did Professional Black Employees Join The Great Resignation

- Career Advancement Barriers for Professional Black Employees

- Retaining Professional Black Employees Through Effective Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Policies

Literature Search Strategy

This literature review's objective was to synthesize and analyze scholarly literature on how the COVID-19 pandemic has significantly influenced employee lifecycles (Klotz, 2022) and how professional Black employees' daily experience with racial discrimination and toxic culture at work as catalysts for joining the Great Resignation remain poorly understood (Gonzales, 2022; Hirsch, 2022; Kyere & Fukui, 2022). The databases I used to conduct the literature review include the Walden University Library and Google Scholar. Literary searches were conducted through the collections of Emerald Insight, Business Source Complete, Science Direct, Sage Premier, EBSCO Host, Business Source Complete, PsycNet, SpringerLink, and Thoreau Database

Search. The strategy I decided to use for searching the literature included identifying essential concepts of the search, keywords, related terms, and various appropriate databases.

The keywords searched included: racial discrimination, great resignation, individual values and ethics, systemic racism, hermeneutic approach, corporate ethics, and increasing diversity and inclusion. Additional vital terms include qualitative study, sampling strategy, semi-structured interview, single case study, authentic leadership, ethical leadership, social change, sustainability ethics, self-awareness, leadership, emotional intelligence, ethics, leadership, and racial microaggression.

My strategy was to search for peer-reviewed journals within the last 5 years that relate to understanding how professional Black employees' daily experiences with racial discrimination and perceived toxic work culture as incentives for joining the Great Resignation. The keywords I used to search for updated scholarly papers in the databases were: *authentic leadership, corporate ethics, corporate values, emotional intelligence, ethical leadership, ethics, identity, increasing diversity and inclusion, individual values and ethics, leadership, mediating lens, self-awareness, self-deception, self-development, self-efficacy, social change,* and *sustainability ethics.*

This literature review presents a synthesis of prior research on racial discrimination and toxic culture within the workplace for Black employees. Also, a synthesis of scholarly literature on the rise of the Great Resignation, the consequences of toxic leadership, the COVID-19 pandemic, and how it influenced employee lifecycles among Black workers and the social problem of Black employees joining the Great

Resignation movement. I identified and documented the literature gap on how professional Black employees narrate their daily experiences with racial discrimination and perceived toxic work culture as motivators for joining the Great Resignation. In conclusion, several peer-reviewed journals, such as *Journal of Racial and Ethnic Health Disparities, Canadian Journal of Nursing Research, Journal of Knowledge Management, Strategic HR Review,* and *Journal of Human Resources Sustainability Studies,* were essential in providing key elements of information that are related to the study's specific topic.

The Literature Review

Conceptual Framework

This study is framed by two key concepts that focus on the significance of developing empirical research on professional Black employees' daily experiences with racial discrimination and perceived toxic work culture may become catalysts for joining the Great Resignation: 1) Montaudon-Tomas's (2022) concept of *the Great Resignation and toxic work culture* and 2) Feagin and Eckberg's (1980) concept of *racial discrimination*.

The Great Resignation and Toxic Work Culture

Montaudon-Tomas et al.'s (2022) research explained the Great Resignation as a term coined by Professor Antony Klotz for Texas A&M University before the pandemic reshaped the nature of work. Klotz anticipated that there would be a vast resignation movement due to various factors that were endemic to the modern workplace, and many employees would have resigned from their jobs with or without the COVID-19 pandemic

(Kaplan, 2021). Montaudon-Tomas et al. grounded their research on The Great Resignation on the anti-work theory, which postulates that work is an unfair system that deprived workers of the total value of their output. The Great Resignation is a self-styled anti-work movement that seeks to shift from the economic order that limits current work-related practices which people have been protesting, such as fair income, dignity at work, working conditions, workplace safety, and well-being (O'Connor, 2022).

Sull et al. (2022) wrote that corporate culture would be a reliable predictor of attrition when compared with remuneration and employee benefits and that a toxic corporate culture is more impactful in predicting attrition rate within an industry sector. A perceived toxic workplace will leave employees disengaged and angry toward their employer (Lipman, 2017). Emerging research conducted at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology during the COVID-19 pandemic concluded that the core elements that drive the Great Resignation remain toxic corporate cultures, including practicing unethical behavior and failing to enact diversity, equity, and inclusion policies driving employees to feel disrespected and demoralized. (Sull et al., 2022).

Racial Discrimination

Feagin and Eckberg (1980) defined racial discrimination as "actions or practices carried out by members of dominant racial or ethnic groups that have a differential and negative impact on members of subordinate racial or ethnic groups" (pp. 1–2). Regardless of the definition, the conceptualizations of discrimination indicate that, in essence, discrimination involves excluding specific individuals or groups from other persons or resources. In later writings, Feagin (2013) uses his systemic racism theory to describe "a

form of racism that is embedded in the laws and regulations of a society or an organization and manifests as discrimination in areas such as criminal justice, employment, housing, health care, education, and political representation" (p. 1). Workplace racial discrimination led Feagin to extend systemic racism theory as a roadmap for how an individual perception of unfair workplace treatment of Black workers by the dominant White group is rooted in racial prejudice at all social levels (Cazenave, 2017).

Scholars used Feagin's (1980) concept of racial discrimination to expand his work on how workplace racial discrimination not only reinforces feelings of powerlessness, shame, confusion, and studies have shown it also leads to premature resignation from work and the development of a hostile work attitude. As such, how Blacks evaluate and cope with perceived workplace racial discrimination stressors may be more complex than indicated in previous studies (Egeruoh, 2022). Gould and Wilson (2020) used Feagin's work as a foundation to lay the groundwork for their investigations on how racial and economic inequality enhanced during the COVID-19 pandemic, leaving Black workers with few good options for protecting their health and economic well-being.

Foundational Literature of the Study

After analyzing the available literature on turnover, great resignation, and toxic culture, this concluded that toxic culture alone could not be the reason behind great resignation (Braje, 2022). After the COVID-19 pandemic, many employers recognized increased voluntary turnover, which became known globally as the great resignation. Toxicity within organizational literature is often associated with leadership that consists

of micromanaging, blaming, and setting unrealistic goals. Some countries experienced this trend more than others. Braje (2022) explored the reasons behind the great resignation, especially the role of toxic organizational culture in such events. Reasons include value alignment, a perception of an unbiassed culture, the possibility of professional development, interwoven disruptions caused by the multiple crises of the COVID-19 pandemic, violent incidents against persons of color, social justice concerns, and political and civil unrest. However, these crises can impact and continue to affect careers, schools, workplaces, and personal lives in ways that will not be favorable for longevity within the workforce, thereby defining the frameworks of care that adult learners and educators can adapt to and respond to ongoing crises (Hansman, 2022).

One of the most visible impacts on employee lifecycles is the Great Resignation phenomenon, a massive wave of workers quitting across industries in 2021 after easing the first pandemic restrictions (Kuzior et al., 2022). The COVID-19 pandemic significantly influenced the work world, and as this process is relatively recent, a research gap in the field has pushed authors to examine this topic in more detail. Recent cross-sectional research conducted in Germany indicated that the main reasons employees leave their workplaces are non-materialistic. In the context of institutionalized white dominance, workers of color within mental health organizations may experience race-based cultural exclusion, identity threat, and racialized workplace emotional expression and be burdened by racialized tasks (Kyere & Fukui, 2022).

Structural racism operates in organizations, including mental health organizations, to undermine workforce diversity efforts and reinforce inequities (Cazenave, 2017).

Using the theories of racialized organizations, researchers underscore organizations' racial character as mezzo-level racialized structures that may systematically activate and uphold white privilege in the mental health workplace. Workers of color may also become the means for organizations to attract communities of color due to their diverse characteristics. The literature stated that the inequities in healthcare systems have historical and contemporary roots in structural racism and that cultural, social, and organizational ideas and practices of white supremacy. Nevertheless, workers' effects on addressing disparities in mental health are minimized due to potential racialized organizational forces, including the whiteness of organizational leadership and color blindness (Kyere & Fukui, 2022).

The Great Resignation created numerous individual, organizational, and national knowledge-related impacts (Serenko, 2022). On the individual level, because of the accelerating adoption of freelancing, the future may witness an expansion of the knowledge worker category and a growing need for personal knowledge management methods and information technologies. On the organizational level, the effects include knowledge loss, reduced business process efficiency, damaged intra-organizational knowledge flows, lower relational capital, lost informal friendship networks, difficulty attracting the best human capital, undermined knowledge transfer processes, and knowledge leakage to competition. On the national level, the immediate result of the Great Resignation is the possible depletion of national human capital (Piacentini et al., 2022).

What is The Great Resignation?

Montaudon-Tomas et al. (2022) analyzed the phenomenon known as the great resignation or the big quit, which entails the massive voluntary resignations or mass exodus of workers that have been taking place in different organizations across the globe. Although the notion acquired relevance during the COVID-19 pandemic and is connected to reassessing or evaluating work and the fragility of life, it was first developed in 2019 by Professor Antony Klotz of Texas A&M University. Labor scholars identified several factors that contributed to employee turnover intention before the pandemic and how unresolved leadership behaviors and toxic organizational cultures exacerbated circumstances that led to what is now known as The Great Resignation of 2021. Tessema et al. (2022) argued that many of the pre-pandemic era's HR policies and practices that led to this mass employee turnover movement might not apply to the pandemic and post-pandemic periods and need to be adjusted once the causes and consequences of the Great Resignation are more carefully examined.

The United States specifically experienced the Great Resignation when, in September 2021, 4.4 million American workers quit their jobs, the most significant employee resignation spike in decades (Williams et al., 2022). The Great Resignation made it essential for human resource (HR) managers to understand the changes and develop a new HR strategy that can stem the mass resignation of employees and develop innovative employee retention strategies. By 2022, more than 47 million workers quit their jobs, with many searching for an improved work-life balance and flexibility,

increased compensation, and strong company culture (Hirsch, 2021; Williams et al., 2022).

Nevertheless, organizational leaders influenced the high 2021 turnover rates amid the COVID-19 shutdown (Brown, 2022). While the pandemic shutdown temporarily paused employee turnover, organizational leaders missed an opportunity to retain their employees by not recognizing and changing factors that led to preexisting employee turnover intention (Jeong et al., 2022). Roberson (2021) offered solutions to help leaders support and retain current and future employees in a future labor crisis, with leadership development at the forefront to support and help strengthen managers in their highly complex roles.

How Corporate Toxic Culture Triggered the Great Resignation

Millions of quitters are part of a national movement known as the Great Resignation, a trend of employees voluntarily leaving their jobs to find higher pay, better benefits, new careers, and healthier working conditions (Dunaway-Seale, 2022). The ethical drivers that work together to create a situation where organizational toxicity spills over to employees are ethical issues that create workplaces where employees endure stress and anxiety. In toxic workplaces, senior leaders get persuaded into making poor ethical or moral decisions as they rise through the ranks; and provide strategies for putting up barriers to mitigate these ethical lapses among senior leaders. Reasons for quitting during the Great Resignation differed from those during the pre-COVID era; working during COVID has dramatically changed peoples' affective, cognitive, and behavioral processes (Malmendier, 2021).

A toxic workplace environment negatively affects employee engagement, directly and indirectly, through organizational support and employee well-being (Taylor, 2022). Toxicity in the workplace can appear as the consequence of toxins within the organization, resulting in the occurrence of terms such as toxic leader, toxic manager, and toxic culture and eventually leading to toxic organizations (Appelbaum & Roy-Girard, 2007; Tiwari & Jhr, 2022). Toxic leaders cannot achieve operation goals and commitments, have problem-solving processes driven by fear, and rarely yield good decisions; they suffer from poor internal communication, have vast amounts of waste, poor decision-making, and lots of rework. Relationships within a toxic workplace are driven by manipulative and self-centered agendas (Bacal & Associates, 2022).

A toxic workplace environment has a negative impact on employee engagement (Mountadon-Tomas et al., 2021). Among workers who quit during the Great Resignation, the most common reasons were toxic company culture at 31%, poor company response to the COVID-19 pandemic at 30%, and changing career goals at 30% (Dunaway-Seale, 2022). The Great Resignation signals that employee engagement is lower than employee dissatisfaction, and attracting and retaining diverse teams seems to be an ever-increasing challenge, according to William et al. (2022). Previous research determines that the direct relationship between a perceived toxic workplace environment and minimal employee engagement confirms that a toxic environment may lead to resignations. Certain feelings that can come with a toxic environment are bullying, stress, depression, anxiety, and exclusion, which can harm employee productivity and the desire to resign from the organization. Additionally, previous research confirmed that the lack of organizational

support for the employee significantly mediates a toxic workplace environment (Sull et al., 2022).

Toxic Leadership Behaviors and the Great Resignation

Studies show that leadership is one of many essential drivers for improving an organization's performance and sustainability. Additionally, the personal ethics of individuals in a leadership role can also be essential to the values and ethics of an organization (Rosinski, 2022). According to Onyeneho (2022) and the 2021 Bureau of Labor Statistics, 4.3 million Americans, 309,000 women above age 20, and 182,000 men dropped out of the workforce. The primary reason employees walked out the door during the Great Resignation is a perceived toxic workplace and the toxic behaviors of leadership within the organization. According to studies, the leading elements contributing to toxic cultures include failure to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion, with the workers feeling disrespected by the unethical behaviors of leadership (Mountadon-Tomas et al., 2021).

People did not leave their jobs and careers because of low pay, burnout, or even the lack of work-life balance but because of the inability of leadership to rise above the toxic behaviors that created a toxic environment. Toxic leadership and workplace culture are the most cited reasons by employees for departing organizations, which means that employers may need to take a hard look at these factors to do a better job retaining staff. The five attributes of a toxic culture are: disrespectful, non-inclusive, unethical, cutthroat, and abusive – and have a very negative impact on how employees will rate the company's culture. (Sull et al., 2022)

Toxic leadership behaviors can cause harm not only to their direct reports but also to the entire organization (Mountadon-Tomas et al., 2021). Such behaviors can result in adverse consequences such as decreased employee morale, productivity, and motivation. Consequences such as these can affect the emotional intelligence of some employees. According to Sull et al. (2022), feeling disrespected at work has the largest negative impact on an employee's overall rating of the corporate culture and can sometimes lead to the organization's culture being described as toxic. Toxic leaders and toxic leadership practices cause many problems for organizations, and it is apparent that such leaders consistently lead organizations to failure in the long run and hurt the personal and health well-being of individuals (Kurtulmuş, 2021).

Personal ethics are ethical principles a person uses when making decisions, and behaving in personal and professional settings can sometimes spill over into behaviors (Sull et al., 2022). According to Ninivaggi (2020), being self-aware as a leader requires the "ability to engage in reflective awareness and requires certain cognitive abilities such as visual self-recognition and the ability to recognize oneself in a mirror." These ethics influence various aspects of a person's life and help individuals develop their work ethic, personal and professional goals, and values. Individuals use their ethics to determine right and wrong and influence how someone behaves in challenging situations. Each person's code of ethics varies, but many people share common ethics, such as honesty and respect. Personal ethics successful individuals share in professional settings are honesty, loyalty, integrity, respect, selflessness, and responsibility. Additionally, Ninivaggi's (2020) study suggested that authentic and ethical leadership and the importance of organizational

leadership's perspectives of diversity and inclusion in the workplace are significantly

associated with corporate adjustment and adaptability.

Personal ethical principles are essential for a variety of reasons: it allows leaders

to lead their teams more effectively; instill a sense of trust and support in leaders; give

individuals a solid basis on which to determine the most appropriate action in any

situation; improve the decision-making process; set a standard of behavior; supports

motivational culture (Rosinski, 2022). Having the ability to recognize oneself and lead a

multicultural organization, open communication, and a sustainable level of shared visions

to engage employees effectively can impact an organization's sustainability and

contribution to social change, according to Muff et al. (2020). There are a few key

differences between personal and professional ethics. The primary difference is that a

personal set of ethics refers to an individual's beliefs and values in any area of life, while

professional ethics refers to a person's values within the workplace. The difference

between personal and professional ethics can be viewed through a personal ethical system

as a personal moral code or a person's conscience, while professional ethics are viewed

as a set code of conduct that must be adhered to in the workplace. Like transformational,

spiritual, charismatic, and authentic leadership, ethical leadership is essential in

promoting desirable employee attitudes and behaviors, including organizational

commitment, job satisfaction, pro-social behavior, and job performance. (Afsar &

Shahjehan, 2018). Ethical and unethical behavioral practices among an organization's

leadership team can affect workplace performance, culture, and the sustainability and

future of an organization. Also, according to Caldwell and Hayes (2016), self-awareness

and reflection are needed to enhance how leaders should comply with proper ethical and socially responsible workplace standards.

Professional ethics can be viewed as principles that govern the behavior of a person or group in a business environment; additionally, professional ethics provide rules on how a person should act toward other people and institutions in such an environment (Sliwa, 2017). Professional values are the essential elements that build a profession's ethics and guide its development; they refer to the set of codes of professional conduct, the legitimate purpose of the profession, and the way of dealing with ethical conflicts. (Marques-Sule, et al. 2022). Also, according to Sull et al. (2022), toxic culture was the single best predictor of attrition during the first six months of the Great Resignation and was ten times more powerful than how employees viewed compensation as a means of predicting employee turnover. A toxic corporate culture is the strongest predictor of industry-adjusted attrition and is ten times more important than compensation when predicting turnover and has been found that leading elements contributing to toxic cultures include failure to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion; the feeling of disrespect; and unethical behavior. (Sull, 2022a)

Racial Discrimination in the American Workplace

The year 2020 was a watershed moment for the conversation about racial injustice, including race in the workplace; almost half of the Black workers are in three industries with a sizeable frontline presence, with significant underrepresentation, especially in high-growth, high-wage industries. (Hancock et al., 2021). Findings suggested that workers of color may experience race-based cultural exclusion, identity

threat, and racialized workplace emotional expression in the context of institutionalized white dominance. Racialized tasks can burden minority employees; the workers of color may also become the means for organizations to attract communities of color due to their diverse characteristics, yet workers' effects to address disparities in mental health are minimized due to potential racialized organizational forces, including the whiteness of organizational leadership and color-blindness. (Kyere & Fukui, 2022)

More Black workers are in jobs with less opportunity for advancement; Black workers are at higher risk of disruption from automation, and job prospects are markedly different for Black and white workers with similar backgrounds. (Handcock et al., 2021). The theoretical arguments and empirical findings, when compared with White employees, Federal Black, Indigenous, and Employees of Color (BIEOC) are significantly more likely to leave their current organizations. The distributive justice findings suggest that Federal employees' turnover intentions, in general, and BIEOC, can be reduced by paying attention to fairness in performance appraisals and performance-related distributive outcomes such as pay raises, promotions, awards, and recognitions. Like distributive justice, findings also indicate support for a promising role of procedural justice in reducing turnover intentions of Federal employees in general and Black, Indigenous, and Employees of Color (BIEOC) in particular. (Chordiya, 2022)

Black workers are underrepresented in the highest-growth geographies and the highest-paying industries. Meanwhile, they are overrepresented in low-growth geographies and frontline jobs, which tend to pay less. (Hancock et al., 2021). Racial minority employees were likely to choose emotion-focused coping strategies when

experiencing discrimination; emotion-focused coping strategies may lead to adverse employment outcomes among racial minority employees; problem-focused coping strategies may lead to positive employee outcomes among racial minority employees; transparent communication was found to reduce the negative impacts of discrimination experiences; transparent communication was found to increase the motivation of adopting problem-focused approaches. (Li et al., 2021) Cardiology has a high global prevalence of hostile work environments (HWE), including discrimination, emotional harassment, and sexual harassment. HWE harms professional and patient interactions, thus confirming concerns about well-being and optimizing patient care. Institutions and practices should prioritize combating HWE. (Sharma et al., 2021). Racial discrimination, or "unfair, differential treatment based on race," is pervasive in American workplaces; in 2019 alone, nearly 24,000 race-related discrimination charges were filed with the EEOC (EEOC, 2020).

Racial discrimination has been shown to have many negative consequences for minorities, including lower performance ratings, difficulty accessing management roles, and lower acceptance as leaders. (Burgess et al., 2022) Evidence-based research and interventions to report systemic institutional racism show that underrepresented minority (URM) professionals in research institutions produce evidence that has remained abysmally low for decades. This unique study of URM university professors assesses factors such as vocational strain, role overload, discrimination, coping strategies contributing to health and well-being, research productivity, and ultimately their retention in high-impact research positions. (Zambrana et al., 2021).

Findings support calls for increased attention to Black women in school mental health fields because they risk experiencing work discrimination due to their intersectional identities; Black women may also experience difficulties navigating workplace discrimination because of organizational politics and power issues privilege. (Parker et al., 2022). Lawyers who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, and queer ("LGBQ") show a higher likelihood of reporting both subtle and overt discrimination, and subtle-only discrimination, as compared to lawyers who identify as straight/heterosexual; women lawyers and lawyers of color are more likely to report all three types of discrimination. (Blanck et al., 2021).

Why did Professional Black Employees Join The Great Resignation?

Texas A&M University organizational psychologist Anthony Klotz, in predicting the voluntary mass exodus of the American workforce, coined the term "The Great Resignation". It only worsened since government support dried up, along with lingering gender and socioeconomic problems. (Onyeneho, 2022) According to the US Bureau of Labor Statistics, 4 million Americans quit their jobs in July 2021. Resignations peaked in April and remained abnormally high for the last several months, with a record-breaking 10.9 million open jobs at the end of July. It has been challenging for employers to retain people in the face of this tidal wave of resignations. (Cook, 2021).

More than 19 million US workers have quit their jobs since April 2021, a record pace disrupting businesses everywhere. Companies are struggling to address the problem, and many will continue to struggle for one simple reason: they do not understand why their employees are leaving in the first place (De Smet et al., 2021). Rather than take the

time to investigate the real causes of attrition, many companies are jumping to well-intentioned quick fixes that fall flat. The examination of leadership behaviors during the shutdown of the pandemic confirmed decisions to quit and notes that the halt temporarily paused employee turnover. Organizational leaders missed an opportunity to recognize and address factors that led to pre-existing employee turnover intention; it also aims to identify leadership best practices that can support and retain current and future employees amid an organizational crisis. (Robertson, 2021).

This lack of opportunity has been a primary driver behind Black workers joining the Great Resignation (Taylor, 2022). A University of Phoenix study found that while Black Americans are among the most likely to be actively looking for a new job and the most willing to quit their jobs before having another one lined up, they remain the most likely to live paycheck to paycheck; and that, half of Black Americans feel that COVID-19 has derailed their career. (Collins, 2022). Black workers were likelier to seek different jobs because of a lack of career momentum. An estimated 8 million Black Americans left their jobs in 2021, and one of the factors to blame for this mass exodus was systemic glass ceilings. Black employees are highly likely to be enterprising; 65% of Black professionals labeled themselves as ambitious as opposed to 53% of white professionals, according to Coqual's Being Black in Corporate America report, yet they still face high promotion gaps in comparison to their white peers, Black employees left early-career jobs in droves due to barriers to advancement such as a lack of allyship and support in their workplace. (Taylor, 2022)

Over 80% of BIPOC employees have experienced microaggressions in the workplace, according to a report by Savanta, a market research company (Washington, 2022). Forty percent of Black women said their qualifications were questioned and that they regularly needed to provide more evidence of their competence, as opposed to 28% of white women, the study found, also being overlooked at work and having to deal with racial microaggressions and differential treatment constantly can be grating for many Black employees. (Taylor, 2022) Situations at work when someone says or does something that feels hostile or offensive to some aspect of identity. Such actions such as insensitive statements, questions, or assumptions are called "microaggressions," and they can target many aspects of who we are; for example, they could be related to someone's race, gender, sexuality, parental status, socioeconomic background, mental health, or any other aspect of our identity. (Washington, 2022).

Microaggressions are aimed at traditionally marginalized identity groups, yet these hurtful actions can happen to anyone of any background or professional level. A microaggression against a Black woman, for example, could be, "You are not like the other Black people. I know," whereas one for a white male might be, "Oh, you do not ever have to worry about fitting in"; essentially, microaggressions are based on a simple, damaging idea: "Because you are X, you probably are/are not or like/don't like Y." (Washington, 2022). According to several desk research findings, the most significant elements influencing employee engagement have been revealed. The turnover/retention rate of the Great Resignation was primarily caused by ethical, cultural, relational, and

personal factors and was confirmed within the studied organization; these results will be the base of the future, broader, and more representative research. (Kuzior et al., 2022)

Some Black women who decided to leave the workforce are doing so to start their businesses; Black women remain among the country's fastest-growing group of entrepreneurs. A recent study by American Express found that Black women-owned businesses grew by 50 percent between 2014 and 2019. (Brown, 2022) In an attempt to break the glass ceiling, Black professionals often only go so high in a company, and some believe they are expected to work twice as hard for less money compared to their white counterparts; executives should adopt a cultural way of thinking and open the pipeline of promotion and leadership within their companies. (Onyeneho, 2022) Emily M. Dickens serves as the Chief of Staff and Head of Government Affairs at the Society For Human Resource Management; she recognizes the trend and urges employers to pay attention. It is important to emphasize that organizations with a higher proportion of women in leadership positions experience improved business outcomes, including more significant innovation and productivity. Nevertheless, women are still underrepresented in the C-suite, and the current workforce movement is signaling a more significant cultural shift. (Browley, 2022)

Research shows that women of color in leadership are five times more likely to leave a company than men (Browley, 2022). According to the survey data, non-White parents planning to leave at higher rates than their White counterparts; non-White fathers surveyed said they were planning to leave their jobs, and non-White mothers are planning to leave at higher rates than White mothers, at 43 percent to 34 percent. (De Smet et al.,

2021). Diversity should be evident across all levels of an organization, particularly among leadership positions. The upheaval and uncertainty caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and the heightened trauma of racial injustice affected minority workers' physical and mental health, leading people of color to leave or consider quitting their jobs. (Gonzales, 2022)

All the turmoil, in addition to the systemic inequities Black workers have been dealing with for far too long, not everyone has the same experience, but fatigue, exhaustion, frustration, and isolation are taking their toll. Research data shows that Black workers are also leaving their jobs to start their businesses; the percentage of Black adults starting their own business has increased yearly since 2018, according to the research organization Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation. (Gonzales, 2022). Employers should listen to Black Employees; they want to feel appreciated by their leaders at work, and investment in their professional development is pivotal; unfortunately, career coaching is often reserved for the most senior employees at a company. This lack of coaching and mentoring is an opportunity gap that holds underrepresented professionals behind in meeting their career goals (Gonzales, 2022).

Career Advancement Barriers for Professional Black Employees

Although there have been some developments, research shows that the five most significant barriers for black professionals are: lack of institutional transparency regarding compensation structures, pervasive implicit bias, lack of recognition for intersectionality, diversity-hire stigma, and the ongoing impact of COVID. (Peterman, 2022). The absence of transparency prevents Black professionals from having proper

knowledge if they are or are not receiving equal pay as their counterparts. According to the 2022 Job Seeker Nation Report, workers seeking out new employers for potential wage increases, with forty-nine percent of the workforce thinking they will make more money by just switching jobs, and fifty-three percent considering compensations the top point of consideration. (Taylor, 2022) The lack of recognition for intersectionality organizations can sometimes lump all Black professionals regardless of their region of origin, culture, or tradition. The stigma of diversity hire is still very prevalent, and Black professionals are still faced with the misperception of only being hired because of their race and not their actual qualifications. The economic impact of COVID-19 has disproportionately impacted Black professionals, with many of them leaving the workforce voluntarily, thereby widening gaps in career-growth opportunities (Peterman, 2022).

Also, according to research, other barriers that Black professionals experience within the workplace are not feeling psychologically safe, lack of mentorship and sponsorship opportunities, and the feeling of isolation and exclusion. (Straughn & Richmond, 2022). A lack of psychological safety at work can cause substantial business repercussions. Black professionals can experience challenges resulting in feeling psychologically unsafe when they are the only person of color on a team or within an organization.   Psychological safety at work is a shared belief held by team members that others will not embarrass, reject, or punish them for speaking up; this is sometimes difficult for Black professionals and becomes a significant barrier to successful career advancement (Peterman, 2022).

Although the importance of hard work, having the ability to be committed, and being reliable are all paramount in career development, none is as effective as having someone in leadership to be an advocate when being considered or informed about advanced opportunities in the career path (Sull et al., 2022). The lack of mentoring and sponsoring opportunities for Black professionals can hinder desired career advancement. According to the report by Coqual, "Being Black in Corporate America," Black professionals are not experiencing a sense of belonging, trust, and respect at work; the report found that Black professionals encounter microaggressions in the workplace at a significantly higher rate than other racial groups, and this can lead to feelings of isolation and exclusion. (Straughn & Richmond, 2022)

Retaining Professional Black Employees Through Effective Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Policies

An Executive Order on Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility in the Federal Workforce was issued and signed by the President of the United States of America on June 25, 2021, to promote diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility to strengthen the Federal workforce (*US Executive Order 14035*, 2021). Because of Black professionals' challenges, organizations' leadership must initiate more sustainable processes to fast-track positive progress. Addressing issues in three administrative areas could help move the needle: 1. companies must look beyond simply hiring Black workers. 2. focus on reestablishing trust. 3. companies can build systems to create opportunities for Black workers. When efforts are focused on levels within the

organization and in collaboration with other stakeholders, the probability of retaining professional black employees increase significantly (Morris and Yee, 2021).

Over the past 30 years, diversity, equity, and inclusion (DE&I), specifically for Black workers throughout the ranks, has become an increasing priority for the US private sector, and each year, companies collectively spend hundreds of millions of dollars on DE&I initiatives, they implemented a range of programs to reach out to a diverse talent pool and create a culture that supports workers from all backgrounds. (Hancock et al., 2021). Sponsorship from leaders opens opportunities for workers at every stage of the career journey, helping workers gain visible jobs, projects, and promotions. According to research, only 23% of Black employees believe they get "a lot" or "quite a bit" of support to advance; Black workers report some of the lowest levels of this critical support. More equitable sponsorship can help to ensure that Black employees have the needed support for career advancement. Such initiatives should improve outcomes (Morris & Yee, 2021).

Business leaders must also recognize that Black workers' barriers are grounded in years of more significant social problems, including segregation and disinvestment in Black communities (Washington, 2022). These social problems are too significant for one organization or entity to tackle; instead, companies also need to work together to address the complex, structural barriers that too often impede the retention and promotion of Black employees. (Morris & Yee, 2021). High attrition rates are often linked to an incompatible or perceived toxic workplace, and one-third of workers who left a job in the first 90 days said it was due to poor company culture. Additionally, almost one-third of BIPOC employees have left their jobs due to a lack of company diversity and inclusion

practices. To create a more equitable and diverse workplace, leaders must consider a multistep process, such as fostering more inclusive work environments focused on hiring events that bring together niche audiences like veterans or women (Taylor, 2022)

The four key retention drivers for Black employees and employees of color are an inclusive culture, effective people managers, family-sustaining wages and benefits, and transparent career pathways. "A lack of diversity can perpetuate a lack of belonging among underrepresented talent, which can drive employees out the door; we know that people leave managers, not companies, and so investing in things like manager training to support an inclusive culture and holding managers accountable for DEI outcomes is vitally important." (Taylor, 2022, p.2). Keeping the lines of communication open with Black employees is essential to ensuring engagement and building a stronger relationship between the individual and the organization. If leaders and senior managers only reach out during catastrophic events, which is not genuine support for many Black employees, it can be seen as a bandage to a wound already cut very deep. Therefore, organization leaders have no excuse for not keeping a constant pulse on the challenges experienced by marginalized groups and providing a safe space for these conversations to occur in the workplace. (McArthur, 2022)

Diversity and inclusion in breast imaging can improve creativity and innovation, enrich the workplace environment, and enhance culturally appropriate care for an increasingly diverse patient population. Strategies to improve diversity and inclusion in breast imaging include recruiting a diverse breast imaging workforce, establishing robust mentorship and sponsorship programs, fostering an inclusive training and workplace

environment, and retaining and promoting a diverse workforce. (Monga et al., 2022).

However, based on interviews with DEI professionals in NCAA athletic departments

across the U.S., the four main high-impact practices that advance DEI work in collegiate

athletics are (1) Diverse Hiring & Retention Practices, (2) Holistic and Engaging Support,

(3) Culturally Relevant and Responsive Programs, and (4) Infrastructure for Institutional

Transformation and the implications for research and practice are outlined in order to

support the successful advancement of DEI further and empower the individuals holding

DEI positions within intercollegiate athletics. (Wright-Mair et al., 2021)

Summary and Conclusions

The Great Resignation made it essential for human resource managers to

understand the changes and develop new strategies to stem employee mass resignation

during disruptive national or global events (Cook, 2021). As emerging research on the

Great Resignation is relatively recent, a research gap in the field has pushed scholars to

examine this topic of how structural racism continued to Black and minority employees

quitting their jobs in the millions during the 2020-2022 item period. Using the theories of

racialized organizations, Kyere and Fukui (2022) identified how structural racism

operates in organizations to undermine workforce diversity efforts and reinforce

inequities.

While stress, low compensation, and poor work-life balance have pushed many to

rethink their careers, the pandemic's impacts have had uneven effects. Women and

people of color have borne a disproportionate burden, getting pushed out of the labor

market. (Donaldson, 2022)**.** In 2021, around 181,000 Black women left the US labor

force between September and November, according to the Brookings Institution (2022).

Though no public data tracks how many Black women in staff and professional positions

have left academe, many within higher education have noted the ongoing loss of talent.

The popular narrative of the Great Resignation largely ignored Black workers. With a

recession on the horizon, their employment prospects are about to go from bad to worse.

It is time for employers to look beyond the prevailing ideas surrounding the Great

Resignation and acknowledge that their recruitment practices are still not reaching Black

workers. (Collins, 2022).

Researchers at the MIT Sloan School of Management identified a toxic corporate

culture as the strongest predictor of industry-adjusted attrition for all demographic groups

and is ten times more important than compensation in predicting turnover (Mountadon-

Tomas et al., 2021; Sull et al., 2022). White-collar Black employees were more likely to

seek different jobs during the Great Resignation because of a lack of career advancement,

employer failure to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion, employer's unethical

behavior, feeling disrespected, and toxic work culture (Coqual, 2019; Rosinski, 2022).

The limited research on professional Black employees leaving their jobs by the millions

during the COVID-19 pandemic calls for empirical research to gain a deeper

understanding of Black employees' narratives of racial discrimination and perceived

toxic work culture in the years leading up to the COVID-19 pandemic and served as

catalysts for joining the Great Resignation (Chordiya 2021; Wicker, 2021)

Chapter 3: Research Method

This qualitative, narrative inquiry study aims to gain a deeper understanding of how professional Black employees' daily experiences with racial discrimination and perceived toxic work culture are as impetus for joining the Great Resignation. To address this study's purpose and be consistent with the qualitative paradigm, I used a narrative inquiry approach to collect data through storytelling to meet the study's purpose and provide data for the literature gap on Black employees' narratives of racial discrimination and toxic work culture as incentives for joining the Great Resignation. In this study, a narrative inquiry research design (Clandinin, 2016) allows for collecting detailed participant's stories, and such a design has been previously used to deconstruct Black employee narratives of workplace relationships (McKinney et al., 2022; Wicker, 2021).

This chapter will provide thorough information on the research method and rationale for utilizing the narrative inquiry approach. In Chapter 3, I present the rationale for the participant selection strategy, data collection strategies and data analysis, the role of the researcher, evaluation methods for the trustworthiness of data, ethical considerations, and a chapter summary.

Research Design and Rationale

Narrative inquiry is a qualitative research design that captures participants' stories to understand the connection between participants' storytelling and their daily experiences (Clandinin, 2016). Using a context-rich interpretive approach, investigating professional Black employees' daily experiences with racial discrimination and perceived toxic work culture as triggers for joining the Great Resignation can offer

recommendations for future research. After the extensive literature review on the central topic, the central research question is: *How do professional Black employees narrate their daily experiences with racial discrimination and toxic work culture as catalysts for joining the Great Resignation?*

Social constructivists such as Gergen (1998) wrote that narrative emphasizes the contextual construction in social relations and daily life experiences (Merriam & Grenier, 2019). Narrative inquiry allows for presenting detailed participant descriptions through storytelling and can also be a valuable research method for developing a detailed understanding of human experiences as they are being lived daily (Clandinin, 2022; Webster & Mertova, 2012). In the narrative inquiry tradition, I expected participants' stories to be interesting and rich in information, including a social context to answer the research question. This study is grounded in a hermeneutic approach that focuses on how human experience is expressed through storytelling (Clandinin, 2022).

Although other qualitative methods and designs exist, such as phenomenology, grounded theory, and case study, these designs are used to gather data based on the participants' experiences to communicate common understandings at specific points in time (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). A narrative inquiry approach permits the researcher to present a detailed picture of the participant's daily experience, including examining complex data of critical events that influence the daily decision-making and reactions to such events (Webster & Mertova, 2007). To provide an accurate and data-rich narrative study, I conducted online interviews and recordings of the daily experiences of a purposeful sample of six participants. The sample population for my study met the

following inclusion criteria: adults over the age of 18; identifying as professional Black or African American; employed in a U.S.-based organization for a minimum of 3 years before resignation; identity as joining the Great Resignation movement during the peak years of the COVID-19 pandemic (2020-2022); and, able and willing to provide in-depth information on the phenomena under study (see Tracy, 2019).

A narrative inquiry approach permits the researcher to present a general picture of the participant's daily experience, including examining complex data of critical events that influence daily decision-making and reactions. Using the narrative approach, I could work closely and establish trusting relationships with participants who may express discomfort when revealing critical events within their organizational setting (Moen, 2006; Webster & Mertova, 2007). Using narrative inquiry, I collected critical facts and positions (see Clandinin & Connelly, 2000) by retelling each participant's stories as captured through personal and social experiences.

Narrative inquiry is used to understand and inquire about the lived experiences of research participants, using temporality, sociality, and places to serve as specific guidelines for extending the conceptual framework (Clandinin, 2006). Professional Black employees' daily experiences with racial discrimination and toxic work culture as catalysts for joining the Great Resignation remain poorly understood (Gonzales, 2022; Hirsch, 2022; Kyere & Fukui, 2022). Original empirical results may generate new knowledge and inform employers on how the pre-pandemic era's human resources policies and practices must reflect the lessons learned on the toxic work cultures and

racial discrimination driving Black employees to a mass job exodus. (Tessema et al., 2022).

Role of the Researcher

My role as a researcher was to interview African American individuals in professional positions of executive directors to senior vice president and above who directly and indirectly experienced various levels of bullying, unethical and unfair experiences, and the consequence of these experiences on their career progression. I documented these participants' experiences relating to the fundamental research question. The research explored only the replies to the study questions, and I did not embellish my role in any other way during this research. Participants had no personal or professional affiliations or personal dealings with the researcher. I did not express any form of authority and management over the participants.

Because authentic and ethical leadership can be critical in increasing an organization's socially conscious footprint and promising future sustainability, ethical leadership begins with understanding and commitment to a leader's core values. The process of integrating unique values within personal, professional, and societal lives can begin by uncovering the values that make up the core of identities and motivators. Ethical leadership requires framing actions within an image of what should be specified in service to others. Ethical leaders must be able to articulate the vision that will invigorate them into action and want to be a part of it. Ethical leaders try to practice virtuous behavior by asking questions such as how their values, vision, and voice align with and support the organization's standard good and social footprint within the community.

Reflective journal notes were collected throughout the research study to ensure trustworthiness and reduce potential biases (Merriam & Grenier, 2019). If any personal biases are detected, they will be openly stated when transcribed responses are analyzed to minimize their effect on the participants' stories (Tracy, 2019).

Conducting interviews and relating with participants will require professional collaboration and for the researcher to take an ethical stance regarding research issues (Webster & Mertova, 2007). To develop understanding and trust, ethical issues or concerns may be shared. Trust is fundamental to qualitative research interviews to obtain the utmost accurate data. Shared trust between the interviewer and the participant is significant for collecting accurate data in a narrative research study, as the researcher anticipates that participants share deeply personal experiences (Clandinin, 2022).

Narratives of participants' experiences in qualitative interviewing may expose negative aspects of individuals, organizations, and groups, so participant confidentiality and trust must be kept within the highest standards within the data collection process (Merriam & Grenier, 2019). I did not use incentives to recruit candidates for the study sample. There were minimal impediments between the participants and the researcher, neither of whom had any transactional dealings, personal or professional, before the study. If requested, participants may exit the study without explanation or penalty (see Tracy, 2019).

Upon review of the analytic and field notes on the topic, such a research process highlighted the journey of discovering how changes affect and shape data outputs. All efforts were made to discover and understand various diverse phenomena and issues,

such as leadership development, mentorship, and career selections. As a graduate student, interviewer, and researcher, the goal is related to and reflected on the construction of ethical and moral decision-making as senior leadership within an organization's meaning and lived experiences of individuals throughout the research process.

The following ethical issues could arise upon conducting research as a conflict of interest related to the researcher's ethical background. I am an individual who has first-hand accounts of senior leadership decision-making that is of unethical caliber. Whereas, in turn, may or may not result in successful and honest interviews within the work environment. Therefore, attempting to interview critical individuals in one's work environment successfully may cause interviewees to suppress their personal experiences and characteristics or provide conflicting information regarding one's challenging perspectives and assumptions regarding the importance of senior ethical and moral leadership behaviors within an organization.

Methodology

Narrative inquiry was appropriate for this study because it is a process by which, through the stories that participants share, scholars can gain a deeper understanding of their specific human and social challenges through the individual perspective of their daily experiences, transactions, and relationships (see Clandinin, 2006). Storytelling has always been a part of the history of human culture. Throughout time, the stories told defined individuals' experiences. The strength of the narrative inquiry approach rests in the epistemological premise that individuals will inherently strive to make sense of their experiences through storytelling (Polkinghorne, 1995). However, the structure of stories

is continuously within the timeline of recent events and does not exist in a static environment. Participants' narratives are influenced by what Connelly and Clandinin (1990) termed as the three pillars of narrative analysis: *personal* and *social* (interaction); *past, present, future* (continuity); and *place* (situation). The narrative inquiry design is the three-dimensional narrative inquiry space. I will use this approach to explore participants' daily life experiences through stories of their interactions with others (see Clandinin, 2022).

According to Sliwa (2017), a researcher must learn to plan the research process to acquire the information needed to support an identified phenomenon and distinguish biases and perceptions to eliminate personal views when approaching research preparation. As Mohajan (2018) mentioned, qualitative research is an inquiry process of understanding and exploring several areas of social and human behaviors to develop organizations. To evaluate and eliminate any personal views or biases (Amin et al., 2020), a researcher must also develop self-referent skills toward cross-examining previous notions from the researcher's perspective (Shufutinsky, 2020). As a result, the research will suggest that quality, trustworthiness, and credibility concerning the research and data are presented.

The purpose of this qualitative, narrative inquiry study is to gain a deeper understanding of how professional Black employees' daily experiences with racial discrimination and perceived toxic work culture are as catalysts for joining the Great Resignation. I used an experimental, single-case study design with embedded units (Yin, 2017). To provide an accurate and data-rich narrative study and meet the Walden Ph.D.

standard for sample sizes in qualitative dissertations, I conducted data collection data through online interviews from a purposeful sample of up to 10 participants with the phenomena under study, and I kept reflective journal notes (see Clandinin, 2022; Webster & Mertova, 2007). Previously published research articles, literature, and business and government labor reports were used as archival data. The final sample size in this qualitative study will be determined by data saturation evaluated from the interview transcripts (Fusch & Ness, 2015).

The sample population for my study met the following inclusion criteria: adults over the age of 18; identifying as professional Black or African American; employed in a U.S.-based organization for a minimum of 3 years before resignation; identity as joining the Great Resignation movement during the peak years of the COVID-19 pandemic (2020-2022); and able and willing to provide in-depth information on the phenomena under study (see Tracy, 2019). The inclusion criteria of the study's sample replicate inclusion criteria from similar studies of employees joining the Great Resignation movement in the United States (Chordiya, 2022; Kyere & Fukui, 2022; Serenko, 2022).

Participant Selection Logic

Population

Through this narrative inquiry, I aimed to understand how professional Black employees' daily experiences with racial discrimination and perceived toxic work culture were as impetus joining the Great Resignation. "Characteristics of a population group are specific to that group, such as a particular individual, group, organization, or specific collection of data, and may include, for example, specific attributes, traits, experiences,

attitudes, perceptions, and impressions in the case of people" (Harkiolakis, 2017; p. 35).

The population group for this study included an estimated eight million Black Americans who left their jobs in 2021 as part of the Great resignation movement with this mass exodus of workers driven by toxic work culture and racial discrimination in the workplace (Taylor, 2022). Labor studies scholars have noted that of those joining the Great Resignation, over 80% of Blacks and indigenous people of color have experienced microaggressions and toxic leadership behavior in the workplace (Skinner-Dorkenoo et al., 2021; Williams, 2022).

Purposeful Sampling Strategies

I used a sample size of 8-10 participants in this narrative inquiry. Participants were recruited by contacting candidates through LinkedIn's professional online platform to identify initial participants who meet the inclusion criteria. Purposive sampling is a widely used technique in qualitative research to identify participants likely to provide much information about the phenomenon under investigation (Tracy, 2019). Criterion and network sampling are purposeful strategies that collect a target sample within a given population group using participants who meet the same inclusion criteria (Merriam & Grenier, 2019). Snowball sampling of a hidden population begins with a convenience sample of initial subjects because the population would not be restricted. The planned snowball participant selection strategy appears sufficient to achieve this study's eight to 10 referrals.

The process of identifying participants for the study began with an initial communication by email with a formal request to advise them of the study's objectives

and provide all informed consent form that summarizes their rights as a participant. This study aims to interview as many participants as possible without achieving over-saturation to prevent redundancy and result in no new data (Boddy, 2016). Saturation is a well-established concept for assessing the trustworthiness and quality of qualitative research. When no additional observations are required to answer the research questions, saturation occurs (Braun & Clarke, 2021).

The unit of analysis for this study is the professional Black employee. The method of purposeful sampling selection was based on identifying participants who can contribute information that will aid in determining the study's central significance (Tracy, 2019). The sample size in a narrative inquiry study is equivocal because it depends on the questions being investigated, data saturation, and the size that provides the most information, even though data saturation is less straightforward in the narrative approach than in other qualitative designs (Saunders et al., 2018; Sims et al.,2018). As the researcher, I meticulously identified study participants meeting the appropriate criteria and were willing to complete the data collection process.

Appropriate identification of the intended sample population is critical (Ellard-Gray et al., 2015). Researchers must define appropriate inclusion and exclusion criteria when designing a study and consider the impact of those decisions on the external validity of the study's results. Inclusion criteria are the essential characteristics of participants that the researcher is looking for to ensure that the study's purpose and research questions are aligned. Prescreening questions will determine whether interested

participants meet the inclusion criteria and collect demographic data. Each question will be based on self-reporting (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015).

Four basic contact information questions will be included in the demographic inventory to ascertain (a) gender, (b) years of experience, (c) industry sector, and (d) years at professional position from which the participant resigned. Prospective participants will be prescreened against the outlined criteria to ensure they have the necessary knowledge and experience to promote the necessary contribution to support the research topic. The participants will be purposefully selected from LinkedIn websites and interviewed with open-ended questions until the data collected reaches saturation. The social media platform LinkedIn was an additional area to connect with the target group because it allows effective communication. Everyone's eligibility was confirmed once they responded to any communication platforms to express an interest in participation in the study. Three to five supplementary participants were in reserve if any original participants could not complete the study for the desired information to be obtained. For example, if a participant chooses not to complete the study, a participant would be chosen from the prescreened participant reserve list to meet the proposed data collection amount for the needed outcome.

Instrumentation

Conversational interviewing is the method of choice in a study collecting data for narrative research (Clandinin, 2006). I utilized an interview script (see Appendix B) to help with the interview process in this research study. The participant gave the facts, and the researcher gathered the facts through their storytelling and semi-structured interviews

(Webster & Mertova, 2007). The instrument of semi-structured interviews facilitates participants to relay experiences told in a story and mitigates researcher bias when analyzing participants' meaning-making (Tracy, 2016).

Using a semi-structured interview implies having a constructionist view of the world, allowing the researcher and the storyteller to participate fully in the interview (DeFina & Georgakopoulou, 2019). Narrative inquiry scholars recommend conversational interviewing, so there is no pre-determined or tightly structured way of conducting the interview. A prepared interview protocol will guide the process (see Appendix C). The story of daily challenges for professional Black employees meeting the study's inclusion will be co-constructed by the storyteller and the researcher in an atmosphere of mutual trust through the interview questions (Clandinin, 2022). In this study, the interview protocol will address the study's purpose and provide answers for the CRQ: *How do professional Black employees narrate their daily experiences with racial discrimination and toxic work culture as catalysts for joining the Great Resignation*

In narrative research, stories are collected, analyzed, and presented to understand how meaning is constructed through storytelling and to explore the story as a meaning-making device, offering insight into human life. The interviewer aims to understand the subjects, their meanings, and their experiences. The interview protocol must be a researcher-developed instrument in narrative studies (Webster & Mertova, 2007). The interview protocol includes eight open-ended questions intended to encourage each interviewee to respond with relevant information regarding each question, which can later

be analyzed, synthesized, and compared to the study's other participants' data. The interview questions, followed by probing questions, may be viewed in Appendix C.

The interview questions (Appendix C) were grounded in the study's conceptual framework and from research studies conducted by the seminal authors identified in Chapter 2. Two key concepts are comprised in the study's conceptual framework and align with the purpose of the study of developing empirical research on professional Black employees' daily experiences with racial discrimination and perceived toxic work culture as catalysts for joining the Great Resignation: 1) Montaudon-Tomas' (2022) concept of *the Great Resignation and toxic work culture,* and 2) Feagin and Eckberg's (1980) concept of *racial discrimination*.

A preliminary field test was conducted to analyze and determine whether the study's interview questions, grounded in the conceptual framework and scholarly literature reviewed in Chapter 2, would produce reliable results. The field test is a commonly used method of quality audit on researcher-developed instruments (Tracy, 2019). The field test auditors include the Dissertation Committee Chair and two subject matter experts who determine the interview guide's questions and procedures' credibility, dependability, and applicability (see Lincoln & Guba, 2013). Aside from the Dissertation Chair, the two field test auditors, Dr. Daphne Halkias, the Dissertation Committee Member, and Dr. Ray Sanders Muhammad, Assistant Professor at the University of Georgia, who have published papers and related to employee experiences using African-American managers as participants in the sample (e.g., McKinney et al., 2022; Sanders-

Muhammad & Halkias, 2019; 2019a). This field testing establishes trustworthiness and credibility in the study's qualitative findings (Lincoln & Guba, 2013).

The researcher's goal in conducting narrative inquiry research is to understand participants' daily lives using narrative as an instrument (DeFina & Georgakopoulou, 2019). The stories' authenticity and substance will be maintained through the utilized narrative analysis techniques (Lewis, 2020). I kept reflective journal notes to record all relevant information, observations, and situations within individuals' storytelling of daily experiences (see Webster & Mertova, 2007).

Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection

The interview process enables one to immerse themselves in another's experiences to gain insight into that person's reality (Tracy, 2016). The interview guide was the primary source of data collection for this narrative study. Unlike a traditional interview, observations will be made, and participants' stories will be recorded, but the mannerisms in which they discuss the experience were also noted. Seminal narrative methodologists recommend using a semi-structured interview to minimize the researcher's influence and allow the participant's intentions and meaning to emerge (Clandinin, 2019). Through in-depth storytelling, participants shared their perspectives as professional Black employees whose experiences of racial discrimination and perceived toxic work culture were incentives for joining the Great Resignation. All participants were interviewed using the same protocol to ensure data saturation (see Merriam & Grenier, 2019).

I maintained field notes throughout the interview to document my thoughts, interpretations, and reflections on the narratives communicated by the participants. Furthermore, the researcher took note of any issues that support or undermine the data's trustworthiness (Fusch & Ness, 2015). As the researcher, I communicated the data collection findings to the study participants, enhancing the trustworthiness of the authentic lived experiences shared, recorded, transcribed, and reported. The final sample size will be determined by the degree of saturation of the interview data (see Merriam & Grenier, 2019). Saturation occurs when data become repetitive and do not progress in a new direction or raise new questions. In qualitative research, the study results from trustworthiness are not determined by the number of participants but by the rich, in-depth information about the phenomenon provided by individual participants (Harkiolakis, 2017). Schram (2006) suggested that the appropriate data collection sample for qualitative research is between 5-10 participants in a qualitative study because large sample sizes may pose a barrier to reaching the goals of qualitative research.

I developed semi-structured interview items grounded in the conceptual framework and the literature review. Follow-up probes will be included to provide guidance and direction during the interview. I gathered all data for each interview in the form of stories by allowing participants to speak freely and taking handwritten notes in the form of reflective journal notes. It is critical in narrative research to capture what is said and how it is said. Interviews will be recorded using the Microsoft Teams audio function to ensure accurate transcription. I will send participants a transcript of their

recorded interview and the opportunity to clarify any statements made during the interview through transcript review and member checking (see Tracy, 2019).

In supporting the narrative inquiry, 6 to 10 participants will be recruited from the LinkedIn professional platform using network and criterion sampling, two types of purposive sampling. The study will begin with ten participants anticipating evaluation of data saturation to begin at six total completed interviews. A snowball strategy gathered the remaining needed participants if saturation was not reached. Handwritten notes will be used for reflective journal notes. Data will be collected through audio-recorded online interviews, phone, or online platforms such as Facetime, WhatsApp, and Skype. The duration of data collection events will be between 30 and 40 minutes.

Open-ended questions were used, and additional in-depth questioning was administered when necessary. The question will be related to the participants discovered throughout the study. This allows participants to offer data in a storytelling fashion while maintaining participant narrative integrity (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006). Follow-up probes were used whenever there was a need for elaboration or clarification. To ensure consistency throughout the interview process, the data collection method was carefully observed while documenting the questions and responses of each participant. Biases will be monitored to mitigate their influence on the study's outcome (Clandinin, 2019; Webster & Mertova, 2007).

Before the interviews began, participants were guaranteed that the information would be used only for research purposes and that their identities would be kept entirely confidential, followed by the destruction of data collection materials after five years.

After each interview, I (a) completed data collection; (b) informed participants of the following steps within the process, (c) transcribed interviews; (d) organized the setting, plot, characters, and critical events; and (e) conducted member checks ensuring participants report revisions, clarifications, and confirmation of accurate, critical events notated. Finally, I collected reflective field notes on the data as an observer of the interview process (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). Data collection continued until all the participants were interviewed or data saturated (Fusch & Ness, 2015).

Data Analysis Plan

I developed my study's rigorous data collection and analysis methods to gain a true-to-life insight into participants' stories taken from their daily life with racial discrimination and perceived toxic work culture as triggers for joining the Great Resignation. I intended to obtain factually accurate participants who shared daily experiences and stories (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Webster & Mertova, 2007). After the data was collected, I analyzed the data and created a written detailed narrative of participants' stories. I auto-recorded participants' stories digitally and hand-wrote my reflective journal notes (see Connelly, 2016; Webster & Mertova, 2007).

The first step of the data analysis of *restorying* is a narrative data analysis method used by the researcher to gather data, analyze the story (e.g., time, place, plot, and scene), and then rewrite the data (Clandinin, 2006). The rich details of the setting and the theme will be included in the restorying process to share the context of the participant's personal experiences (Clandinin, 2022; Webster & Mertova, 2007). The second step of the data analysis for narrative inquiry studies, known as the critical events analysis approach, calls

on the researcher to gather a collection of each participant's description of critical events by providing details on place, time, characters, and significant events essential to meeting the purpose of the study (Webster & Mertova, 2007).

The second step in the critical event analysis approach required the researcher to cross-check cases with the event category's themes for comparative purposes. This hermeneutic narrative approach helped me identify meaning within stories even when these stories may not be sequential (Polkinghorne, 1988). The *hermeneutic circle* of moving between the parts and the whole narrative provided a deeper understanding of the participants' daily experiences (Freeman, 2016). When the narratives are well crafted, it permits insights and deepens empathy and understanding of the participant's subjective experiences (Freeman, 2016; Webster & Mertova, 2007). Finally, I carried out a descriptive coding strategy recommended by Saldaña (2015), assigned code to phrases and words of participants' narratives, and carefully folded the data of this study into thematic categories or themes. Completing the critical events data analysis method to the collected data allowed me to understand how professional Black employees' daily experiences with racial discrimination and toxic work culture were catalysts for joining the Great Resignation (see De Fina & Georgakopoulou, 2019).

Issues of Trustworthiness

Credibility

Credibility is the truth and confidence of data collected or views from the participant and the researcher's representation and interpretation (Papakitsou, 2020). The trustworthiness and credibility are reflected in the data of this study to avoid biases by

implementing transcript review to obtain saturation. Reviewing the transcript is member

checking to enhance the credibility of the research findings (Tracy, 2019). Gaining thick

and rich data was critical to reaching data saturation. The participants and interviews

constituted the entire data set and quality. The data quality supported the participants'

thoughts and feelings, which assisted in developing their narratives (Sutton & Austin,

2015). To ensure the participants' lived experiences are accurately represented and

respected, I will remain attentive to the narratives' structures and how they are shared

(Clandinin, 2006).

Transferability

Transferability refers to the study's findings that can be applied to other studies,

contexts, or groups to develop a new study through replication (Papakitsou, 2020).

Being transparent about the analysis results supported the study's transferability with a

rich and detailed description of context, location, and people (Connelly, 2016). This

criterion was met when the study results provided meaning to non-participants. This

primary qualitative research aims not to generalize the study but to provide results of

in-depth information on the COVID-19 pandemic (Burkholder et al., 2016). Questions

that are open-ended and specific to my research will be gathered and available for

future studies.

Dependability

Dependability refers to the stability of research findings over time (Korstjens &

Moser, 2018). A successful study outcome is achieved when participants' findings

support the recommendations. It is vital to have data credibility as this will result in

positive dependability. Appropriate strategies can be described through member checking, prolonged contact, triangulation, review of saturation, reflexivity, and peer review (Loh, 2013). However, ultimately the researcher must clarify the achievement of dependability and credibility.   For additional clarification, preserving possible successful procedures can include audit trails and detailed process logs. To ensure data reliability, the data collected was from various participants, and a detailed record of the data collection tools and processes (Miles et al., 76 2020). Checking and conducting an extensive review of the interview transcripts confirmed no noticeable inaccuracies, and data comparison with codes ensured no changes in the definition or meaning of the codes. (Hennink et al., 2016). Diverse techniques were used to ensure triangulation to acquire a complete understanding of the participants' shared experiences. The first method in this process was to conduct semi-structured interviews via Zoom. The next was to keep a detailed research journal that replicated the study's findings based on previous literature reviews. The final method was to compile the data and create topics for the evaluation process.

Confirmability

Confirmability is the degree to which researchers establish or verify study results (Papakitsou, 2020). Confirmability corroborates and confirms that results are not biased but proven facts from data collected (Connelly, 2016). The researcher's personal bias was removed during the interview process, and as with dependability, further member checking occurred throughout the study to ensure the element of each recorded interview was accurate. Spot checks and revisions for clarity throughout the study were monitored,

and the researcher and a transcriber would validate the accuracy of the data collection process. Using strategies such as an audit trail, triangulation, and a detailed researcher's journal were effective ways of achieving confirmability and providing a paper trail of the researcher's processes for a robust result of the intended study.

The consistency of the efficient approach in qualitative research design and the data analysis contended dependability characterized by honesty and rationality (Belotto, 2018) as the interpretation and presentation of the data determined the trustworthiness of the provided data in the study. To ensure other researchers could replicate the identified study or conduct a similar analysis to explore further the identified problem with a similar population group, a detailed record of each data collection tool and the process has been applied. These data collection tools and techniques ensured the study's outcome was comparable. Objectivity, like confirmability, is the step in which findings are consistent and could be repeated or duplicated (Connelly, 2016). Detailed notes will be journaled during this research of data and analysis throughout the progression of the research.

Ethical Procedures

Human experiences aligned with following the proper protocol is what this research embodied to ensure that all processes and procedures will be ethnically sound (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). To ensure the process is ethical, I followed the guidelines established by Walden University's Institutional Review Board (IRB) to avoid the harm that may develop during the study. The practicing of positive moral values can be viewed as ethics. Mandated by current regulations and ethical considerations, the IRB ensures that human subjects and participants involved in a study are protected from being

harmed or injured in any way during a study (White, 2020). According to the guidelines of Walden University, the researcher will be required to observe and comply with the ethical compliance rules and understand better how to distinguish biases and perceptions to eliminate personal views when approaching research preparation (Sliwa, 2017).

The IRB is the entity that will certify that all research conducted through Walden University fulfills the ethical standards of the University and other federal regulations that may apply. As the researcher, I know that the IRB review and approval are required before any participant recruitment or data collection can be conducted. After approval of the IRB was granted, the researcher assigned the approval number to the study and included the expiration date that would complement the study. Many ethical issues are critical components that researchers must remain aware of when negotiating the participant–researcher interview (Anthony & Danaher, 2016).

Production of a recruitment email or letter and the consent form that identified study participants were created. The role of the human participant is to serve as a data source (Tracy, 2019). It is the responsibility of the researcher to be ethical and unanimously protect the study's dignity and integrity and the participants that have agreed to dedicate time and information. As a researcher, guiding ethical and legal principles of privacy and confidentiality are critical elements of the importance of ethics owed to the participants because they trusted the researcher with personal and reliable information during data collection. During the in-depth interviews, all participants were treated professionally and provided with the courtesy of aligning their time to not interfere with

their professional or personal life. To develop a connection with each participant, I utilized active listening skills to improve open communication and comprehensibility.

Each participant who agreed and consented to the guidelines for this study decided to continue their involvement voluntarily. The in-depth interview took up to approximately 45 minutes, recorded, and field notes were captured along with engagement with each participant. When each participant interview was completed, the researcher provided each participant with the transcription to ensure the data collected was captured accurately. Additionally, the researcher advised each participant that they have the right to withdraw at any time during the study due to the content of the study.

At the time of the study, no significant ethical issues prohibited the achievement of involvement by the individuals identified as contributors. Transparency of information relating to the study informed each participant of the data collection policies and who will have access, and those parties will include the researcher and the committees of Walden University. I ensured the study results would be secured to satisfy the confidentiality of the study. The recruitment e-mail letter provided participants with information related to the research, and the informed consent form stated that there would be no monetary value for participating in the interview process.

I further advised the participants that all collected data, electronic, written, or recorded, will be securely filed in compliance with the ethical standards of five years as per Walden University standards. Had participants expressed emotional issues during the in-depth interview and displayed or requested the desire to withdraw their participation from the study, they could do so without consequence. The researcher would have noted

how their confidentiality would be protected by ensuring privacy and anonymity. To proactively manage potential conflicts of interest, precautions were taken to confirm the absence of personal or professional relationships between the researcher. The data will be archived securely for five years and then deleted from the laptop and all devices used for this study (see Kornbluh, 2015).

Summary

In Chapter 3 of this study, areas such as ethical procedures, data collection, and reliability and validity were addressed in detail. Also, this chapter of the study included the detailed research process, the role of the researcher, the participant's role, the method, the design, and the population. I identified potential research biases that may arise from the research and discussed how reflexiveness would control such biases. The recruitment of participants and data collection process were detailed as an accurate outline of the criteria for an ethical study. It was the goal of the researcher to conduct virtual interviews via Zoom/WebEx with an approximate sampling of 10-15 African American individuals who are currently or have been in positions of middle to senior leadership positions within an organization and are willing to share their experiences of with racial discrimination and toxic culture at work were as mechanisms for joining the Great Resignation. The selected participants all live in the U.S., sharing the same experience of the study's research topic.

The process of snowballing sampling to recruit additional participants would have been conducted if data saturation was not initially achieved. The sample population for my study will meet the following inclusion criteria: adults over the age of 18; identifying

as professional Black or African American; employed in a U.S.-based organization for a minimum of 3 years before resignation; identity as joining the Great Resignation movement during the peak years of the COVID-19 pandemic (2020-2022); and, able and willing to provide in-depth information on the phenomena under study (see Tracy, 2019). I conducted semi-structured open-ended questions to foster in-depth responses reflecting participants' shared experiences related to the study's phenomena.

In the narrative inquiry tradition, I expected participants' stories to produce rich and interesting information, including a context of a social nature that produced robust context to answer the research question. This study is grounded in a hermeneutic approach that focuses on how human experience is mediated through storytelling (Clandinin, 2022). This approach increased the likelihood of obtaining findings that became significant research material (Webster & Mertova, 2007). According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (1979), the core ethical principles, respect for others, beneficence, and justice, were addressed in the study's ethical procedures of this section. Chapter 4 presents the research study's findings and results of the participants' lived daily experiences.

Chapter 4: Results

The purpose of this qualitative, narrative inquiry study was to gain a deeper understanding of how professional Black employees' daily experiences with racial discrimination and perceived toxic work culture were as incentives for joining the Great Resignation. Upon completing a comprehensive literature review, I designed a central research question to address the literature gap for empirical research using a layered account approach to position Black employees' narratives of racial discrimination and toxic work culture as catalysts for joining the Great Resignation (Chordiya 2021; Kuzior et al., 2022; Wicker, 2021). The designed central research question is: *How do professional Black employees narrate their daily experiences with racial discrimination and toxic work culture as catalysts for joining the Great Resignation?* The current study results could be significant to professional practice by providing managers insight into the phenomenon known as the great resignation and highlighting how organizational leaders influenced the high 2021 turnover rates among Black employees amid the COVID-19 shutdown. (Montaudon-Tomas et al., 2022; Robertson, 2021).

I used a critical event approach (Webster & Mertova, 2007) to capture and analyze participants' narratives, addressing the study's specific management problem and purpose. I used thematic analysis of the collected data to record the primary themes throughout the participants' stories (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). The final sample size of this study was determined by data saturation evaluated from the verbatim interview transcripts of participants' stories (Fusch & Ness, 2015). The two-step critical event narrative analysis approach was used for the data analysis (Webster & Mertova, 2007).

The study results presented in this chapter were revealed through narratives directly from the voices of professional Black employees and their experiences of how racial discrimination at their jobs and a perceived toxic work culture were influences for joining the Great Resignation. In this chapter, I present information about the research setting, demographic data, data collection and analysis procedures, evidence of the qualitative data's trustworthiness, and a summation of the study results.

Research Setting

I gathered data for this narrative inquiry study using semi-structured interviews with six professional Black employees in organizations in the United States. All interviews were conducted using the Zoom meeting platform, a virtual audio conference, and a digital recorder. I received IRB approval (02-10-23-1001327) before recruiting participants or beginning data collection. I initially sent the IRB-approved recruitment letter through LinkedIn to recruit study participants. The invitation included the study's inclusion criteria and the purpose of the study.

I conducted a keyword search on LinkedIn using job titles such as vice president, director, middle manager, and senior manager leader to acquire potential participants who met the study inclusion criteria. I requested to connect using a general message in which I explained who I was and the purpose of the research study; these particular messages through the LinkedIn platform were limited to 250 words. Upon connecting with each recruit, I posted a message with the approved IRB recruitment invitation letter to the recruits who accepted my connection request. Twelve potential study recruits expressed interest through LinkedIn during the initial recruitment, but only eight of the 12

consented to participate. Of those, seven initial recruits confirmed their interest through LinkedIn; six scheduled their interview, and one did not schedule. The remaining participants were obtained through a network and snowballing sampling technique (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015).

A follow-up message with my Walden University email address was posted on LinkedIn so that interested participants could send a reply via email if they were willing to participate. Upon receiving interested participants' email responses, I replied with a formal introduction with the approved IRB consent form to review and return indicating consent. All professional participants who agreed to participate reviewed the approved IRB consent, responded with a signed electronic consent to the study, and scheduled the interview time conducive to their professional and personal schedules.

Once I received each participant's signed consent electronically and availability, I scheduled individual interview dates and times so that each participant would not feel rushed with their responses. With the scheduled interviews, I sent a calendar invite with the Zoom meeting details. I sent calendar reminders 2 days prior and 2 hours before the scheduled meeting to allow participants an opportunity to reschedule if necessary, and with this, there were three reschedules.

Demographics

All six Black professionals who participated in the research study met the study's inclusion criteria and had knowledge and experience of the phenomenon under study in this narrative qualitative study. Each of the study participants approached the study interview process with professional careers spanning between 10 to 45 years and

provided rich and valuable in-depth data relating to events driving professional Black employees to join the Great Resignation, experienced racial discrimination on the job, experienced toxic work culture on the job and lessons learned by professional Black employees after the Great Resignation.

Professional Black employees who participated in this study shared how their experience of racial discrimination at their jobs and a perceived toxic work culture were triggers for joining the Great Resignation. The demographic information gathered from study participants consisted of title, age, highest level of education, industry/sector, and total years of experience. This research's unique study participant identifiers consisted of a letter and numeric combination of P for participants and a number code: P1, P2, etc. The participant demographics are outlined in Table 1.

The participants ranged in age from 41 to 67; each had a minimal education level of at least one master's degree and approximately 10 years or more of experience in a middle to senior-level management professional position. The industry/sector extended from higher education and healthcare to energy and biopharmaceuticals, offering a diverse perspective and in-depth personal stories.

Table 1

Participants' Demographics and Characteristics

Pseudonym	Title	Industry/sector	Degree attainment	Job tenure	Age
Participant 1	Senior vice president	Healthcare	DNP	25	41
Participant 2	Director	Healthcare	Masters	20	52
Participant 3	Executive director	Higher education	PhD	16	43
Participant 4	Executive director	Biopharmaceutical	PhD	22	45
Participant 5	Vice president	Healthcare	DNP; PhD	43	66
Participant 6	Executive director	Energy & healthcare	Masters	30	52

Data Collection

After receiving IRB approval on February 10, 2023, I began the data collection phase on February 19, 2023. Upon receiving an "interest to participate" response, a consent form was sent to the potential participants, followed by an availability email asking for dates and times that appropriately aligned with the participants' schedules. Each Zoom call took approximately 45–60 minutes, and after the interview, each participant was thanked for their time and participation in the study.

In addition, after each interview, participants were provided with copies of the interpretations of the interview, and each participant was asked to review (i.e., member checking) to ensure the accuracy of the data captured. The participants were advised that if a response was not received within 24 hours of providing the transcripts, there was an assumption that the data collected and interpreted were indeed accurate. At this time, the participant's voice began the analysis process. I completed my interviewing process of professional Black/ African American individuals with at least 3 years of work experience in a leadership position, a United States resident, and over 18, and the sixth interview reached data saturation.

I concluded that data saturation was met once no new themes emerged from the interviews (Fusch & Ness, 2015). Participants were asked the same semi-structured interview questions to ensure alignment and consistency with the research topic. Occasionally, I asked probing questions for clarity to provide sufficient research data (Guest et al., 2006). The data collection process took place from February to May 2023. Qualitative research studies generally have at least five participants (Guest et al., 2020). I continued beyond the minimum to ensure the saturation of concepts and obtain comprehensive data for this study.

Each interview was recorded, transcribed, and member-checked with participants. I implemented scholarly recommendations consisting of direct communication with all participants and asking probing questions for clarity, strengthening the data collection process and enabling data saturation. No variation in the approved proposal plan was made except for the time for the semi-structured interviews. The interview duration of

two to three of the participants was extended past the quoted timeframe due to the participants' eagerness to share their lived experiences. Key themes emerged from the interviewing process, such as lack of dignity at work; employer failure in diversity, equity, and inclusion; feeling dismissed and disrespected; toxic work conditions; racial microaggressions; lack of advancement opportunities; toxic leadership behaviors; toxic organizational culture towards Black women employees; culture of fear; unfair business practices; be more entrepreneurial to have a safer exit plan; focus on one's mental and physical well-being; mentorship of the next generation; work for better working conditions for Black employees. All evidence that facilitated achieving data saturation.

The data collection process consisted of approximately 4 months. During this time, I recruited and made certain that each potential participant met the required criteria, obtained consent, scheduled interviews, transcribed interviews, and reviewed and member-checked transcriptions with each confirmed participant. The interview process began on April 1, 2023, and continued until April 24, 2023, with six virtual audio interviews using the Zoom videoconference platform and a digital recorder, with some rescheduling that was incorporated due to the travel schedules of participants. I allocated the remaining time to complete the following steps: the data collection process, member checking and data organization for analysis. All participants' cameras were turned off for audio, as outlined in the IRB-approved consent form.

A total of 12 people expressed interest in being a study participant; however, only eight consented to participate; one did not meet all criteria, and six scheduled an interview. Most of the study participants kept their original interview date and time,

except for two who requested to reschedule due to work travel. I emailed a follow-up message with an alternate date and time and was able to accommodate the participants' schedules. All study participants either replied accepted as is, no changes needed, or did not respond with any revisions or changes during the 48-hour member checking period.

As prearranged, I used a reflective journal throughout the interviewing process to make notes of insights gained from the study participants' personal stories of daily lived experiences with racial discrimination and a perceived toxic work culture and how it was as incentives for joining the Great Resignation. I used Zoom videoconference and a digital recorder to capture participants' responses and transcribed all interviews using temi.com. At the beginning of each interview, I informed all participants when the recording began and ended. Furthermore, during the member-checking/transcript review process, I reminded participants that there were no names or identifiers in the study.

Each participant shared in-depth personal stories of how, as professional Black employees, their daily experiences with racial discrimination and perceived toxic work culture were impetus for joining the Great Resignation. Participants defined meaningful work for themselves and how work conditions, racial microaggressions, lack of advancement opportunities, toxic leadership behavior, and organizational culture were a few determining factors for joining the Great Resignation and finding a more comfortable professional fit for them. I gained a deeper understanding of how professional Black employees' daily experiences with racial discrimination and perceived toxic work culture were as motivation for joining the Great Resignation.

Semi-Structured Interviews

After receiving a show of interest in the research study from potential participants who connected through LinkedIn, I emailed the approved IRB recruitment invitation letter and consent forms. Subsequently, once each potential participant reviewed the IRB-approved consent form, all recruits who responded with an electronic copy of the signed consent form as *I consent* received a follow-up message via email with available dates and times to schedule their interview. Participants responded with their available dates and times, and I scheduled their interview through a calendar invite, including the Zoom link details for connecting.

I sent a calendar reminder to consented study participants two days prior and two hours before the scheduled interview. Each interview was conducted in a private, quiet environment free of noise and distraction to produce clear recordings. I began each participant interview using the interview protocol (Appendix C), including preliminary actions, such as defining key terms related to the study, checking in to ensure privacy and a comfortable location, and whether the participants were ready to begin the interview. The interview process ended with a standardized closing epilogue for participants.

Reflective Field Notes and Journal

My reflective field notes and journal entries comprised the researcher's insights, 'thoughts, approaches of comparison with other participants' responses, feelings, and possible questions that led to follow-up questions for clarity. When researchers incorporate reflective field notes and journal entries with audio recordings, they can reflect on the participants' responses, reduce interview biases, and perform audit trials to

ensure credibility and reliable data (Clandinin, 2016). Reflective field notes and

journaling throughout an interview process allow the researchers to capture essential

information, audible observations, and any situations in the interview process that create

trustworthiness and take precautions against potential bias (Webster & Mertova, 2007). I

documented in-depth responses from my reflective field notes and journal entries that

generated passion and emotions from each participant separately but seemed to maintain

a common language, specifically around toxic cultures and leadership behaviors.

Transcript Review

The member-checking process consists of a transcript review with participants to

strengthen the study results' trustworthiness (Merriam & Grenier, 2019). All participants

were allowed to review their transcribed virtual audio recordings to inspect, correct, or

edit for improved accuracy and credibility of this study for this process. As previously

outlined within the approved IRB consent form, participants had 48 hours to review and

respond with any edits or change requests, and all participants responded positively and

in agreement with the transcript information with no requested updates or changes.

Data Analysis Procedures

Significant events impact the participant's life and are vital to the narrative data

analysis of participants' stories. Semi-structured interviews collected narrative experience

data from each volunteer research study participant. Thematic analysis is a process for

encoding qualitative information (Boyatzis, 1998). Three approaches to systematically

developing themes are theory-driven, prior research-driven, and inductive. Theory-driven

codes are obtained from either the researcher or existing theories in other research, while

inductive codes are acquired through the researcher's interpretation of the data. Coding can include prior research-driven codes (Saldana, 2015).

The coding and analyses of the data from this research study could enhance the influence of social change and were grounded in the PS and Conceptual Framework. Using thematic analysis, scholars, observers, or practitioners can use various information systemically (Tracy, 2019). Thematic analysis can be helpful in all the stages of the research inquiry process. This technique can increase the researcher's accuracy and sensitivity in understanding and interpreting observations of people, events, and situations. The thematic approach is a more useful qualitative research method because it allows for exclusion from a theoretical stricture (Boyatzis, 1998).

As explained in Chapter 3, the first step of the data analysis of *restorying* is a narrative data analysis method used by the researcher to gather data, analyze the story (e.g., time, place, plot, and scene), and then rewrite the data (Clandinin, 2006). The rich details of the setting and the theme will be included in the restorying process to share the context of the participant's personal experiences (Clandinin, 2022; Webster & Mertova, 2007). The second step of the data analysis for narrative inquiry studies, known as the critical events analysis approach, calls on the researcher to gather a collection of each participant's description of critical events by providing details on place, time, characters, and significant events essential to meeting the purpose of the study (Webster & Mertova, 2007).

The second step of the narrative inquiry design's data analysis process is named the critical event narrative analysis by Webster and Mertova (2007). In this phase, I

listed events in narratives, categorizing them as *critical, like,* or *other*. A *critical* event

significantly impacts the people involved and is characterized as an event with a unique,

illustrative, confirmatory nature. *Critical* events can only be identified after the event and

happen in an unplanned and unstructured manner (Webster & Mertova, 2007). A *like*

event is equivalent, related, and associated with a *critical* event but is not exceptional to

the same effect as the *critical* event (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Webster & Mertova,

2007). *Like* events are diverse, unusual, atypical, uncommon, and not as insightful as

critical events (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Webster & Mertova, 2007). Any other

knowledge, such as development issues or family background unrelated to *critical* or *like*

events, are categorized as *other* events in critical event analysis and regarded as

descriptive of the *critical* or *like* event (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Webster &

Mertova, 2007).

My data analysis result was developed according to narrative inquiry design

methods recommended by Webster and Mertova (2007). The critical event analysis

approach requires the researcher to cross-check cases with the event categories or themes

for comparative purposes (Webster & Mertova, 2007). This hermeneutic narrative

approach can clarify meaning within stories even when these stories are not sequential

and can be ordered as a singular piece of information in their own right (Polkinghorne,

1988).

This two-stage data analysis process aims for the researcher and participant to co-

construct meanings into a participant-guided transcript (Polkinghorne, 1995; Webster &

Mertova, 2007). Applying the critical events data analysis method to the primary data

allowed information-rich data on Black professional employees' joining the Great

Resignation to emerge in the participants' stories. Meaning can be made through

interactions with others, developing one's sense of self, and deciding how to order critical

life events to form one's reality (Clandinin, 2016). When the researcher analyzes the

participant's story, the setting's themes, and rich details are included to share the context

of the participant's personal experiences (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990; Webster &

Mertova, 2007).

The critical event analysis approach requires the researcher to cross-check the

cases with the conceptual framework's coding categories for comparison. This analytical

narrative approach helps the researcher discover meaning within the stories

(Polkinghorne, 1988). Applying the critical events data analysis method to the primary

data allowed the daily experiences of Black professional employees to emerge in the

study's final four coding categories and 14 themes, all gleaned from the thematic

analysis, as listed below:

Coding Category: <u>Events driving professional Black employees to join the Great</u>

<u>Resignation</u>

      Themes: 1) lack of dignity at work, 2) employer failure in diversity, equity, and

inclusion, 3) feeling dismissed and disrespected

Coding Category: <u>Experiences professional Black employees with racial discrimination</u>

<u>on the job</u>

      Themes: 1) work conditions, 2) racial microaggressions, 3) lack of advancement

opportunities

Coding Category: <u>Experiences professional Black employees with toxic work culture on</u>

<u>the job</u>

      Themes: 1) toxic leadership behavior, 2) toxic organizational culture towards

Black women employees, 3) culture of fear, 4) unfair business practices

Coding Category: <u>Lessons learned by professional Black employees after the Great</u>

<u>Resignation</u>

      Themes: 1) be more entrepreneurial to have a safer exit plan, 2) focus on one's

mental and physical well-being, 3) mentorship of the next generation, 4) work for better

working conditions for Black employees

      Figure 1 below visually represents the meaning and alignment of codes and

themes with the foundational elements of the study and derived from the narratives

included in this study.

Figure 1

Codes and Themes
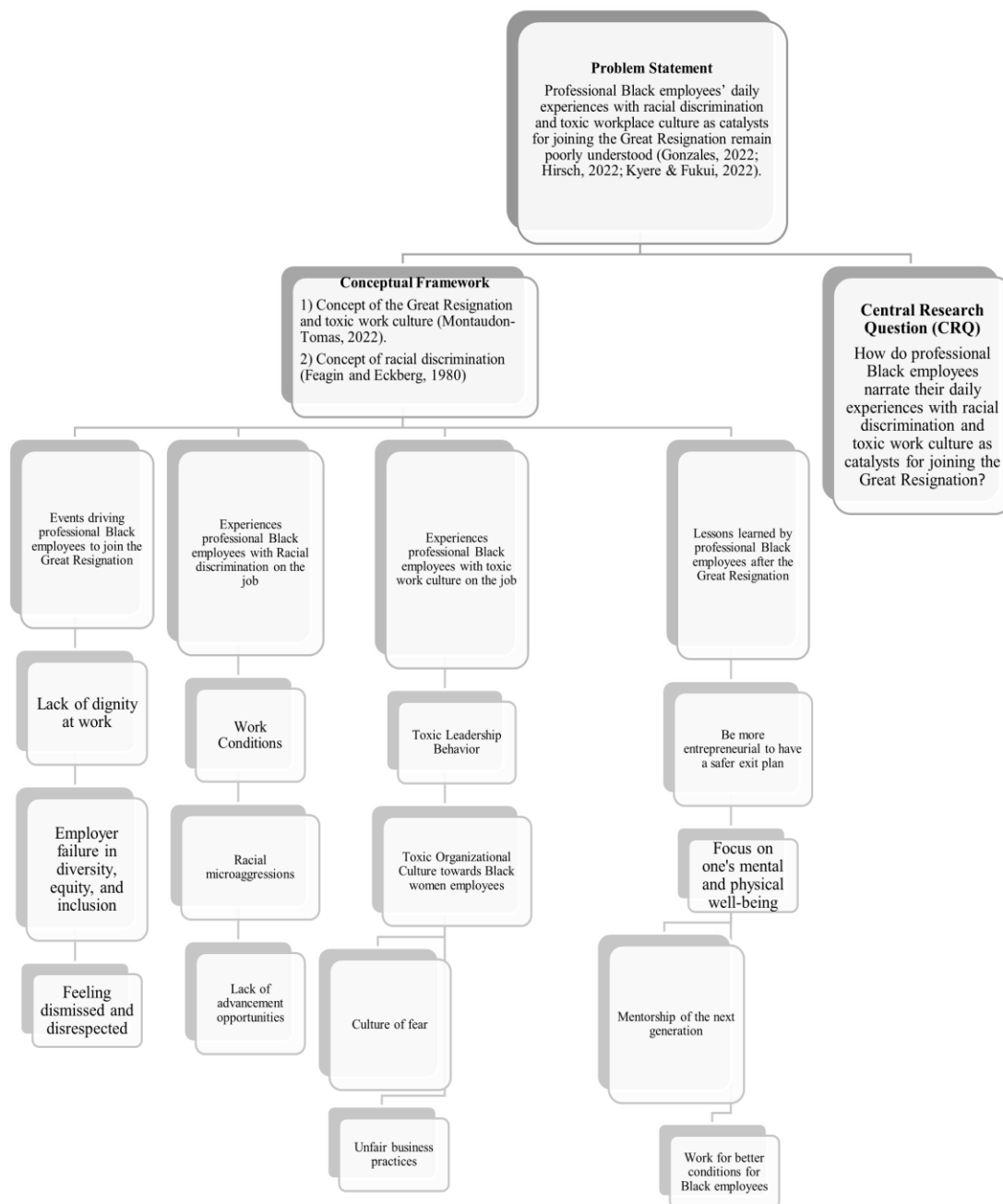
Evidence of Trustworthiness

Credibility

Trustworthiness and credibility are reflected in the data of this study to avoid biases by implementing transcript review to obtain saturation. The truth and confidence of data collection or views from the participant and researcher representation and interpretation are critical in ensuring the credibility of study results in qualitative research (Papakitsou, 2020). Reviewing the transcript is member checking to enhance the credibility of the research findings (Tracy, 2019) and provides the ability to gain thick and rich data critical to reaching data saturation. The data quality supported the participants' thoughts and feelings, which assisted in developing their narratives (Sutton & Austin, 2015). The participants and interviews constituted the entire data set and quality. To ensure the participants' lived experiences were accurately represented and respected, I remained attentive to the narratives' structures and how they were shared (Clandinin, 2006).

Transferability

Being transparent about the analysis results supported the study's transferability with a rich and detailed description of context, location, and people (Connelly, 2016). This criterion was met when the study results provided meaning to non-participants. The study's findings that can be applied to other studies, contexts, or groups to develop a new study through replication are transferability (Papakitsou, 2020). Open-ended questions specific to my research were used to gather information and data with future studies

available. This primary qualitative research aims not to generalize the study but to provide results of in-depth information on volunteers.

Dependability

The stability of research findings over time is known as dependability (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). The first method in this process for this study was to conduct semi-structured interviews via Zoom. The next was to keep a detailed research journal that replicated the study's findings based on previous literature reviews. The final method was to compile the data and create topics for the evaluation process. A successful study outcome can be achieved when participants' findings support the recommendations. It is vital to have data credibility, and this results in positive dependability. Appropriate strategies can be described through member checking, prolonged contact, triangulation, review of saturation, reflexivity, and peer review (Loh, 2013).

Confirmability

Confirmability corroborates and confirms that results are not biased but proven facts from data collected (Connelly, 2016). The degree to which researchers establish or verify study results is considered confirmability (Papkitsou, 2020). Spot checks and revisions for clarity throughout the study were monitored, and the researcher and a transcriber would validate the accuracy of the data collection process. The researcher's personal bias was removed during the interview process, and as with dependability, further member checking occurred throughout the study to ensure the element of each recorded interview was accurate. Effective ways of achieving confirmability and providing a paper trail of the researcher's processes for a robust result of the intended

study were achieved using strategies such as an audit trail, triangulation, and a detailed researcher's journal.

To ensure other researchers could replicate the identified study or conduct a similar analysis to explore further the identified problem with a similar population group, a detailed record of each data collection tool and the process was appropriately applied to the study. Detailed notes were journaled during this research of data and analysis throughout the progression of the research. The consistency of the efficient approach in qualitative research design and the data analysis contended dependability characterized by honesty and rationality (Belotto, 2018) as the interpretation and presentation of the data determined the trustworthiness of the provided data in the study. These data collection tools and techniques ensured the study's outcome was comparable. Objectivity, like confirmability, is the step in which findings are consistent and could be repeated or duplicated (Connelly, 2016).

Study Results

This narrative inquiry approach aimed to create a purpose for this research study and gather data using Black professional employees' narratives regarding their daily experiences with influences driving them to join The Great Resignation movement. I collected data to obtain accurate and realistic narratives of participants' shared experiences and stories. I supported the data trustworthiness of my study results by following narrative methodologists' recommendations on the strictures of narrative analysis, critical event analysis, and transcript review (see Clandinin, 2022; De Fina & Georgakopoulou, 2019; Webster & Mertova, 2007).

Narrative analysis involves examining data through the views of themes or storylines. Critical event analysis enabled the researcher to contextualize data and the themes produced within data as reflections of narratively significant events (Webster & Mertova, 2007). Social centeredness and the complexity of human experience are two factors that drive data analysis in the narrative inquiry methodology (Esin et al., 2014). Through narrative and critical event analysis, the researcher reflected on participants' interactions in the context of their sequence of events (Clandinin, 2016).

Participants' critical event stories illustrate their daily interactions to create stories expressing their narratives' depth and meaningful context (Clandinin, 2016; Webster & Mertova, 2007). The hermeneutic approach I used in my study is grounded in the methodological interpretation of stories involving human experiences (see Polkinghorne, 1988).

The following 14 themes emerged through stories gathered from in-depth interviews, with reinforcement from research present in the extant literature: lack of dignity at work; employer failure in diversity, equity, and inclusion, feeling dismissed and disrespected; work conditions, racial microaggressions; lack of advancement opportunities; toxic leadership behavior, toxic organizational culture towards Black women employees; culture of fear; unfair business practices; be more entrepreneurial to have a safer exit plan; focus on one's mental and physical well-being; mentorship of the next generation; work for better working conditions for Black employees. These themes are methodological interpretations of participants' storytelling in response to the central

research question. The representative verbatim quotes from individual participants allow them to retain their voices throughout this presentation of the study results.

Lack of Dignity at Work

This theme refers to events driving professional Black employees to join the Great Resignation. Research has shown that an estimated 8 million Black Americans left their jobs in 2021 as part of the Great Resignation movement (Taylor, 2022). Participants discussed what significantly influenced employee lifecycles among Black workers during the rise of the "Great Resignation."

Participant 1: "I would say what led to my resignation was a few things. I think one of the main things was the feeling that I was working in an environment where there was a lack of trust. I didn't have trust in my leader, nor did I have the trust for the senior executive team, which was really concerning. I think the mistrust was what I viewed as decisions that were not necessarily patient-focused, employee centered decisions that really didn't seem to make sense. And decisions that seemed to contrast the, the mission of the organization, it felt like there were people in the organization that were being moved into different positions without necessarily having the skill, the background, the experience to be able to support it."

Participant 5: "Well, I was in an institution where, there was, I felt like the good old boy syndrome and where there was not just a culture. If you were not in that, peer group, then your ability to move forward was a stipend. And it was also a culture where there was a lot of movement of black professionals outside of the organization. And so, and to add to that, I was also at the point of my retirement. So I decided to make a

decision, instead of fighting the system since it was so close to retirement that I would just move on. And, and I think that if that retirement issue was not there, I may have made a choice to, just begin to put out my resume and do some job seeking elsewhere because of the stress that was happening at the workplace was just not healthy. It was just not a healthy environment, and it was not a happy one. So, so that's, you know, that's, it in a nutshell.

Employer Failure in Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

This theme refers to events driving professional Black employees to join the Great Resignation. Research has shown a lack of career advancement, employer failure to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion, employer unethical behavior, and feeling disrespected (Coqual, 2019; Rosinski, 2022).

Participant 1: "Yeah, I, um, feel like that's, I've experienced racial discrimination from those that are not of the same race and those that are of the same race, which is kind of sad for those that are not of the same race. Um, what I feel like I experienced was, um, their insecurity, their jealousy, they're feeling threatened by a person of color who is equally or more skilled, has more background, more experience, more education, more certifications. Um, but for whatever reasons, because I didn't look like them and because I did not, um, I was not, I'm not the type of person that's just going to go with something just because you say, I need to go with it. I'm going to ask the question why. And if you can't articulate to me why, um, I need to follow that, what it is that you want me to follow, if it doesn't make logical sense, it's going to be a challenge for me."

Participant 6: "Yes. I think it's important for your topic that we identify that I am an African American and I identify as an African American woman, and I was born an African American woman. So, I departed my company after a 15-year career in the utility industry, based on a lack of upward mobility. I kept getting lateral moves in my career. I participated in every mentorship program, every leadership program, went to school, did everything that I was told that was on the unofficial checklist to do. And yet that did not result in any real upward mobility. And what I mean when I say that I would get promotions where there may have been a six, seven, I think the largest was a 10% increase from one department to the next. But there was no real move from one position as an individual contributor to a management position. So that is what led to my resignation.

Feeling Dismissed and Disrespected

This theme refers to events driving professional Black employees to join the Great Resignation. Research has shown significantly influenced the employee lifecycle among Black workers during the rise of the "Great Resignation" (Klotz, 2022).

Participant 4: "What led to my resignation is that I was being discriminated against. So, no matter how much I gave my, my supervisor, no matter how much I provided in work, no matter how many, recognitions I received through other colleagues from cross functions, I always had to overexert myself and be an overachiever in order for my supervisor to see that. She always categorized me as being the aggressor or being defensive. So, it became not only a physical battle, but a mental battle as well. And that

led to a lot of stress. So, I took it upon myself to continue to do personal and professional development so that I can move from underneath her."

Participant 6: So I will say with the company I was with in 2019 when I resigned, the company has a long history of family history, lots of nepotism internally of the company, lots of promotion based on who's related to whom or whose family could have donated 10 acres of land to the company back in, you know, when it started 150 years ago. And so those people's children and children's children and relationships and commitments to family just automatically put us on an unequal playing field. And it became apparent to me during my time at that company that relationships were everything. And you can't compensate with knowledge or being smart or any kind of classes. You can't compete with a 200-year familiar relationship.

Work Conditions

This theme refers to professional Black employees' experiences with racial discrimination on the job. Research has shown a mass exodus of workers driven by toxic work culture and racial discrimination in the workplace (Taylor, 2022).

Participant 1: My experiences, I mean, kind of similar to what I've described before. Um, just the negativity, the, um, the gossiping, the negative, um, the, um, the, um, saying things about people, like per people's personal lives, not evaluating people truly on their merit, their skills, their experiences, that type of thing. Um, I think toxicity sometimes breeds toxicity. And if you have people that are, um, to me, complicity means that you are supporting it. Um, lack of speaking out against it means that you are complicit. And, um, and so my experiences have been that there are those types of

people, though probably not the majority, if their behaviors are not addressed, it permeates through the system. And even if people don't like it, it becomes the norm. It becomes the culture and the strategy that they put in place will not be successful because they have to address the culture issues.

Yes. And so, my experiences are, that it's been those types of things. It's been, you know, people not really having a lot of skills, but being allowed to be in the positions because it's hard to recruit or, you know, well, but they've been here so long and, oh, I don't want to go through HR, or, you know, how HR is, or nothing's going to be done, or I'm not going to be supported, or I just don't want to deal with it. And all of those types of things. Um, as opposed to just like addressing the issue mm-hmm just address it and if you have to address it again, address it again mm-hmm, because part of changing behavior is addressing those types of issues. Um, but I didn't really find that, or what I, what I experienced was, again, um, individuals that did speak up or speak out, got mistreated or labeled to be certain things, and some of them even got terminated.

Participant 6: In my current employment, what I find in the different industries in the healthcare industry is that, um, those relationships are, relationships still matter, but it's a different kind of relationship. I find that if you don't have enough letters behind your name, if you didn't go to a certain school or pledge a certain sorority or fraternity, then your mobility again becomes stagnant. And once one person, uh, has a bad experience with you, or you may even have a bad experience with someone, whereas you should be able to have conversations as adults and get rid of whatever the negativity is. Healthcare people have very long memories and will taint your reputation, so that at your next

opportunity, you go into it with people having very strong preconceived notions about you before they ever get to know you or before they ever get to see your work. And your mental health suffers. It just becomes overwhelming, and it just becomes a job to get up and go to your job every day.

Racial Microaggressions

This theme refers to the experiences' professional Black employees with racial discrimination on the job. Research has shown due to barriers to advancement, racial microaggressions, and a lack of recognition and growth opportunities (Taylor, 2022).

Participant 1: I think the other toxic piece, if I'm being completely honest, is, um, aligning himself with people who were negative, who were bullied, people who were bullied, people who went out of their way to retaliate against people. Um, people who, um, mistreated people. I mean, if, if that organization really was on the kindness journey, which is what I heard repeatedly while I was there. then how is it that you are not holding people accountable who are not exhibiting kindness? It was a complete misalignment with organizational values. It was a disconnect between express values versus, versus, you know, um, enacted or espouse values. Right? It's to say it's, we're, we're going to say that this is how we live our values, but you do it completely differently. And so that leader, I found him to be toxic, to be, um, negative, to be someone that people just didn't trust mm-hmm. Felt was weak. Um, and, um, it just, it was challenging. And then with the senior executives, what I experienced was, uh, insecurity, um, um, jealousy, um, uh, creating a culture where if you challenge or ask questions, you get mistreated or labeled or terminated or written up or isolated or dismissed or devalued.

Participant 4: I've had several meetings with Human Resources. I asked my supervisor, take DEI courses. That was never done. Um, again, because she used the word aggression and defensive all the time with me, I asked her not to do. So. I told her that I am not the angry black woman. She basically kept on saying, you're the angry black woman, this syndrome or whatever. I'm like, I think you need to take courses on diversity and inclusion. I thought that was very imperative, but she kept declining. Um, even when HR got involved, they tried to be the mediator and say, hey, how can you give back to her? How do you make her feel more comfortable? Making sure that she doesn't feel like you're defensive? And even when I made suggestions of, we have one-on-one weekly calls and she provided me feedback on a weekly basis in writing. She declined outside of HR, but she approved with hr. So I started recording my calls, started logging different things that I said to her so that I could have it fresh in my mind so I could go back and reflect. Um, I even started sending her emails after I did things so that I could say, hey, listen, this was done.

So then it was time for performance reviews. I can always go back and that would be my documentation. So, an overall I was crossing my T's and double dotted my eyes just to make sure that I didn't drop any balls when I know that I wasn't dropping them. Um, it was times where she accused me of doing things that I didn't do or saying that I was confrontational with other colleagues on the team. I actually went back to colleagues on the team and was like, can you please explain the time where I was confrontational? And they were like, what are you talking about? And these were women, you know, Caucasian women, because again, I was only African American woman on the team. So,

at that point, she started making me, uh, start questioning myself. And like I said to you, it was not only physical draining, but it was mentally draining me as well. So those are some of the things that I had to work with. I had to learn that hr, they say they're for the people, but they're really for the company. Um, that's something that I had to learn. Um, so again, I always had to cover myself.

Lack of Advancement Opportunities

This theme refers to professional Black employees' experiences with racial discrimination on the job. Research has shown that such as fair income, dignity at work, working conditions, workplace safety, and well-being (O'Connor, 2022) all play an essential part in the lack of advancement opportunities for Black employees.

Participant 3: Okay, so in this, in my context, my director who recruited me, another black woman, it was inaction that made it toxic, the lack action, the lack of advocacy. And because she really had the power to change some things but was not onboard with being an advocate. I think she did what she could, but she didn't want to muddy the waters, it's only, she didn't want to go so much against the grain because this institution is controlled by, or the research center is controlled by its alumni. Alumni are wealthy families. Right, wealthy white women. Like senators are graduating from. So it's old, old, old money that runs the institution which is the alumni. And so for her, I believe that her position as another black woman, um, actually, you know, tied her hands a little bit and she wasn't just, you know, For the toxic leadership, it was more like the action of turning the blind eye or just letting things happen. And it wasn't until much later when I

was getting ready to leave that I found out that the toxic environment and leadership is why all the black people had left.

Participant 4: Poor performance reviews year after year, I asked her for, um, a raise and she gave me a poor performance review. And I said to her, wait, what are you talking about? And, um, she basically could not defend the poor performance review. When I asked to have a meeting with HR henceforth, I said that there for the company, um, she backtracked. She says, no, I didn't say you were a bad employee. I said, you didn't stretch enough. And I was like, stretch enough. How much more stretching do you want me to do if I'm one line at 6:45 in the morning and I'm not off until seven, eight o'clock at night? Um, again, she could not defend her reasoning were not giving me a raise, but she just said to me, let's wait and see what we can produce in the end of 2022. So at the end of that, I said to myself, you know what, there's no going back and forth because again, HR was saying to me, maybe these are some of the things that you could do to help her see your efforts. When in fact, I knew she saw my efforts because she took my work and she even made it as her own. So, I think taking my work and creating it as her own is what made me realize you got to go. So, I just said, you know what? I'm leaving.

Toxic Leadership Behavior

This theme refers to professional Black employees' experiences with toxic work culture on the job. Research has shown that over 80% of Blacks and indigenous people of color have experienced microaggressions and toxic leadership behavior in the workplace (Skinner-Dorkeno et al., 2021; Williams, 2022).

Participant 1: I probably can give tons of examples of what I saw as toxic. So, my experiences have been that I have actually experienced toxic leadership. I'll give you a few examples of the kind of the, the concern with my direct leader and then with the senior executives, with my direct leader, what I saw was someone who avoided confrontation. Someone who, immediately jumped and said yes and to every single thing that he was told to do, even if it was something that didn't align with the mission, the vision, the values, even if it was something that would tax or strain or stress the workforce, even if it was, that would disrupt the workflow, even if it was something that didn't align with the policies, the procedures that, um, it was, well, no, we have to do it because X, Y, and Z said we had to do it.

Participant 2: What has been my experience? Very toxic environment. The culture when this particular vice president, came on board. She actually came on board as an executive director and became VP in less than 24 months or less, but she was my direct report at the time. There was no director or anybody in between when she first came on board. She appeared not to be biased. She appeared not to be racist. However, there are some things that came out in conversation that led people other than me to believe such. She came on board and the entire culture changed. The environment changed the close knit of internal leadership changed, meaning that it was, everything was separate. Now it was one against the other who's doing better than the other person. And she actually did not follow through with several things and was very negative to several of the other leaders and they ended up actually resigning, yes, the majority of them resigned. Her

leadership style was not very good, she was not a very good leader, with little to no communication skills.

Toxic Organizational Culture Towards Black Women Employees

This theme refers to professional Black employees' experiences with a perceived toxic work culture on the job. Research has shown racial discrimination as "…actions or practices carried out by members of dominant racial or ethnic groups that have a differential and negative impact on members of subordinate racial or ethnic groups…" (Feagin and Eckberg, 1980, pp. 1–2).

Participant 1: What they would do is they would go and tell other people within that senior leadership team things to make, to almost, to turn those other individuals against you. Though there was no proof or no substance, it was all subjective. That's what they did. I also found that there were senior leaders that wouldn't have honest conversations with people. They would terminate people without even meeting with them. They would terminate people for no cause without having conversations with them about what was going on. And, um, I found an environment where, um, you know, if you, you couldn't speak freely, people were scared to, to say anything because of fear of retaliation. Um, and to me, those are, that's just toxic. It was gossipy. It was leaders who would spread rumors and say negative things about people, executive leaders who would talk about people's personal life. Um, it maybe because they disagreed with it or had judgment towards it. Um, it was just one of the most toxic environments I think I have ever worked in, in my entire 25 years of working as a nurse. Um, and it is an environment that I think is destructive. And to be honest, it's not sustainable.

Participant 2: So, my resignation led to somewhat of a forced resignation, but a well-needed resignation. I was actually planning to resign due to the fact that there was no growth within my current position. And the leadership did not feel that I was capable of growth. And le leadership felt as if was not recognizing the work that I was doing. And so it became a mutual understanding that I would resign with them, with the ability to return. Pretty much that's my base, that's my real base of resigning. Okay.

Culture of Fear

This theme refers to professional Black employees' experiences with a perceived toxic work culture on the job. Research has shown a toxic corporate culture as the strongest predictor of industry-adjusted attrition (Mountadon-Tomas et al., 2021; Sull et al., 2022)

Participant 1: So that culture of fear, right? Like, if you say something, then this is going to happen. You're retaliated against, there's a culture of fear. There's the culture that you can't speak up, um, because something is going to happen to you. Um, so I mean, I can tell you I've experienced some of those things directly and indirectly to where it's, at one point I said, well, why haven't I even going to say anything? I remember there was a time that I asked a question in a leadership meeting, and the response was so dismissive and so disrespectful where the question wasn't even answered.

It was as if, well, how dare you asked this question to us. It was a completely normal question that you should be able to ask and they should be able to answer. But for whatever reason, they didn't want to. Um, and I remember being labeled as someone that was being difficult because I was asking a question. So that made me say, well, why

should I, why would I even ask a question anymore? And to be honest, I stopped asking

mm-hmm. I stopped answering, asking a question that was, um, a pivotal, pivotal

moment during my time there, because that was when I first started saying, I don't know

if this is the right place for me. From that one time when I asked that question and was

disrespected and dismissed that began, um, my thoughts around this is probably not

where I need to be.

      Participant 3: Multiple assaults on my personhood multiple assaults on my, you

know, my identity. It started, I really started to question myself as a researcher. Like, do I

really want to do this? You know, it was, it was, it became too much, and it was too

expensive. It was costing me too much. Yeah, and I had to be the victim of white people's

guilt too much.

Unfair Business Practices

      This theme refers to professional Black employees' experiences with perceived

toxic work culture on the job. Research has shown that an unfair system that deprives

workers of the total value of their output, such as fair income, dignity at work, working

conditions, workplace safety, and well-being (O'Conner, 2022).

      Participant 2: I think it was underlining racial discrimination. Prior to my

resignation I had because of the workload and the culture, I had always asked for my, my

position to be evaluated in reference to pay mm-hmm, and not until I received a African

American, shall I say director who took upon himself noticed that work that I was doing,

my work ethic was questioned why the, why, why was the pay I receiving so much less

than what it was deserved? He went on his own because I had asked prior to him, and

each time asked basically they were, we'll, look, you know, we'll review it one, one time. They reviewed it and it was like a 3% increase. But again, I didn't ask him. He took it upon himself and put the, the request in. And I actually got a substantial amount of increase which unfortunately led two weeks after my increase, he was terminated. He reported to, the vice president, the VP of cardiovascular services.

Participant 3: I think the straw that broke the catalyst back so to speak, was when I finally came back to Georgia, I still submitted like grants, and I was writing grants from the time I left to the time I came here. And that last year, I think it's January 2021, the grant that I had been applying for, about four or five years finally hit, I finally got it. But in that grant, and they knew in that grant that I wrote that I would stay in Georgia to facilitate that grant That was a part of the proposal that I submitted to the, to the national organization that was providing the money. So when things happened I was like, okay, I got the grant. Well, maybe I could ride this out a little bit longer. But then the institution changed their policy stating that you had to be working from a neighboring state, the institution is Bost and I'm in Georgia. Project was going to be in Georgia, and you had to work at, a neighboring, like a commuter state either Connecticut, Massachusetts, maybe New York, no more than like two hours away, and that meant that I could not really continue to do my work in a way that I got a grant for.

Be More Entrepreneurial to Have a Safer Exit

This theme refers to lessons learned by professional Black employees after the Great Resignation. Research has shown that Black employees' narratives of racial discrimination and perceived toxic work culture are catalysts for joining the Great

Resignation (Chordiya, 2021; Kuzior et al., 2022; Wicker, 2021). Participants discussed a variety of words of wisdom that they would provide to Black professionals entering a new job environment and what some of the pitfalls can be.

Participant 5: I just think that as young black professionals, they need to be cognizant of the realness and unconscious racism, and don't just be aware of the realness of it but to also to not let their guard down so that they get comfortable with where they are and to remember, that they are Black and when things go array in their perspective departments know that leadership will always be looking to the "fall guy" and unfortunately the Black employee is who will designated that "fall guy", just remember to be strategic in the protection of yourself, your confidence and your ability to maintain that professionalism that you know you have and have been taught to be.

Participant 6: Yes. I would say always bet on yourself. And because you're Black, always bet on black. You have to have trust in yourself, as much trust in yourself as you have in the companies you work for. And that, uh, if a company tells us to go to training to read a book or do something, we, we do that because of the company. So, my tip is to do that for yourself. Every morning I read something in the Harvard Business Review, the New York Times, Chicago Tribune, New York Post, etc. something. I read stuff every day to make sure I'm current, I'm relevant, and I know what I'm talking about. And I think we must learn to do that for ourselves, and not just because the company tells us to do that. I also think we must erase the mindset of speaking up is a bad characteristics to have.

And for example, I really am proud of the generation now, what are the kids now? Gen's, generation Z, this generation Z children, because they are not afraid to speak truth to power. I think sometimes you have to be brave enough to be the, the loudest person in the room. And I think you have to have relationships again with people that you can partner with in meetings, that's just the facts. Usually if I'm in a meeting and there are more White people than Black people, then we've probably had a meeting before the meeting to make sure that we're aligned in our thinking, so that we don't step on each other's toes, and that we, we represent a cohesive conversation, because it's important that we make what's important to us, important to our companies. An example is the Crown Act. You know, most black people have hair that grows toward the sun. And so, on my team now, there's young lady who was super, like gluing her hair edges down, down. And I just told her one day, you know if you keep treating your edges that way, all that's going to do is make you bald, and plus you don't have to do that because your hair is made to shine toward the sun. And she stopped and she was like, you don't know how freeing that was for somebody to just tell me, you don't have to do this to fit in. And so I think that we have to be very conscious of the information we give, the light, we spread the light we share with others. I also think we must be conscious of the words we speak. I hate words like that slave mentality, I hate that because the slaves fought together. So, slave mentality actually would bring people closer.

We've been accustomed to "slave owner" mentality to drive people apart, right? Yes. So just not buying into the narrative that we have become accustomed to and allowing this new generation to be as loud and visible and to just be proud of who they

are and not taking that as a bad thing. Or that there's something wrong, there's nothing wrong with being loud and expressive. There's nothing wrong with a good hearty laugh. You know, things that people will say, oh, you know that don't do this or don't, that, your hair doesn't have to be super pressed and, and blonde and hanging down to your butt. You know, there are so many little things that I just try to impart on younger workers or children I mentor, when they're entering this workforce, because there's so many lies that have been told to us for centuries.

I know when I was growing up, my parents were just like, you go to school and get you a good job. And then it's like, don't mess up on that good job, kind of thing. You just stay there for 50 years and hope you get something in the end, and nobody ever fires you. So, I would say again, bet on yourself, make yourself relevant, stay smart, knowledge can never be taken away from you, even if it's not a formal education, you don't have to be formally educated in the traditional way to be smart mm-hmm. But you can do it, do it. You know, go for it. But if something is in you, there's nothing that keeps you from picking up and reading a book, there's nothing that keeps you from reading a newspaper.

Focus on One's Mental and Physical Well-Being

This theme refers to lessons learned by professional Black employees after the Great Resignation. Research has shown that a toxic corporate culture as the strongest predictor of industry-adjusted attrition (Mountadon – Tomas et al., 2021; Sull et., 2022).

Participant 5: Don't allow their shortcomings to affect you emotionally and mentally, know that God is on your side and that there will be other opportunities. And so

you just need to do what is necessary to protect your inner self and to keep your

confidence and to always know that staying focused and very strategic is key in the

success of your next move.

Participant 6: Always take care of your health. And that's the other thing. Take

care of your health and don't let anybody fool you into thinking that health is not wealth,

because it is just that, health is wealth. I hate it when I hear people say, you know, you

must wake up at five o'clock or four o'clock in the morning to do this. No, please get

some sleep, some rest. Because as black people, we have health ailments and things that

are in our DNA that can be agitated by lack of rest and sleep, we need to rest and restore

and replenish. And so don't let people convince you to join the rat race. Run the race at

your own pace, on your own terms, and just keep yourself in check and you'll be okay.

You got to make sure not only your physical health, but definitely your mental health is

in check. Yes, and this newest generation, I am so proud of the way these young people

now talk about, I need a mental health break, I need to take a gap year, I need to take time

to just breathe. I applaud that. I think we have to give people space to be human, and it's

better for the companies in the long run, really. As an organization if you have somebody

rested, well, healthy, happy, they're going to give you their best work, continuously. And

then compensate people for the jobs that you're getting them to do fairly. That's all people

want to be treated like humans and be compensated fairly for the work they do.

Mentorship of the Next Generation

This theme refers to lessons learned by professional Black employees after the

Great Resignation. Research has shown that Black employees joined the Great

Resignation movement, leaving-early-and-mid-career jobs in droves due to barriers to advancement, lack of recognition, and growth opportunities. (Taylor, 2022)

Participant 3: I would tell young professionals to not to look at just the job and salary, evaluate the costs, like really evaluate the cost beyond the financial to look at what is it costing me health-wise, right? What is it costing me mental health-wise, right? What is it costing my family, my children? And then you'll be able to kind of make decisions that won't put you into a place where you don't want to be. I think that's it, that is what I would tell the next generation. I mean, you know, you know that that's it. I just want to thank you for doing the research and I can be a part of it.

Participant 4: What I only think I could tell someone that's coming up as an African American male or female is that don't have the imposter syndrome. Know who you are, put forth your great work, but know that you can break that glass ceiling, you can break that concrete ceiling. A lot of times they say that we can't, but we can. I think that as an African American, all I can say is "WE" are in leadership positions we should not have that crab and barrel mentality. We should always go back and be able to help and not be afraid and thinking that the next generation is going to take over our spot because they may and that really should be the ultimate goal is for them too and be ok with it, but they may also be grateful for you to help them.

And so that's where a lot of times I see as an African American woman that we tend to not do, we don't tend to give back. So, for me, my expectations and for me, my personal goal is to go back and help. So that's why I sit on these different boards because I want to be able to teach these children or the next generation of future leaders that

sometimes at the age of 20, you're not thinking about your social media pages, you're not thinking about what you're doing as you're participating in different organizations and how it can potentially affect your professional future. I'm a part of a black, Greek letter organization and we go to different picnics, parties, outings and things of that nature and we take part in photos, events, we don't think about the future.

My goal is to go back and say, hey, listen, think about your future, be mindful of how you present yourself when you're out, because a lot of times they can use that against you. I have seen where I've seen HR look at people by their names and throw their resumes in the garbage or go and look at their social media. So that's my goal is to go back and just help. I don't want to have that crab in a barrel mentality for my people, and also knowing that who we are, and we have to work harder and think harder, get all the education that you can. If your company pays for your education, use those resources. If they pay for you to go and have mentorships programs and fellowships, use those resources. A lot of times I think that we are afraid to use that, or we tend to say, hey, this is our personal time, but if you take a little bit of your personal time to develop yourself professionally, it'll go a long way.

Work for Better Working Conditions for Black Employees

This theme refers to lessons learned by professional Black employees after the Great Resignation. Research has shown that the dominant White group's unfair workplace treatment of Black workers is rooted in racial prejudice at all social levels (Cazenvave, 2017).

Participant 4: One thing I can say is I think that a lot of companies are now focusing on diversity, inclusion, and equality. However, they must go deeper because what I've realized that while we are working on DEI here in America, so is everyone globally, a lot of organizations don't have that issue because they don't look at racial profiling over n other countries, New England and the United Kingdom. These are things I learned throughout my own research. So, what I can say is, I think organizations should not only look at racial backgrounds, but also like things like the pay, right? So, a lot of times it's, as an African American woman, not only am I dealing with the racial background of working with a Caucasian woman or a Caucasian man, but also being underpaid for my services.

Participant 6: We/Leaders must allow adults to start adulting and trust people to do the jobs that they were hired and are paid to do. And then pay people, compensate people for the jobs that you're getting them to do fairly. That's all people want to be treated like humans and be compensated fairly for the work they do.

Summary

In Chapter 4, the study's results revealed a rigorous data collection and analysis process using a narrative inquiry approach. In the narrative inquiry tradition, I expected participants' stories to be interesting and rich in information, including a social context to answer the research question. This study is grounded in a hermeneutic approach that focuses on how human experience is expressed through storytelling (Clandinin, 2022). This qualitative narrative research study presented answers to the CRQ: *How do*

professional Black employees narrate their daily experiences with racial discrimination

and toxic work culture as catalysts for joining the Great Resignation?

Four coding categories emerged from the raw data grounded in the conceptual framework of this narrative qualitative study and gleaned 14 themes from the thematic analysis utilizing the critical event approach from their lived daily experiences. The four coding categories authenticated in the conceptual framework were as follows: (1) events driving professional Black employees to join the Great Resignation, (2) experiences professional Black employees with racial discrimination on the job, (3) experiences professional Black employees with toxic work culture on the job, and (4) lessons learned by professional Black employees after the Great Resignation.

The 14 themes gleaned from the six participants' stories through the critical event analysis comprised matters as follows: 1) lack of dignity at work, (2) employer failure in diversity, equity, and inclusion, (3) feeling dismissed and disrespected, (4) work conditions, (5) racial microaggressions, (6) lack of advancement opportunities, (7) toxic leadership behavior, (8) toxic organizational culture towards black women employees, (9) culture of fear, (10) unfair business practices, (11) be more entrepreneurial to have a safer exit plan, (12) focus on one's mental and physical well-being, (13) mentorship of the next generation, and (14) work for better working conditions for black employees.

To ensure the trustworthiness of this research study, I used a critical event analysis of participants' stories and member-checking of transcribed transcripts to safeguard credibility and dependability. Ultimately it is the researcher's responsibility to clarify the achievement of dependability and credibility.   Preserving possible successful

procedures can include audit trails and detailed process logs for additional illumination. To ensure data reliability, the data collected was from various participants, and a detailed record of the data collection tools and processes. No noticeable inaccuracies and data comparison with codes ensured no changes in the definition or meaning of the codes were the result of checking and conducting an extensive review of the interview transcripts.

In Chapter 5, I broaden this research study's analysis by interpreting its findings and how the data confirms, disconfirms, or extends knowledge of the subject by comparing them with the comprehensive literature review presented in Chapter 2. As construed through participants ' stories, I described how future research and new scholarly information for organizations on acknowledging and addressing toxic leadership behaviors, organizational cultures, and work environments contributed to driving professional Black employees to join the Great Resignation before and during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

The purpose of this qualitative, narrative inquiry study was to gain a deeper understanding of how professional Black employees' daily experiences with racial discrimination and a perceived toxic work culture were as incentives for joining the Great Resignation. Upon completing a comprehensive literature review, I used the narrative inquiry study approach to document the daily experiences of six Black professionals with racial discrimination and perceived toxic work culture as impetus for joining the Great Resignation.

This study is framed by two key concepts that focus on the significance of developing empirical research on professional Black employees' daily experiences with racial discrimination and perceived toxic work culture that became catalysts for joining the Great Resignation: 1) Montaudon-Tomas's (2022) concept of *the Great Resignation and toxic work culture* and 2) Feagin and Eckberg's (1980) concept of *racial discrimination*.

In this empirical investigation, I aimed to advance research and a deeper understanding of Black employees joining The Great Resignation due to the lack of research that positions Black employee's narratives of racial discrimination and toxic work culture as catalysts for joining the Great Resignation (Chordiya 2021; Kuzior et al., 2022; Wicker, 2021). This study is significant as it may drive positive social change by raising employers' awareness of Black American employees' experiences and issues that must be diligently addressed to counter long-standing toxic cultures and racial disparities in the U.S. workplace.

In this empirical investigation, I sought to advance research and contribute original qualitative data to the study's conceptual framework. A critical event analysis of the six participants' narratives revealed 14 prominent themes: (a) lack of dignity at work, (b) employer failure in diversity, equity, and inclusion, (c) feeling dismissed and disrespected, (d) work conditions, (e) racial microaggressions, (f) lack of advancement opportunities, (g) toxic leadership behavior, (h) toxic organizational culture towards black women employees, (i) culture of fear, (j) unfair business practices, (k) be more entrepreneurial to have a safer exit plan, (l) focus on one's mental and physical well-being, (m) mentorship of the next generation, and (n) work for better working conditions for Black employees.

Interpretations of the Findings

With the findings of this single case study with embedded units, I provided original, qualitative data with each participant presenting examples of issues discussed in the literature review in Chapter 2. In this section, I present and review the study's findings in the context of the four coding categories that emerged from the conceptual framework: (a) events driving professional Black employees to join the Great Resignation, (b) experiences of professional Black employees with racial discrimination on the job, (c) experiences of professional Black employees with toxic work culture on the job, and (d) lessons learned by professional Black employees after the Great Resignation.

Next, I compare these four categories with relevant concepts from the extant talent management and human resources literature presented in Chapter 2. Finally, I

provide evidence on how the primary data collected from the study's six semi-structured interviews either confirm or disconfirm existing knowledge or extend it. Extension studies, such as the present study, provide replicable evidence that may suggest new theoretical directions for future researchers (Bonett, 2012).

Events Driving Professional Black Employees to Join the Great Resignation

Scholars indicate a significant gap in the literature of empirical research on the experiences of Black employees in the workplace that drove millions to exit their jobs and join the Great Resignation (Chordiya, 2021; Kuzior et al., 2022; Wicker, 2021). My study results confirmed that dues to a lack of dignity at work, employees feeling dismissed and disrespected, and an employer's failure to adequately acknowledge diversity, equity, and inclusion, millions of professional Black employees joined the Great Resignation for amnesty. Study participants confirm that the toxic environment created by organizational leadership was one of many deciding factors that led them to choose the path to achieving professional respect and dignity. This study aligns with De Smet et al.'s (2021) claim that great companies are struggling to address the problem, and many will continue to struggle for one simple reason: they do not understand why their employees are leaving in the first place. The study results extend knowledge based on the works of Coqual (2019), Choridya (2021), Kuzior et al. (2022), and Wicker (2021) identified a literature gap for empirical research using a layered account approach to position Black employees' narratives of racial discrimination and perceived toxic work culture as incentives for joining the Great Resignation.

Experiences Professional Black Employees With Racial Discrimination on the Job

Scholars specify the need for more in-depth empirical research to understand how professional Black employees' daily experiences with racial discrimination and toxic work culture became catalysts for joining the Great Resignation (Kuzior et al., 2022). My study results confirmed that professional Black employees experience racial discrimination on the job at an alarming rate through hostile work conditions, racial microaggressions from organizational leadership, and a lack of advancement opportunities. Study participants confirm experiencing racial discrimination directly from middle and senior-level leadership.

This study aligns with Sull et al. (2022) and Lipman (2017), who stated that corporate culture would be a reliable predictor of attrition when compared with remuneration and employee benefits and that a toxic corporate culture is more impactful in predicting attrition rate within an industry sector as well as a perceived toxic workplace will leave employees disengaged and angry toward their employer. The study results extend knowledge based on the works of Montaudon-Tomas et al. (2022) and O'Connor (2022) that grounded research on The Great Resignation on the anti-work theory, which postulates that work is an unfair system that deprived workers of the total value of their output and The Great Resignation is a self-styled anti-work movement that seeks to shift from the economic order that limits current work-related practices which people have been protesting, such as fair income, dignity at work, working conditions, workplace safety, and well-being (O'Connor, 2022).

Experiences Professional Black Employees With Toxic Work Culture on the Job

Scholars indicate that a qualitative approach is ideal when investigating the topic of how Black employees narrate their daily experiences with racial discrimination and a perceived toxic work culture as incentives for joining the Great Resignation by presenting detailed, thick descriptions rather than focusing on testing a prior hypothesis (see Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). My study results confirmed the management theory by understanding and exploring several factors that contributed to Black employee turnover intention before the pandemic and how unresolved leadership behaviors and toxic organizational cultures exacerbated circumstances leading Black employees to join The Great Resignation of 2021. Study participants confirm experiencing a perceived toxic work culture that specifically targeted Black women employees directly from leadership behaviors, creating a fear culture.

This study aligns with Taylor (2022), Coqual (2019), and Rosinski (2022), who stated that an estimated eight million Black Americans left their jobs in 2021 as part of the Great resignation movement with a mass exodus of workers driven by perceived toxic work culture and racial discrimination in the workplace, as well as professional, white-collar Black employees were likelier to seek different jobs during the Great Resignation because of a lack of career advancement, employer failure to promote diversity, feeling disrespected, and perceived toxic work culture. The study result extends knowledge based on the works of Clandinin (2016), McKinney et al. (2022), and Wicker (2021) on how a narrative inquiry approach to collect data through storytelling can provide data for the literature gap on Black employees' narratives of racial discrimination and perceived

toxic work culture as impetus for joining the Great Resignation as a means to deconstruct Black employee narratives of workplace relationships.

Lessons Learned by Professional Black Employees After the Great Resignation.

Scholars indicate that increasing professional practice may inform employers on how the pre-pandemic era's human resources policies and practices must reflect the lessons learned on the toxic work cultures and racial discrimination driving Black employees to a mass job exodus (Tessema et al., 2022). My study results confirmed that professional Black employees' experiences with the toxic behaviors of leadership, a culture of fear, and unfair business practices have created the mind state of generating a more entrepreneurial environment for themselves that can provide a safer exit plan and always remember that focusing on one's mental and physical well-being is critical to professional longevity. Study participants confirm that although an increased focus on DEI within organizations is commendable, there is still a need for better working conditions for professional Black employees and proper mentorship of the next generation of mid to senior-level leadership. This study aligns with Cazenvave (2017) and Taylor (2022), who stated that Black employees joined the Great Resignation movement, leaving-early-and-mid-career jobs in droves due to barriers to advancement, lack of recognition and growth opportunities, and the dominant White group's unfair workplace treatment of Black workers is rooted in racial prejudice at all social levels.

The study result extends knowledge of the lasting impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and its consequence on the U.S. labor market, the gap between numerous streams of research about Black employees joining The Great Resignation, and the lack

of research that positions Black employee's narratives of racial discrimination and toxic work culture as catalysts for joining the Great Resignation (Chordiya 2021; Kuzior et al., 2022; Wicker, 2021). The significance of this study is that it may drive positive social change by raising employers' awareness of professional Black American employees' experiences and issues that must be conscientiously addressed to counter long-standing toxic cultures and racial disparities in the U.S. workplace.

Limitations of the Study

Two labor market phenomena were popularized following the pandemic: the Great Resignation in 2021 and Quiet Quitting in 2022. Although some of the people who quit as part of the Great Resignation did exit from the labor force, many others found a new job, possibly with an employer offering more flexible work arrangements such as work-life balance, a work environment that was free of racial microaggressions, better pay as well as an increase in advancement opportunities. With the findings of this single case study with embedded units of original qualitative data, each participant presented examples of issues about the toxic behaviors of leadership and a perceived toxic work environment where they experienced racial microaggressions, unfair business practices, and a lack of advancement opportunities, to name a few.

Limitations of the study included potential shortcomings or weaknesses beyond the control of the researcher, which may be related to the selected research design, statistical model constraints, funding constraints, or other factors that may affect the results and conclusions of the study (Theofanidis & Fountouki, 2018). The analysis data for the study was based on self-reported data, and as the researcher, I relied upon the

spontaneous answers from all interviewed participants. While limitations of a research study are a factor that a researcher has no control over (Baron, 2010), subjectivity, the influence of personal biases, and connection or the lack thereof of researching theory are all potential limitations or barriers of a qualitative study.

The strong dependability of the study was achieved through the proper credibility of the data collected, thereby resulting in a successful study outcome from the findings of the participants that support the recommendations. For additional clarification, successful procedures such as maintaining detailed process logs, review of data saturation, and audit trails were appropriately documented. Diverse techniques were used to ensure triangulation to acquire a complete understanding of the participants' shared experiences. Appropriate strategies can be described through member checking, prolonged contact, triangulation, review of saturation, reflexivity, and peer review (Loh, 2013). Therefore, the researcher's responsibility for clarifying dependability and credibility was established. To ensure data reliability, the data collected were from various participants, and a detailed record of the data collection tools and processes (Miles et al., 2020).

Based on the findings of this study, the participants found that their ability to ascend the corporate ladder in their careers was difficult based on race, sense of belonging, lack of opportunities for advancement, perceived toxicity of organizational culture, lack of mentorship, and unfair business practices. In comparison, each participant discussed how their experiences with their previous organization were comparable with toxic organizational culture towards Black women employees and racial

microaggressions. The organization's ability to ensure executive-level diversity training was not attained.

The limitations previously suggested that would be relevant to this study are the data collection methods due to time, financial resources, and other processes, such as the participants' responses, which may be conditioned based on their perceived notions of organizational loyalty (Tracy, 2019). However, limitations such as lack of transparency due to organizational loyalty were irrelevant to this study, and each participant was eager to share their experiences with toxic leadership and organizational culture. Lastly, because the interviews were virtual, the ability to monitor the participant's nonverbal cues was not as visible as in person. Nevertheless, this did not prohibit the participants from providing all of what they desired to share regarding their experiences of events that would eventually lead to joining the Great Resignation; therefore, the findings of the study experienced limited restrictions.

Recommendations

Recommendations for Practice and Policy

To provide meaningful and productive recommendations during data collection, I aimed to ensure that I took detailed notes. These comprehensive notes were crucial to understanding and exploring professional Black employees' daily experiences with racial discrimination and toxic culture at work, how it acted as an influence for joining the Great Resignation, and the fact that this global phenomenon remains poorly understood. Braje (2022) explored the reasons behind the great resignation, especially the role of toxic organizational culture in such events; reasons include value alignment, a perception

of an unbiassed culture, the possibility of professional development, interwoven

disruptions caused by the multiple crises of the COVID-19 pandemic, violent incidents

against persons of color, social justice concerns, and political and civil unrest. However,

these crises can impact and continue to affect careers, schools, workplaces, and personal

lives in ways that will not be favorable for longevity within the workforce, thereby

defining the frameworks of care that adult learners and educators can adapt to and

respond to ongoing crises (Hansman, 2022).

According to Quader (2011), due to the escalating importance of the quality of

relationships within the workplace and the extent of the benefits of these relationships to

organizations, the formulation of diversity in emotional intelligence's fundamental role in

human survival and the organization is increasingly considered as an opportunity for

human interaction and personal development. Organizations expect to operate in the area

of the most ethical perspective possible. Increasing innovation and maintaining the

highest level of personal and corporate ethics that involve growth and development can

be crucial to the sustainability of an organization's financial, intellectual property, and

social consciousness. Ethical Leadership is "the demonstration of normatively

appropriate conduct through personal actions and interpersonal relationships, and the

promotion of such conduct to followers through two-way communication, reinforcement,

and decision-making" (Brown et al., 2005, p. 120). The linking of ethical leadership, a

moral voice, and the embedding of logic in trust and trustworthiness of Leadership are

critical factors of organizational success with a positive connection between personal and

social ethics.

Personal ethical principles are essential for a variety of reasons, as it allows leaders to more effectively lead their teams; instill a sense of trust and support in leaders; give individuals a solid basis on which to determine the most appropriate action in any situation; improves the decision-making process; set a standard of behavior; supports motivational culture. Professional ethics can be viewed as principles that govern the behavior of a person or group in a business environment and provide rules on how a person should act toward other people and institutions in such an environment. The primary difference is that a personal set of ethics refers to an individual's beliefs and values in any area of life, while professional ethics refers to a person's values within the workplace. The difference between personal and professional ethics can be viewed through a personal ethical system as a personal moral code or a person's conscience, while professional ethics are viewed as a set code of conduct that must be adhered to in the workplace.

According to McMurray et al. (2019), a component of work commitment, such as work values ethics (WVE), focuses on identifying situational and personal antecedents and has examined its ability to contribute to the outcomes of specific work efforts. "Qualitative studies identify meaning-relevant kinds of things in the world – kinds of people, kinds of actions, kinds of beliefs and interests – focusing on differences in forms of things that make a difference for meaning." (Erickson, 2011) These meanings and interests can position an organization to be highly successful, average, or fail depending on the level of the relationship between the personal and professional ethics and values of the organization's leadership. Erickson (2011) stated that a qualitative research study

seeks to discover and describe what some people do in their everyday lives and what these activities mean to them, which can express the significance of individual ethics and values and their role in corporate ethics.

Recommendations for Future Research

Upon addressing the findings and limitations of the study, future research should focus on using study participants as an introduction to an understanding of events that drove professional Black employees to join the Great Resignation and to what degree perceived toxic work cultures, racial microaggression, a lack of advancement opportunities and toxic leader behaviors contributed to it. The characteristics of ethical leadership for possible reproduction. According to Caldwell & Hayes (2016), self-awareness and reflection are needed to enhance how leaders should comply with proper ethical and socially responsible workplace standards. Therefore, it is recommended that a multifaceted outlook on authentic and ethical leadership, the level of social consciousness, and how increasing diversity and inclusion within the workplace impact organizational adjustment and adaptability.

After the review of Caliskan and Isik (2016), Dana (2016), Díaz-Fernández et al. (2018), and Madkova and Prochazka (2015) articles, the focus was frequently on growth mindset, sustainable business models, and stakeholder management as each concept is an essential component of organizational growth. However, the research area not explored was the implications of adopting the relation between the different perspectives of diversity and corporate strategy change, including control variables, such as an organization's size, performance, and diversification. Individually, each variable can

affect the relationship between implementing and sustaining change to achieve performance at high levels, including retaining competent and professional individuals of color.

According to Díaz-Fernández et al. (2018), these particular influences can create a sustainable change, which depends significantly on the strategy changes and the staff who implement these changes with a path leading to sustainable organizational growth. Upon careful review of the Caliskan and Isik (2016), Dana (2016), Díaz-Fernández et al. (2018), and Madkova and Prochazka (2015) articles, and based on my understanding of social change, this qualitative research study's exploration is critical. Therefore, it is recommended that a multifaceted outlook on authentic and ethical leadership can play a critical role in being socially conscious, how behavioral leadership patterns impact diversity and inclusion within an organization, and how an organization's adjustment and adaptability are warranted.

 Additionally, future research can offer researchers opportunities for new findings and leaders to improve their behaviors and influence socially conscious initiatives while encouraging leaders to commit themselves to self-reflection to improve the organization's growth (Caldwell & Hayes, 2016), resulting in positive social change.

Implications

An estimated eight million Black Americans left their jobs in 2021 as part of the Great resignation movement with this mass exodus of workers driven by toxic work culture and racial discrimination in the workplace (Taylor, 2022). Labor studies scholars have noted that of those joining the Great Resignation, over 80% of Blacks and

indigenous people of color have experienced microaggressions and toxic leadership behavior in the workplace (Skinner-Dorkenoo et al., 2021; Williams, 2022). Organizational leaders will benefit from this study's findings by understanding the factors that encourage unethical practices that would later lead to professional Black employees joining the Great Resignation. Organizational leaders will be able to implement policies to address the people's needs and for the organization's benefit.

As for the study's implications, Odeneye (2017) points out that a study can potentially increase employee job satisfaction. An ethical leader who exhibits most of the positive characteristics will be concerned about the well-being and flourishing of the organization's employees, and this will make employees satisfied with performing their duties. Ethical leadership reduces the rate of employee turnover and enhances commitment to organizational goals (Demirtas & Akdogan, 2015). This study may have implications for positive social change in the organizational component, such as the organization's success regarding goal attainment, profitability, the harnessing of resources, innovation, and competitiveness require the ethical competence of leaders. The successful operation of an organization depends on ethical leadership (Eisenbeiss et al., 2015).

From the findings of this study, organizational leaders will be able to tailor rewards toward employee needs, which will bring maximum motivation and reduce the tendency to get involved in unethical practices. Based on this research, establishing a conducive environment that encourages ethical practices will reduce organizational

leaders' moral disengagement and reduce instances of or perceived violation of employee psychological contracts (PC).

Increasing the number of reported liabilities of organizational leaders in unethical practices can be attributed to some things directly related to leadership with behaviors that define racial microaggressions and create a perceived toxic work culture. The need to potentially improve or change organizational factors that encourage unethical practices by organizational leadership is more urgent than ever. Understanding these factors within the organization that encourages leaders to act unethically may increase organizational leaders' ethical efficacy, reduce moral disengagement, and decrease the number of professional individuals of color exiting the organization. Increased ethical awareness, reduced moral disengagement, reduced instances of employee psychological contract violations, development, and enhanced practice of consequences to leadership will directly lead to improvements in toxic leadership behavior in the organization. According to Mayer et al. (2013), leaders strongly influence ethical standards and are viewed as the standard for positive ethical behaviors in the organization and society.

Implications for Theory

I referred to my conceptual framework to ground the study and analyze narratives and stories collected through the critical events approach (Webster & Mertova, 2007). This study is grounded in a hermeneutic approach that focuses on how human experience is mediated through storytelling (Clandinin, 2022). This approach increased the likelihood of obtaining findings that became significant research material (Webster & Mertova, 2007).

This study is framed by two key concepts that focus on the significance of developing empirical research on professional Black employees' daily experiences with racial discrimination and toxic work culture that became catalysts for joining the Great Resignation: 1) Montaudon-Tomas' (2022) concept of *the Great Resignation and toxic work culture,* and 2) Feagin and Eckberg's (1980) concept of *racial discrimination*. This study contributes to the management theory by better understanding and exploring several factors that contributed to Black employee turnover intention before the pandemic and how unresolved leadership behaviors and toxic organizational cultures exacerbated circumstances leading Black employees to The Great Resignation of 2021. This study may be significant to theory extension by contributing original, qualitative data to address a significant gap in the literature of empirical research on the experiences of Black employees in the workplace that drove millions to exit their jobs and join the Great Resignation (Chordiya 2021; Kuzior et al., 2022; Wicker, 2021).

Implications for Practice

A narrative inquiry approach was used through storytelling to meet the study's purpose and provide data for the literature gap on Black employees' narratives of racial discrimination and perceived toxic work culture as motivation for joining the Great Resignation. The significance of my study to professional practice may inform employers on how the pre-pandemic era's human resources policies and practices needed to reflect the lessons learned on the toxic work cultures and racial discrimination driving Black employees to a mass job exodus. (Tessema et al., 2022). While the pandemic shutdown temporarily paused employee turnover, organizational leaders missed an opportunity to

retain their employees by not recognizing and changing factors that led to preexisting employee turnover intentions (Robertson, 2021).

This study is significant in that findings may contain information that provides managers insight into the phenomenon known as the great resignation or the big quit, which entails the massive voluntary resignations or mass exodus of workers that have been taking place in different organizations across the globe, and to highlight how organizational leaders influenced the high 2021 turnover rates among Black employees amid the COVID-19 shutdown. (Montaudon-Tomas et al., 2022; Robertson, 2021).

Business leaders must also recognize that Black workers' barriers are grounded in years of more significant social problems, including segregation and disinvestment in Black communities (Washington, 2022). Based on my study's results and the scholarly literature on the specific management problem of professional Black employees' daily experiences with racial discrimination and toxic culture within the workplace and how it acted as triggers for joining the Great Resignation, several professional practice recommendations can be implemented by HR departments to provide higher quality and a more compliant work environment daily for all professional employees of color.

1. Organizations need to work to address the complex, structural barriers that impede the retention and promotion of professional Black employees.

2. Organizations must create a more equitable and diverse workplace where leadership considers a multistep process, such as an inclusive work environment.

3. Organizations must focus on crucial retention drivers such as an inclusive culture, effective people managers, family-sustaining wages and benefits, and transparent career pathways.

4. Organizations need to create and focus on holistic and engaging support of the BIPOC employees.

5. Organizations need to create and participate in culturally relevant and responsive programs.

6. Organizations need to create an infrastructure for institutional transformation that will help support the retention of professional BIPOC within the organization.

Conclusions

Labor studies scholars have noted that of those joining the Great Resignation, over 80% of Blacks and indigenous people of color have experienced microaggressions and toxic leadership behavior in the workplace (Skinner-Dorkenoo et al., 2021; Williams, 2022). Although research on the Great Resignation is relatively current, scholars have begun to find it necessary to examine how structural racism continues to increase the number of Black and minority employees quitting their jobs by the millions during the 2020-2022 period. Women and people of color have borne a disproportionate burden, getting pushed out of the labor market. (Donaldson, 2022). While stress, low compensation, and poor work-life balance have led many to rethink their careers, the pandemic's impacts have had an uneven effect. Although no recorded data tracks explicitly the number of Black women and other individuals of color in professional

positions that have left careers in which they have trained and obtained higher education for the ongoing loss of such talent is noted. The time has come for employers to look beyond the theories surrounding the Great Resignation and acknowledge the truth about their recruitment and retention practices and what part the organization's leadership behaviors and work culture contributes to phenomena such as The Great Resignation.

After thoroughly reviewing the participants' interview transcripts and existing literature, I have developed a better understanding of the CRQ, and using the conceptual framework to ground this study, I presented theoretical propositions that further explained the problem facing the sample of participants I was able to interview. The overall conclusion is that opportunities for further research with a variety of scopes and methodologies do exist directly focused on the dynamics of toxic leadership behaviors, perceived toxic work cultures, unfair business practices, and several other events that drove professional Black employees and other people of color to join the Great Resignation.

References

Afsar, B., & Shahjehan, A. (2018). Linking ethical leadership and moral voice: The effects of moral efficacy, trust in leader, and leader-follower value congruence. *Leadership & Organization Development Journal, 39*(6), 775–793. APA PsycInfo. https://doi.org/10.1108/LODJ-01-2018-0015

Allen, M. (2017). *The SAGE encyclopedia of communication research methods*. SAGE Publications, Inc. https://doi.org/10.4135/9781483381411

Amin, M. E. K., Nørgaard, L. S., Cavaco, A. M., Witry, M. J., Hillman, L., Cernasev, A., & Desselle, S. P. (2020). Establishing trustworthiness and authenticity in qualitative pharmacy research. *Research in Social and Administrative Pharmacy*. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sapharm.2020.02.005

Appelbaum, S. H., & Roy-Girard, D. (2007). Toxins in the workplace: Affect on organizations and employees. *Corporate Governance: The International Journal of Business in Society, 7*(1), 17–28. https://doi.org/10.1108/14720700710727087

Bacal and Associates (2022). Toxic Organizations - Welcome To The Fire Of An Unhealthy Workplace, available online at: http://work911.com/articles/toxicorgs.htm , accessed 10 April 2022

Baron, M. (2010). *Guidelines for writing research proposals and dissertations.* http://www.learningace.com/

Barrett, M. S., & Stauffer, S. L. (2009). Narrative inquiry: From story to method. In M. S. Barrett & S. L. Stauffer (Eds.), *Narrative inquiry in music education* (pp. 7–17). Springer Netherlands. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4020-9862-8_2

Belotto, M. J. (2018). Data analysis methods for qualitative research: Managing the challenges of coding, interrater reliability, and thematic analysis. *The Qualitative Report, 23*(11), 2622–2633. https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2018.3492

Blanck, P., Hyseni, F., & Wise, F. (2021). Diversity and inclusion in the American legal profession: Discrimination and bias reported by lawyers with disabilities and lawyers who identify as LGBTQ. *American Journal of Law & Medicine, 47*(1), 9–61. https://doi.org/10.1017/amj.2021.1

Boddy, C. R. (2016). Sample size for qualitative research. *Qualitative Market Research: An International Journal*, *19*(4), 426–432. https://doi.org/10.1108/QMR-06-2016-0053

Bonett, D. G. (2012). Replication-extension studies. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, *21*(6), 409-412. https://doi.org/10.1177/0963721412459512

Bonney, L., Beeler, L., & Chaker, N. N. (2022). Exploring changes in organizational purchasing behaviors brought about by COVID-19 as a catalyst for new directions in sales research. Journal of Personal Selling & Sales Management, 42(4), 339–357. https://doi.org/10.1080/08853134.2022.2132398

Braje, I. N. (2022). Can toxic organizational culture really cause the Great Resignation: In search of answers. *Full Paper Proceeding AFR-2022, 6*(3), 1–4. ISBN 978-0-6767183-1-9. http://www.researchgate.net/publication/361182961

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2021). To saturate or not to saturate? Questioning data saturation as a useful concept for thematic analysis and sample-size rationales. *Qualitative Research in Sport, Exercise and Health, 13*(2), 201–216. https://doi.org/10.1080/2159676X.2019.1704846

Browley, J. (2022). *What is the Great Renegotiation and where do black women fit? This expert weighs in.* Essence. https://www.essence.com/news/money-career/renegotiation-and-where-do-black-women-fit/

Brown, A. (2022). *The Great Resignation is growing, and Black Women are ditching their jobs. Here's why*. Finurah. https://finurah.com/2022/01/11/the-great-resignation-is-growing-and-black-women-are-ditching-their-jobs-heres-why/

Brown, M. E., Treviño, L. K., & Harrison, D. A. (2005). Ethical leadership: A social learning perspective for construct development and testing. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes, 97*(2), 117–134. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.obhdp.2005.03.002

Bruce, A., Beuthin, R., Sheilds, L., Molzahn, A., & Schick-Makaroff, K. (2016). Narrative research evolving: Evolving through narrative research. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, *15*(1). https://doi.org/10.1177/1609406916659292

Burgess, R., Leigh, A., Christian, M., & Melwani, S. (2022). "Bystander Intervention of Workplace Racial Discrimination," Dismantling Bias Conference Series: Vol. 3: Iss. 8, Article 1. Abstract of a paper presented at the Dismantling Bias event, organized by E. E. Kossek & T. J. Merriweather. Purdue University, West Lafayette, IN. https://docs.lib.purdue.edu/cgg/vol3/ iss8/1

Burkholder, G. J., Cox, K. A., & Crawford, L. M. (2016). The scholar-practitioner's guide to research design. Baltimore, MD: Laureate Publishing

Caldwell, C. & Hayes, L. A. (2016). Self-efficacy and self-awareness: Moral insights to increased leader effectiveness. *Journal of Management Development, 35*(9), 1163–1173. Emerald Insight. https://doi.org/10.1108/JMD-01-2016-0011

Caliskan, S., & Isik, I. (2016). Are you ready for the global change? Multicultural personality

and readiness for organizational change. *Journal of Organizational Change Management,*

29(3), 404–423. https://doi.org/10.1108/jocm-07-2015-0119

Cazenave, N. A. (2017). Joe R. Feagin: The social science voice of systemic racism theory. In

R. Thompson-Miller & K. Ducey (Eds.), *Systemic racism* (pp. 17–40). Palgrave

Macmillan. https://doi.org/10.1057/978-1-137-59410-5_2

Chordiya, R. (2021). A study of interracial differences in turnover intentions: The mitigating

role of pro-diversity and justice-oriented management. *Public Personnel Management*,

51(2), 235–260. https://doi.org/10.1177/00910260211061824

Clandinin, D. J. (Ed.). (2016). *Handbook of narrative inquiry: Mapping a methodology*.

Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications. https://doi.org/10.4135/9781452226552

Clandinin, D. J. (2019). *Journeys in Narrative Inquiry: The Selected Works of D. Jean*

Clandinin. Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429273896-14

Clandinin, D. J., & Connelly, F. (2000). *Narrative inquiry: Experience and story in qualitative*

research. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

https://doi.org/10.1177/1525822X0101300406

Clandinin, D. J. (2022). *Engaging in narrative inquiry* (2nd ed.). Routledge.

https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003240143

Collins, M. (2022). *The Great Resignation narrative ignores the Black experience in America*.

HR Dive. https://www.hrdive.com/news/the-great-resignation-narrative-ignores-the-

black-experience-in-america/628033/

Connelly, F. M., & Clandinin, D. J. (1990). Stories of experience and narrative inquiry. *Educational Researcher,19*(5), 2–14. doi:10.3102/0013189x019005002

Connelly, F. M., & Clandinin, D. J. (2006). *Narrative inquiry. In JL Green, G. Camilli, 8c PB Elmore (Eds.), Complementary methods for research in education*, 477-487.

Connelly, L. M. (2016). Trustworthiness in qualitative research. *Medsurg Nursing, 25*(6), 435-436. https://www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/trustworthiness-qualitative-research/docview/1849700459/se-2

Cook, I. (2021). Who is driving the Great Resignation? *Harvard Business Review.* https://hbr.org/2021/09/who-is-driving-the-great-resignation?autocomplete=true

Coqual. (2019). *Being Black in corporate America: An intersectional explanation.* https://coqual.org/reports/being-black-in-corporate-america-an-intersectional-exploration/

Dana, G. (2016). Creating a Model Culture of Management Change. *Annals of Faculty of Economics, 1*(1), 871–880.

DeChant, P. (2022). *How to face the Great Resignation in healthcare*. VITAL WorkLife. https://insights.vitalworklife.com/the-great-resignation-post

Demirtas, O., & Akdogan, A. (2015). The effect of ethical leadership behavior on ethical climate, turnover intention, and affective commitment. Journal of Business Ethics, 130, 59–67. https://doi:10.1007/s10551-014-2196-6

De Fina, A., & Georgakopoulou, A. (2019). *The handbook of narrative analysis*. John Wiley & Sons. https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118458204.ch0.

De Smet, A. D., Dowling, B., Mugayar-Baldocchi, M., & Schaninger, B. (2021). *'Great Attrition' or 'Great Attraction'? The choice is yours*. McKinsey & Company.

https://www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/people-and-organizational-

performance/our-insights/great-attrition-or-great-attraction-the-choice-is-yours.

De Smet, A. D., Dowling, B., Mugayar-Baldocchi, M., & Talloen, J. (2021). *Married to the*

job no more: Craving flexibility, parents are quitting to get it. McKinsey & Company.

https://www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/people-and-organizational-

performance/our-insights/married-to-the-job-no-more-craving-flexibility-parents-are-

quitting-to-get-it.

Díaz-Fernández, M. C., González-Rodríguez, M. R., & Simonetti, B. (2018). The Moderating

Role of Top Management Team Diversity in Strategic Change in a Multicultural

Context. *European Management Review*, 16(4), 957–973. Portico.

https://doi.org/10.1111/emre.12306

Dunaway-Seale, J. (2022). *2022 Data: Toxic company culture is fueling the Great*

Resignation. Real Estate Witch. https://www.realestatewitch.com/great-resignation-2022/

EEOC. (2020, January 24). Charge Statistics (Charges filed with EEOC) FY 1997 Through

FY 2019. https://www.eeoc.gov/statistics/charge-statistics-charges-filed-eeoc-fy-1997-

through-fy-2019

Egeruoh, F. M. (2022). *Coping with structural racism: What strategies and adaptation*

mechanisms do Blacks use to deal with perceived racial discrimination at

workplaces? [Doctoral dissertation, Yeshiva University]. ProQuest Dissertations

Publishing.

Eisenbeiss, S., Knippenberg, D., & Fahrbach, C. (2015). Doing well by doing good?

Analyzing the relationship between CEO ethical leadership and firm performance.

Journal of Business Ethics, 128, 635–651. https://doi:10.1007/s10551-014-2124-9

Ellard-Gray, A., Jeffrey, N. K., Choubak, M., & Crann, S. E. (2015). Finding the hidden

participant: Solutions for recruiting hidden, hard-to-reach, and vulnerable

populations. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods, 14*(5), 1–

10. https://doi.org/10.1177/1609406915621420

Erickson, F. (2011). Chapter 3: A history of qualitative inquiry in social and educational

research. In N. K. Denzin, & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), The SAGE handbook of qualitative

research (4th ed., pp. 43–58). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Esin, C., Fathi, M., & Squire, C. (2014). Narrative analysis: The constructionist approach. In

U. Flick (Ed.), *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Data Analysis* (pp. 203–216). SAGE

Publications, Inc. https://doi.org/10.4135/9781446282243.n14

Feagin, J. (2013). *Systemic racism: A theory of oppression*. Routledge.

https://doi.org/10.1093/cdj/bsl047

Feagin, J. R., & Eckberg, D. L. (1980). Discrimination: Motivation, action, effects, and

context. *Annual Review of Sociology*, *6*(1980), 1-20. https://www.jstor.org/stable/2946002

Fusch, P. I., & Ness, L. R. (2015). Are we there yet? Data saturation in qualitative research.

The Qualitative Report, 20(9), 1408–1416. Retrieved from

http://nsuworks.nova.edu/tqr/vol20/iss9/3'

Gergen, K. J. (1998). From control to co-construction: New narratives for the social sciences.

Psychological Inquiry, *9*(2), 101–103. https://doi:10.1207/s15327965pli0902_4

Gonzales, M. (2022). *Why Black workers are seeking new opportunities*. SHRM.

https://www.shrm.org/resourcesandtools/hr-topics/behavioral-competencies/global-and-cultural-effectiveness/pages/why-black-workers-are-seeking-new-opportunities.aspx

Gould, E., & Wilson, V. (2020). Black workers face two of the most lethal preexisting conditions for coronavirus—Racism and economic inequality. *Economic Policy Institute*. https://www.epi.org/publication/black-workers-covid/

Hancock, B., Williams, M., Manyika, J., Yee, L., & Wong, J. (2021). Race in the workplace: The Black experience in the US private sector. McKinsey. https://www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/diversity-and-inclusion/race-in-the-workplace-the-black-experience-in-the-us-private-sector?

Hansman, C. A. (2022). "We're all in this together"? Reflections on inequity during tumultuous times. *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education*, *2022*(173–174), 9–19. https://doi.org/10.1002/ace.20448

Hennink, M. M., Kaiser, B. N., & Marconi, V. C. (2016). Code saturation versus meaning saturation. Qualitative Health Research, 27(4), 591–608. https://doi.org/10.1177/1049732316665344

Hirsch, A. S. (2022). *Beyond the numbers: Creating a truly diverse organization*. SHRM. https://www.shrm.org/resourcesandtools/hr-topics/behavioral-competencies/global-and-cultural-effectiveness/pages/beyond-the-numbers-creating-a-truly-diverse-organization.aspx

Hirsch, P. B. (2021). The great discontent. *Journal of Business Strategy*, *42*(6), 439–442. https://doi.org/10.1108/JBS-08-2021-0141

Hopkins, J. C., & Figaro, K. A. (2021). The Great Resignation: An argument for hybrid

    leadership. *International Journal of Business and Management Research*, *9*(4), 393–400.

    https://doi.org/10.37391/IJBMR.090402

Jeong, S., Stawiski, S., Bukin, S., & Champion, H. (2022). *Stemming the Great Resignation*

    through leadership development. Center for Creative Leadership.

    https://cclinnovation.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/ldimpacts-3.pdf

Kaplan J. (2021). *The psychologist who coined the phrase 'Great Resignation' reveals how he*

    saw it coming and where he sees it going. 'Who we are as an employee and as a worker is

    very central to who we are.'. Business Insider. https://www.businessinsider.com/why-

    everyone-is-quitting-great-resignation-psychologist-pandemic-rethink-life-2021-

    10?r=US&IR=T

Klotz, A. (2021). Anthony Klotz on defining the great resignation. *The Verse*.

    https://www.theversemedia.com/articles/anthony-klotz-defining-the-great-resignation

Kornbluh, M. (2015). Combatting challenges to establishing trustworthiness in qualitative

    research. *Qualitative Research in Psychology, 12*, 397–414.

    https://doi:10.1080/14780887.2015.1021941

Korstjens, I., & Moser, A. (2018). Series: Practical guidance to qualitative research. Part 4:

    Trustworthiness and publishing. European Journal of General Practice, 24(1), 120–124.

    doi:0.1080/13814788.2017.1375092

Kurtulmuş, B. E. (2021). Toxic leadership and workplace bullying: the role of followers and

    possible coping strategies. *The Palgrave Handbook of Workplace Well-Being*, 751-770.

    https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-30025-8_24

Kuzior, A., Kettler, K., & Rąb, Ł. (2022). Great Resignation—ethical, cultural, relational, and personal dimensions of generation Y and Z employees' engagement. *Sustainability*, *14*(11), Article 6764. https://doi.org/10.3390/su14116764

Kyere, E., & Fukui, S. (2022). Structural racism, workforce diversity, and mental health disparities: A critical review. *Journal of Racial and Ethnic Health Disparities*. https://doi.org/10.1007/s40615-022-01380-w

Lewis, L. (2020). Finding the stories: a novice qualitative researcher learns to analyze narrative inquiry data. *Nurse researcher*, *28*(1). https://10.7748/nr.2018.e1578

Li, J.-Y., Lee, Y., Tian, S., & Tsai, W. (2021). Coping with workplace racial discrimination: The role of internal communication. *Public Relations Review*, *47*(4), 102089. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pubrev.2021.102089

Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (2013). *The constructivist credo*. Left Coast Press. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315418810

Lindsay, G. M., & Schwind, J. K. (2016). Narrative inquiry: Experience matters. *Canadian Journal of Nursing Research*, *48*(1), 14–20. https://doi.org/10.1177/0844562116652230

Linzer, M., Griffiths, E. P., & Feldman, M. D. (2022). Responding to the Great Resignation: Detoxify and rebuild the culture. *Journal of General Internal Medicine*. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11606-022-07703-1

Lipman, V. (2017). '*Inadvertent demoralization' is a real problem at work*. Psychology Today. https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/mind-the-manager/201701/inadvertent-demoralization-is-real-problem-work

Loh, J. (2015). Inquiry into issues of trustworthiness and quality in narrative studies: A

    perspective. *The Qualitative Report, 18*(33), 1-15. https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-

    3715/2013.1477

Madkova, L., & Prochazka, D. A. (2015). Leading Change in Management Education in the

    Department of Management. *Proceedings of the European Conference on Management,*

    Leadership & Governance, [s. l.], p. 248–253, 2015.

Malmendier, U. (2021), "Exposure, experience, and expertise: why personal histories matter in

    economics", *Journal of the European Economic Association*, Vol. 19 No. 6, pp. 2857-

    2894. https://doi.org/10.3386/w29336

Mayer, D. M., Nurmohamed, S., Schminke, M., Shapiro, D. L., & Trevino, L. K. (2013). 104

    Encouraging employees to report unethical conduct internally: It takes a village.

    Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes, 121, 89-103.

    doi:10.1016/j.obhdp.2013.01.002

McAlpine, L. (2016). Why might you use narrative methodology? A story about narrative.

    Eesti Haridusteaduste Ajakiri/Estonian Journal of Education, *4*(1), 32–57.

    https://doi.org/10.12697/eha.2016.4.1.02b

McArthur, N. (2022). Cultivating meaningful change for Black people in the workplace.

    Culture Amp. https://www.cultureamp.com/blog/black-people-in-the-workplace

McKinney, L., Halkias, D., & Hollis, L. (2022). Vicarious Bullying and Career Progression of

    African-American Women Academics. *Social Science Research Network*.

    http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.4111307

McMurray, A., Scott, D, and Simmers, C. A. (2019) "Work Values Ethic and Personal Discretionary Non-Work Activities." International Journal of Manpower 40(4): 704–16. https://doi.org/10.1108/ijm-04-2018-0133

Meivert, O., & Klevensparr, J. (2014). Improvement of picking operations and development of work balancing model. http://urn.kb.se/resolve?urn=urn:nbn:se:hj:diva=24082

Merriam, S. B., & Grenier, R. S. (Eds.). (2019). *Qualitative research in practice: Examples for discussion and analysis*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Merriam, S. B., & Tisdell, E. J. (2015). *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation* (4th ed.)*.* San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Miles, M. B., Huberman, M., & Saldaña, J. (2020). Qualitative data analysis: A methods sourcebook. SAGE Publications.

Mohajan, H. K. (2018). Qualitative research methodology in social sciences and related subjects. *Journal of Economic Development, Environment and People*, *7*(1), 23. https://doi.org/10.26458/jedep.v7i1.571

Monga, N., Davis, K. M., Cardona-Del Valle, A., Sieck, L., DeBenedectis, C. M., & Spalluto, L. B. (2022). Strategies to improve racial and ethnic diversity in breast imaging training and beyond. *Journal of Breast Imaging*, *4*(2), 202-208. https://doi.org/10.1093/jbi/wbac001

Montaudon-Tomas, C. M., Amsler, A., & Pinto-López, I. N. (2022). The Great Resignation and organizational culture. In A. El-Amin (Ed.), *Advances in educational marketing, administration, and leadership* (pp. 218–233). IGI Global. https://doi.org/10.4018/978-1-6684-4803-8.ch011

Ninivaggi, F. J. (2020). Consciousness and awareness. *Learned Mindfulness*, 1-29.

 https://doi:10.1016/b978-0-12-816484-6.00001-4

Marques-Sule, E., Baxi, H., Arnal-Gómez, A., Cortés-Amador, S., & Sheth, M. (2022).

 Influence of Professional Values on Attitudes towards Professional Ethics in Future

 Physical Therapy Professionals. *International Journal of Environmental Research and*

 Public Health, *19*(21). https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph192113952

Morris, D., Yee, L., (2021). 4 Ways to advance inclusion for Black employees. *Fortune*

 https://fortune.com/2021/08/08/black-employees-workers-diversity-equity-inclusion/

Muff, K., Liechti, A., & Dyllick, T. (2020). How to apply responsible leadership theory in

 practice: A competency tool to collaborate on the sustainable development goals.

 Corporate Social Responsibility and Environmental Management.

 https://doi.org/10.1002/csr.1962

O'Connor, B. (2022, January 27). *The rise of the anti-work movement.* British Broadcasting

 Corporation (BBC). https://www.bbc.com/worklife/article/20220126-the-rise-of-the-anti-

 work-movement

Odeneye, A. S. (2017). *Stakeholders' perceptions of ethical leadership: Implications for*

 organizational success (Doctoral dissertation, Walden University).

Onyeneho, L. (2022). The Great Resignation: Millions leaving the workforce [A Black

 perspective]. *Houston Defender*. https://defendernetwork.com/news/national/the-great-

 resignation-millions-leaving-workforce-might-not-return/

Oxford Analytica. (2022). *US' great resignation' is unlikely to be permanent.*

https://dailybrief.oxan.com/Analysis/DB270427/US-great-resignation-is-unlikely-to-be-

permanent

Papakitsou, V. (2020). Qualitative research: Narrative approach in sciences. *Dialogues in*

Clinical Neuroscience & Mental Health, *3*(1), 63–70.

https://doi.org/10.26386/obrela.v3i1.177

Parker, J. S., Haskins, N., Clemons, A., McClure, E., & Washington, J. (2022). Early career

Black women in school-based mental health fields: Understanding their experiences of

workplace discrimination. *Journal of School Psychology*, *92*, 49–65.

https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jsp.2022.02.004

Peterman, D. (2022). These are the 5 biggest barriers for Black professionals.

https://www.fastcompany.com/90721751/these-are-the-5-biggest-barriers-for-black-

professionals

Piacentini, J., Frazis, H., Meyer, P. B., Schultz, M., & Sveikauskas, L. (2022). *The Impact of*

COVID-19 on labor markets and inequality. US Bureau of Labor Statistics.

https://www.bls.gov/osmr/research-papers/2022/pdf/ec220060.pdf

Polkinghorne, D. E. (1988). *Narrative knowing and the human sciences.* State University of

New York Press. Choice Reviews Online, 26(01), 26-0378-26–0378.

https://doi.org/10.5860/choice.26-0378

Quader, M. S. (2011). Leadership Style and Emotional Intelligence: A Gender

Comparison. *Annamalai International Journal of Business Studies & Research*, *3*(1), 1.

Robertson, M. B. (2021). Hindsight is 2020: Identifying missed leadership opportunities to reduce employee turnover intention amid the COVID-19 shutdown. *Strategic HR Review*, *20*(6), 215–220. https://doi.org/10.1108/SHR-09-2021-0045

Rosinski, P. (2022). Diversity and inclusion 3.0. *Journal of Intercultural Management and Ethics*, *5*(1), 71-78. https://doi.org/10.35478/jime.2022.1.09

Sanders-Muhammad, R. & Halkias. D. (2019). African American women managers experiences in predominantly Black work environments: A Narrative Literature Review. Available at: *Social Science Research Network.* 3430759. www.SSRN.com https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3430759

Sanders-Muhammad, R. & Halkias. D. (2019a) African American women managers' experiences in predominantly Black work environments: A Multiple Case Study. *Proceedings of the Academy of Management 2019 Annual Meeting. Boston, Massachusetts, USA. www.academyofmanagement.org* https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3470825

Saunders, B., Sim, J., Kingstone, T., Baker, S., Waterfield, J., Bartlam, B., Burroughs, H., & Jinks, C. (2018). Saturation in qualitative research: Exploring its conceptualization and operationalization. *Quality & Quantity*, *52*(4), 1893–1907. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11135-017-0574-8

Serenko, A. (2022). The Great Resignation: The great knowledge exodus or the onset of the Great Knowledge Revolution? *Journal of Knowledge Management*. Advance Online Publication. https://doi.org/10.1108/JKM-12-2021-0920

Sharma, G., Douglas, P. S., Hayes, S. N., Mehran, R., Rzeszut, A., Harrington, R. A., ... & Mehta, L. S. (2021). Global prevalence and impact of hostility, discrimination, and harassment in the cardiology workplace. *Journal of the American College of Cardiology*, *77*(19), 2398-2409.

Shufutinsky, A. (2020). Employing use of self for transparency, rigor, trustworthiness, and credibility in qualitative organizational research methods. *OD Practitioner, 52*(1), 50-58. Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/340539936_Employing_Use_of_Self_for_Transparency_Rigor_Trustworthiness_and_Credibility_in_Qualitative_Organizational_Research_Methods

Sliwa, P. (2017). Moral Understanding as Knowing Right from Wrong. *Ethics*, 127(3), 521–552. https://doi.org/10.1086/690011

Simon, M. K., & Goes, J. (2013). *Scope, limitations, and delimitations*. Accessed from: www.dissertationrecipes.com

Skinner-Dorkenoo, A. L., Sarmal, A., André, C. J., & Rogbeer, K. G. (2021). How Microaggressions Reinforce and Perpetuate Systemic Racism in the United States. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*. *16*(5). 903–925 https://doi.org/10.1177/17456916211002543

Straughn, S., & Richmond, R. (2022). Employee Resource Group Insights: Supporting Black Professionals in the Workplace. *Center for Creative Leadership*. https://www.ccl.org/articles/leading-effectively-articles/employee-resource-group-insights-supporting-black-professionals-in-the-workplace/

Sull, D., Sull, C., Cipolli, W., & Brighenti, C. (2022). Why every leader needs to worry about toxic culture. *MIT Sloan Management Review*. https://sloanreview.mit.edu/article/why-every-leader-needs-to-worry-about-toxic-culture/

Sull, D., Sull, C., & Zweig, B. (2022a). Toxic culture is driving the great resignation. *MIT Sloan Management Review*. https://sloanreview.mit.edu/article/toxic-culture-is-driving-the-great-resignation/

Taylor, A. (2022). *Microaggressions, diversity, and career advancement: Why Black workers are joining the Great Resignation*. Fortune. https://fortune.com/2022/04/15/microaggressions-diversity-career-advancement-why-black-workers-are-joining-the-great-resignation/

Tessema, M. T., Tesfom, G., Faircloth, M. A., Tesfagiorgis, M., & Teckle, P. (2022). The "Great Resignation": Causes, consequences, and creative HR management strategies. *Journal of Human Resource and Sustainability Studies*, *10*(1), 161–178. https://doi.org/10.4236/jhrss.2022.101011

The White House Briefing. (June 21, 2021). *US Executive Order 14035*, *2021.* https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/presidential-actions/2021/06/25/executive-order-on-diversity-equity-inclusion-and-accessibility-in-the-federal-workforce/

Theofanidis, D., & Fountouki, A. (2018). Limitations and delimitations in the research process. *Perioperative Nursing*, 7(3), 155–163. https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.2552022

Thomas, S. (2012). Narrative inquiry: Embracing the possibilities. *Qualitative Research Journal*, *12*(2), 206–221. https://doi.org/10.1108/14439881211248356

Tracy, S. J. (2019). *Qualitative research methods: Collecting evidence, crafting analysis, communicating impact.* Hoboken, New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons

Walden. (n.d.). Research ethics: Institutional review BOARD (IRB): Research ethics. Academic Guides. Retrieved September 16, 2021, from https://academicguides.waldenu.edu/research-center/research-ethics.

Wang, C. C., & Geale, S. K. (2015). The power of story: Narrative inquiry as a methodology in nursing research. *International Journal of Nursing Sciences*, *2*(2), 195–198. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijnss.2015.04.014

Washington, E. F. (2022). Recognizing and Responding to Microaggressions at Work. *Harvard Business Review Digital Articles*, 1–11. https://hbsp.harvard.edu/product/H07195-PDF-ENG?Ntt=Recognizing%20and%20responding%20to%20microaggressions%20at%20work.%20Harvard%20Business%20Review.

Webster, L., & Mertova, P. (2007). *Using narrative inquiry as a research method: An introduction to using critical event narrative analysis in research on learning and teaching*. Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203946268

White, M. G. (2020). Why human subjects research protection is important. Ochsner Journal, 20(1), 16–33. https://doi.org/10.31486/toj.20.5012

Wicker, C. J. (2021). The trenches and valleys of corporate America: A black male human resource leader's autoethnographic account. *Advances in Developing Human Resources*, *23*(4), 335-353. https://doi:10.1177/15234223211037762

Williams, J. C., Andrews, O. & Boginsky, M. (2022). Why Many Women of Color Don't Want to Return to the Office. *Harvard Business Review*. https://hbr.org/2022/05/why-many-women-of-color-dont-want-to-return-to-the-office

Williams, J. C., Yancey, J., Pereira, L., Korn, R., Causevic, E., Todd, R. and McKinnon, L. (2022a). *A data-driven approach to winning the war for talent during the Great Resignation: Ending silos between DEI, culture, and anti-sexual harassment initiatives.* Emtrain and WorkLife Law. https://emtrain.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/Research-Paper_-WorklifeLaw_Emtrain_EndingSilos.pdf

World Bank. (2022). *Global economic prospects*. http://hdl.handle.net/10986/37224

Wright-Mair, R., Kluch, Y., Swim, N., & Turick, R. (2021). Driving systemic change: Examining perceptions of high-impact practices for advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion in intercollegiate athletics. *Journal of Issues in Intercollegiate Athletics*. http://csri-jiia.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/RA_2021_29.pdf

Yin, R. K. (2015). *Qualitative research from start to finish*. Guilford publications. https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2011.1309

Zambrana, R. E., Valdez, R. B., Pittman, C. T., Bartko, T., Weber, L., & Parra-Medina, D. (2021). Workplace stress and discrimination effects on the physical and depressive symptoms of underrepresented minority faculty. *Stress and Health: Journal of the International Society for the Investigation of Stress*, *37*(1), 175–185. https://doi.org/10.1002/smi.2983

Appendix A: Recruitment Letter

Hello,

I am a doctoral student at Walden University, and I invite you to participate in my research study. This study aims to understand how professional Black employees' daily experience with racial discrimination and toxic work culture are catalysts for joining the Great Resignation.

The study is important as the findings may help inform managers insight into the phenomenon known as the great resignation or the big quit, which entails the massive voluntary resignations or mass exodus of workers that have been taking place in different organizations across the globe, in addition to highlighting how organizational leaders influenced the high 2021 turnover rates among Black employees I believe your experience would be a significant contribution to the study.

If you are interested in participating in this study, please contact me, the researcher, via email.

Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Respectfully,

Annselmer (Selma) Owens

Ph.D. Candidate – Walden University

Appendix C: Interview Protocol

Screening for Inclusion Criteria:

Participant ID: _____
Interview Date/Time: _____

Age: _____

Gender: _____
Location: _____

Years in professional position from which you resigned: _____

Industry Sector:_____
Year of Resignation: _____

Preliminary Actions: Interviewer to participants:

Thank you for accepting my invitation to participate in my study. The purpose of this qualitative, narrative inquiry study is to gain a deeper understanding of how professional Black employees' daily experience with racial discrimination and toxic work culture are as catalysts for joining the Great Resignation.

Before we get started and ensure consistency among participants' interview responses, I would like to share the definitions of terms we may use within the interview process as they are defined within this study.

Great Resignation: This term refers to a self-styled anti-work movement that seeks to shift from the economic order that limits current work-related practices which people have been protesting, such as fair income, dignity at work, working conditions, workplace safety, and well-being (O'Connor, 2022).
Racial Discrimination: This term refers to actions or practices carried out by members of dominant racial or ethnic groups that have a differential and negative impact on members of subordinate racial or ethnic groups (Feagin and Eckberg, 1980)
Racial Microaggression: This term refers to why black employees joined the Great Resignation movement leaving jobs in droves (Taylor, 2022).
Toxic Leadership Behavior: This term refers to destructive leadership behaviors and why over 80% of Blacks and indigenous people have joined the Great Resignation (Skinner-Dorkenoo et al., 2021; Williams, 2022).
Toxic Work Culture: This term is the strongest predictor of industry-adjusted attrition for all demographic groups and is ten times more important than compensation

in predicting turnover. In a toxic work culture, employees are disengaged and angry toward their employer, who practices unethical behavior and fails to enact diversity, equity, and inclusion policies driving employees to feel disrespected and demoralized (Mountadon-Tomas et al., 2021; Sull et al., 2022).

Before beginning the interview, you must be comfortable in your location and free to participate without interruptions. Do you feel this description describes your setting at this moment? Is there anyone with you, or are you in a private space? In this interview, we will discuss whatever you wish to share about yourself and your work experiences.

May I begin the interview?

1. Could you please describe the circumstances that led up to your resignation during the 2020-2022 period of The Great Resignation movement in the United States?
2. What have been your experiences as a professional Black employee with racial discrimination at your job from which you resigned?
3. What have been your experiences as a professional Black employee with toxic leadership behaviors at your job from which you resigned?
4. What have been your experiences as a professional Black employee within a toxic work culture at your job from which you resigned?
5. What were the specific circumstances that led to your resignation?
6.   Looking back on it now, how did you feel about your resignation?
7. What professional/work activities are you involved with today after your resignation, and how do you feel about where you find yourself today as a Black professional employee?
8. Is there anything more you would like to add as a professional Black employee whose work experiences led to your joining the Great Resignation movement? Any insight for young Black professionals just entering new job environments?

Examples of probes to facilitate conversations around shared facts:
"Can you provide me an example of that?"
"Can you please tell me more?"
"Is there anything else?"

Epilogue to Interviewees:
It was a pleasure, and I thank you for your time and attention throughout this interview. I will provide you with a copy of your interview transcript, as discussed in the consent to check accuracy. I will use no personal identifiers to identify you, and all participant responses will be combined for data analysis and reporting. Thank you for your time and participation in this study.