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What's My Name? Experiences of Individuals with Traditional Hawaiian Names

Natalya N. Spotkaeff
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Walden University

College of Psychology and Community Services

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Natalya Spotkaeff

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Walden University

2026

Abstract

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by

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MA, Walden University, 2017

BS, University of Hawaii, 2012

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

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Doctor of Philosophy

Psychology

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February 2026

Abstract

There is no systematic process of orienting non-Hawaiian educators to Hawaiian culture, as evidenced by name mispronunciation. The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore the experiences of individuals with traditional Hawaiian first names in a classroom environment. Critical race theory (CRT), especially the concept of microaggressions, was used as the framework for the study. Two research questions guided the study: What are the adult lived experiences with traditional Hawaiian first names encountered in academic settings during childhood? How do adults with traditional Hawaiian first names describe their experiences of race in the classroom? Semistructured interviews were conducted with 10 individuals who shared their classroom experiences with non-Hawaiian instructors. Data analysis was conducted following the guidelines set forth by Saldana (2025). Themes related to RQ1 included anxiousness, desensitization, and education as a coping skill. Themes related to RQ2 included non-discriminatory environment, cultural pride, and frustrations with their own race. Key findings indicated that individuals reported experiencing their first name being mispronounced, but had no long-term adverse effects on their psychological well-being or cultural pride. Implications for positive social change included heightened cultural awareness for faculty, together with student support to minimize name-based microaggressions.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Names of individuals, places, and objects are held in high regard in the Hawaiian culture. Names are intentional and are significant in illustrating a function or purpose (Wurdeman-Thurston & Kaomea, 2015). In the Hawaiian culture, naming a child is a sacred process. Historically, Hawaiians viewed names as the property of the individual. Hawaii had a traditional social hierarchy; therefore, the name was not only meaningful, but it also had to be suitable to the infant's specific social class and family of gods (Mokuau, 1990). Hawaiians believed that a name could influence and secure the individual's destiny (Wurdeman-Thurston & Kaomea, 2015). Traditionally, the name possesses a power that could either help or hinder the individual. If the name had no meaning or substance, then the name may attract evil forces towards the person. A name can be generated in three different ways: by a dream, a sign, or given to commemorate a specific event (Wurdeman-Thurston & Kaomea, 2015). Individuals who know the stories and meanings behind their names can find pride in who they are. Making connections to their families via their name commences the validation of their Hawaiian identity.

Background

An individual's name represents various labels, gender, language, culture, and especially their heritage. Addressing someone, specifically a student, by their first name empowers their identity and affirms their sense of belonging within the classroom community (Biernat, Zhao, & Watkins, 2024). However, naming practices can also have adverse results, such as stereotyping or exclusion (Bonnett & Sok, 2022). For those students who belong to an ethnic culture other than American, their names carry much

more significance to their cultural identity and sense of belonging. Bonnett and Sok (2022) believe that the behavior of addressing the student by their given name correctly recognizes the students' culture and self-identity, which in turn enhances the education and social development of the student throughout their adolescent years. Chakraverty (2022) concluded that incorporating the cultural and self-identity of students within the classroom environment is beneficial for all students, not just for the students of cultural diversity. By emphasizing and pronouncing students' names correctly, educators can promote multiculturalism within the classroom community.

Jagiela and Gebus (2015) postulated that the name of an individual signifies their introduction into the world as well as the onset of their life's journey. Jagiela and Gebus (2015) indicated that there are four distinct ways in which someone's name is linked to their script: (a) name is purposeful; (b) it can be given randomly; (c) given recklessly, or (d) unavoidable. Psychologically, it is impossible to anticipate what type of personality the child will have based on the name given; however, research done by Hurlock (1981) provided a list of names that have the potential for psychological threat (Mateos, 2014). Names that were average and ordinary deprive the individual of the feeling of uniqueness (Jagiela & Gebus, 2015). On the other hand, names that were extraordinary and uncommon made the bearer highly visible. For those individuals with lengthy names, the possibility for others to shorten it, which usually causes humiliation for the name bearer (Jagiela & Gebus, 2015). As children become more social outside the home, names become a method of judgment or a measurement of their attributes (Jagiela & Gebus, 2015).

Peterson et al. (2015) investigated the link between children's names and their cultural identity. The prospect of doing so is to make it easier for the dominant culture, unintentionally suggesting that their culture is too difficult or inconvenient, minimizing the attention received by the student for their name, or assisting the student to assimilate into the community. Peterson et. al. (2015) advocated for educators to acknowledge the importance of proper name pronunciation for the student's personal and cultural identity.

In the Hawaiian culture, there is much thought placed in the process of naming a child. Names may reveal themselves in dreams but also reflect the hierarchical society in which the child was born (Pukui et al. 2014). In 1860, Kamehameha IV mandated that all Hawaiian people have a surname, and moving forward, all Hawaiian children born would be given a Christian name (Pukui et al., 2014). After the annexation of Hawaii to the United States, the Hawaiian language quickly became extinct. Hawaiian words began to lose their meaning with the lack of use or misplacement of the okina (glottal stop) (Pukui et al., 2014).

Problem Statement

In the Hawaiian culture, naming a child is a sacred process. Historically, Hawaiians viewed names as the property of the individual. Hawaii had a traditional social hierarchy; therefore, the name was not only meaningful, but it also had to be suitable to the infant's specific social class and family of gods (Pukui et. al., 2014). Traditionally, the name possesses a power that could either help or hinder the individual. If the name had no meaning or substance, then the name may attract evil forces towards the person. Culturally, Hawaiians believe that an allusion was poetic and symbolic, as it is

uncommon for names to be revealed in a dream. There are significant efforts involved in naming a child. The naming process takes time and is not commonly revealed to an elder in a dream or vision. The problem is that academic environments in Hawaii schools do not prioritize the correct pronunciation of traditional Hawaiian names by educators from outside of the Hawaiian culture. There is no systematic process of integrating non-Hawaiian educators into fundamental aspects of Hawaiian culture (i.e., name pronunciation).

Correct name pronunciation is important and may require teaching and practice for those who are new to the Hawaiian culture (e.g., educators from other cultures). Knowing and pronouncing a student's name is a fundamental teaching practice. Accurate name pronunciation builds a credible rapport between students and their instructors, establishes a positive and safe classroom environment, and demonstrates care and consideration from the teacher to the student (Ladson-Billings, 1995). Many children with Hawaiian names feel discouraged and embarrassed in school with the shift to Western cultural systems (Allen et al. 2017). As of 2023, the Department of Education reported the demographic makeup of public-school teachers includes a significant representation of White (25.1%), Japanese (21.8%), and Other (24.6%) individuals. Hawaiian/Part-Hawaiian teachers comprise 10.3% of the teaching force, while Filipino teachers make up 8%. Other ethnicities represented include Hispanic (4%), Chinese (3%), and Korean (1.1%). Although many of the Hawaiian experiences are under-reported or minimized by the students themselves, there is some evidence of the existence of racial microaggressions (Kohli & Solorzano, 2012). Microaggressions are

indirect or slight, unintentional or intentional, behaviors that conjure feelings of hostility (Nadal et al. 2019). These microaggressions mostly target individuals of a marginalized group. Childhood experiences of microaggressions by educators can have a long-lasting impact on the individual's cultural identity, self-identity, and self-concept (Bonnett & Sok, 2022). Racial microaggressions within the classroom can also impact the learning process of the child as well as their worldviews. Mispronouncing a child's given name can cause the child to develop anxiety and parental resentment for choosing such a name (Fu et al. 2022). Many children with traditional Hawaiian names experience additional risks to their psychological and social well-being (Freeman & Stewart, 2021).

Mispronunciation of a child's name is a contributing factor to the devaluation of the cultural heritage during the developmental stages. The microaggressions caused by the mispronunciation of a child's name validate the racial and cultural hierarchy of minority inferiority (Kohli et al. 2017).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to explore the lived experiences of individuals with ethnic Hawaiian names in academic classroom environments. I explored the experiences of individuals with an ethnic Hawaiian first name in a classroom environment as a child. These experiences may affect the individual's worldview perspective of their own culture as well as their cultural identity, which may lead them to adjust in their adult life to minimize the anxiety and shame previously felt.

Research Questions

Research Question 1 (RQ1): What are the lived experiences of adults with traditional Hawaiian first names encountered in academic settings as children?

Research Question 2 (RQ2): How do adults with traditional Hawaiian first names describe their experiences of race in the classroom?

Theoretical Foundation

Critical race theory (CRT) is used to explore the various aspects of educational reforms, especially those of multiculturalism. CRT (1970) disputes the sluggish and stagnant pace of racial reform in the United States. Critical Race Theory presents the assumption that racism is a societal norm in the United States. I used the theory in this study to provide a central focal point for race and racism within our education system. By using CRT, these experiences can be analyzed on a larger racial scale as microaggressions and how these microaggressions affect individuals of Hawaiian ancestry with given Hawaiian names.

Nature of the Study

A qualitative design was chosen to explore the experiences of Hawaiian adults. The phenomenological form of inquiry describes the experiences of several individuals in similar situations, as the culture of the Hawaiian people. Phenomenological research identifies a shared experience and attempts to locate a universal nature of the experience and reveal the essence of the shared experience. A phenomenological study utilizes various forms of sampling; this study will use purposive sampling which participants may

be recruited via demographic questionnaires or by the snowball effect. Data were collected in a semistructured one-on-one interview.

Definitions

Racial microaggressions: brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral, and environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, negative racial slights and insults to the target person or group (Sue et al., 2007).

Name-Based microaggressions: subtle, unintentional, discriminatory comments related to an individual's name, resulting in harm or disrespect (i.e., mispronunciation; giving nicknames without permission; restructuring; or making racial assumptions based on a name. (Morrison et al., 2023).

Cultural identity: Cultural identity is the identity or feeling of belonging to a group. It is part of a person's self-conception and self-perception and is related to nationality, ethnicity, religion, social class, generation, locality, or any kind of social group that has its own distinct culture. In this way, cultural identity is both characteristic of the individual but also of the culturally identical group of members sharing the same cultural identity or upbringing (Evangelista, 2003).

Self-identity: a collection of beliefs about oneself. (Watzlawik, Guimares, Han & Jung, 2016).

Traditional Hawaiian Name: Traditional Hawaiian names have specific meanings and are usually given to a person at birth by a kupuna (family elder) or by their parents.

Critical Race Theory (CRT): a theoretical framework that views race as a social construct rather than a biological concept (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017).

Lived experience: Lived experience represents the way an individual sees the world; in this study, it is the leader's reality toward coaching (Mapp, 2008).

Assumptions

I assumed that all participants had a first name that was Hawaiian and were of Hawaiian descent. There was no quantification made of their Hawaiian descent. I assumed that all participants attended school, either public or private, and experienced being in school with an instructor who was not of Hawaiian descent at least once during the time they attended school. Lastly, I assumed that all participants answered each question truthfully and honestly.

Scope and Delimitations

This study focused on the lived experiences of individuals with Hawaiian first names in an educational setting. The sample of participants was assumed to represent the wide range of age, gender, and geographical population that creates the student body population with Hawaiian first names. Although after 10 interviews, the data collected resulted in saturation, not all potential participants were interviewed, and the sample may not represent all individuals with Hawaiian first names.

Limitations

I collected data for this study during the COVID-19 pandemic, which was a significant limitation. It was difficult to locate participants, and the willingness to participate was met with grave amounts of paranoia. It is possible that the answers to the

interview questions were short and direct, lacking true meaning of the lived experience. Although every COVID-19 precaution was made, participants may have felt uneasy and unsafe to engage in the interview.

Significance

This project can stimulate a multitude of implications for positive social change. This study explored the experiences of individuals with a traditional Hawaiian first name in academic settings. This project was significant because it dealt with a unique population, Hawaiian children. This research project can impact individuals, communities, and societal attitudes. This study can inform the teachers of the long-term psychological outcomes of this type of racial microaggression. Faculty and students can become empowered by promoting civic participation for social change. This project can address the systematic inequalities, if any, present in the classroom and promote a more inclusive academic environment.

Summary

In this qualitative phenomenological study, I interviewed adults who have traditional Hawaiian first names to explore their lived experiences in an academic setting as well as their experiences of race. In the next two chapters, I provided a framework for this study. Chapter 2 includes the identification of gaps and explores existing literature in the areas of racial microaggressions, Critical Race Theory (CRT), cultural, and self-identity. In Chapter 3, I will discuss the methodology used to collect and analyze the data, and I will report on the analysis and results in Chapter 4. In Chapter 5, I will interpret the

findings of the study, make recommendations regarding the study, discuss potential implications for positive social change, and address the limitations of the study.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Microaggressions are subtle, indirect behaviors that precipitate antagonistic feelings, regardless of whether the behavior is unintentional or intentional (Nadal et al., 2014). Microaggressions are usually geared towards members of marginalized groups. DeCuir-Gunby et al. (2023) concluded that microaggressions experienced in a school environment have a significant impact on a child's cultural identity, self-identity, and their sense of self. Experiencing microaggressions can also impede the learning process. Pennesi (2017) noted that children with names that a teacher has difficulty pronouncing correctly are either singled out or completely ignored. In a study done by Biernat et al. (2024), it was discovered that children who have their names misused or avoided by an instructor felt excluded and alienated from their classmates. Mispronunciation of a child's name can result in a multitude of psychological effects. DeCuir-Gunby et al. (2023) stated that microaggressions are viable on minority groups, which result in negative health outcomes, emotional and psychological issues, and negatively impact students' academic achievement. Recipients of microaggressions are marginalized groups, including those based on their race, gender, sexual orientation, disability, or other identities (Freeman & Stewart, 2021). Such minority racial groups include Asian, Eastern European, South American immigrants, Black Indigenous, and people of color. Microaggressions are also apparent towards aboriginal peoples of Alaska, Canada, or Native Americans. Research concludes that due to their exposure or experience of microaggressions, individuals may suffer from oppression, racism, or mental and physical illness (Cooper et al., 2017).

The purpose of this qualitative exploratory study was to understand the lived experiences of individuals with ethnic Hawaiian names in academic environments. The proposed study explored the childhood experiences in the classroom of individuals with an ethnic Hawaiian first name. The project explored these occurrences and revealed the outcome of such occurrences. The research questions that guided the proposed study are as follows:

RQ1: What are the lived experiences of adults with traditional Hawaiian first names encountered in a classroom setting as children?

RQ2: How do adults with traditional Hawaiian first names describe their experiences of race in the classroom?

In Chapter 2, literature was reviewed to serve as a foundation for this study, including information relevant to the topic, phenomenon, and population. Books, peer-reviewed journal articles, and scholarly works were also included in the review. A description of the research strategy, including a list of databases and search engines accessed, as well as the key terms used in the search, was provided. In the review, special attention was given to literature related to this study's theoretical framework while discussing how other researchers have used some of its key concepts. The literature review also included studies that examine the experiences of Hawaiian people who attend a Hawaiian language school, the experiences of other minority groups who have migrated from other countries, and those that examined the psychological well-being of Hawaiian people. However, information regarding Hawaiian's perceptions of microaggressions in an academic setting was absent in the literature. Continued research

is needed to understand the lived academic experiences of Indigenous students attending institutions that historically contribute to assimilation and colonization with daily discrimination inside and outside the classroom. A rationale for the study, as well as a synthesis of the reviewed literature, which is relevant to this study, was also presented. The results of the current study contributed to the body of literature supporting perceived experiences of microaggressions in the classroom by Hawaiian students.

Literature Search Strategy

Relevant literature published between 2015 and 2025 from several disciplines, including Ethnic and Racial Studies, Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minorities, and Education, was analyzed. Studies reflect quantitative and qualitative approaches. The primary search engines used in the process were EBSCOhost, PSYCinfo, Google Scholar, Walden University Library and SAGE Journals. Search terms included Ethnic names, mispronunciation of names, microaggression, name-based microaggression, race-based microaggression, identity-based *microaggression*, and *Hawaiian first names*.

Theoretical Foundation

The study utilized the theoretical framework of Critical Race Theory. The theoretical and conceptual frameworks are integral aspects in a qualitative study (Braun & Clarke, 2023). The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore the experiences of race in the classroom by adults with traditional Hawaiian first names. CRT served as a framework that explores the presence of race as a form of cultural expression in an academic environment (Hernandez, 2016).

Critical Race Theory

The framework of Critical Race Theory includes five interdisciplinary core components: (1) centrality and intersectionality of racism; (2) challenge dominant ideology; (3) commitment to social justice; (4) importance of experiential knowledge; and (5) use of interdisciplinary perspective (Hernandez, 2016). Critical Race Theory affirms the existence of institutional racism, specifically in the judicial and educational systems. However, the intersectionality tenet of the CRT recognizes that oppression is multidimensional. CRT examines additional facets of racism, including sex, class, sexual orientation, etc. Critical Race Theory includes an analytical lens to scrutinize the permanency of power structures fundamentally built upon White privilege and White supremacy. CRT challenges the concept of neutrality and colorblindness, determining that the two are motivated by self-interest, power, and privilege.

How the Theory was Used in Previous Research

Informed by Derrick Bell's theory on social constructs such as racism, privilege, and power, critical race theory states that dominant organizations are built on White privilege and White supremacy, which buttresses the disparagement of people of color. CRT allows theories and research to no longer be viewed individually but in the context of how that individual relates to their environment (Warmington, 2020). In addition, it is implied that the concept of racism permeates within society regardless of the pursuit to forge equality among all citizens (Hernandez, 2016).

Critical Race Theory has exposed racism as a trivial element of everyday life in America (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017; Hernandez, 2016). Critical Race Theory allows the

researcher to challenge societal principles that allow racism to recur, as well as challenge the institutions that perpetuate those same beliefs. In theory, CRT can be implied via intersectionality, attempting to analyze how racism works with, against, and through class, gender, sexuality, and disability (Warmington, 2020). Adopting CRT affords researchers a better understanding of the socio-cultural component that constructs how others perceive, experience, and respond to racism in daily life (Wang et al., 2022). Critical Race Theory ascertains that racism is a theoretical and historical experience that influences all members of society (Warmington, 2020). It also provides an explanation as to why persistent racism is problematic to select individuals by denying them of the fundamental constitutional freedoms. Critical Race Theory indicates the manifestation of systematic racism and its pervasiveness throughout a dominant society (Wang et. al., 2022). Finally, CRT not only addresses the adverse effects of racism on an individual, but it also investigates the perpetrators as well as those who are seemingly unaffected by racial prejudice (Warmington, 2020).

It is proposed that Whiteness is accepted as the norm, and the hierarchy of other races arises from this norm (Ladson-Billings, 1995). Within Critical Race Theory, the concept of microaggression can be burrowed in institutionalized racism as well as the approach in which the majority observes and relates to the minority. Soloranzo et al. (2009) examined the numerous occurrences of microaggressions experienced by African American students on their college campuses. Solorzano et. al. (2009) define microaggressions as unconscious, subtle insults that can be either verbal or non-verbal that are aimed at people of color. The data gathered depicted that both fellow students

and professors were the perpetrators of microaggressions and that the occurrences took place inside and outside of the classroom (Solorzano et.al., 2009).

How the Theory was Used in Research Study

A thorough view of power structures fundamentally built upon white privilege and white supremacy, specifically the educational system and the results of systematic racism, affects the cultural perception of race by individuals (Warmington, 2020). Bell's theory provided an effective conceptual framework for exploring the classroom experiences of individuals with traditional Hawaiian first names and the existence of institutional racism and the theoretical linkage between the two.

Literature Review Related to Key Concepts

The focus of this study, as it relates to name-based microaggressions in the classroom experienced by children with ethnic Hawaiian first names, spawned a selection of interdisciplinary knowledge. Long-term and short-term implications were examined when attempting to apprehend the effects of having your name mispronounced, being given a disapproved nickname, or having your name reconstructed to fit the needs of others. Additionally, this study may provide academic institutions with a roadmap to create, facilitate, and implement training and provide academic instructors with the proper tools to mitigate such circumstances. There has been previous research done that buttresses this study. The key concepts below investigated the many layers of microaggressions in the classroom, including their impact on an individual's academic performance, cultural identity, and psychological well-being.

Microaggressions

Historically, microaggressions were first introduced as a method to depict depraved sentiment towards African Americans (Dover, 2016). Today, microaggressions are prominent in a variety of social and minority groups (Zajac & Benton-Lee, 2023). Microaggressions are subtle comments or gestures that can have a significant long-term impact on the individual (Nadal, Griffin, Wong, Hamit, and Rasmus, 2014). Microaggressions create an environment that consists of unfavorable racial perceptions and have individuals feeling frustrated, as well as contributing to the escalation of their anxiety in the classroom (Biernat et. al., 2024). In a study conducted by Zajac & Benton-Lee (2023), 40%-98% of students of color have experienced microaggressions on campus. Existing research demonstrates that being on the receiving end of microaggression can produce adverse results on an individual's mental and physical well-being (Hernandez, 2016; Sanchez, Adams, Arango, & Flannigan, 2018). Results of microaggressions are isolation, psychological stress, and adverse academic performance due to the impediment of processing information (Nadal et. al, 2014; Sanchez et. al., 2018). It is believed that the faint essence of microaggression can stimulate internal conflict as the recipient struggles with determining what they have experienced and how they should react to such an experience (Nadal et. al., 2014; Thai, Lyons, Lee & Iwasaki, 2017; Munnely, Hishinuma, Lee, Smith & McCarthy, 2018). Morrison et. al. (2023) concluded that microaggressions experienced in the classroom directly or indirectly impacted students' learning.

Previous studies demonstrated that microaggressions can have long-term effects on an individual's self-identity, cultural identity, as well as a precipitant to chronic mental illness (Durham, 2018; Meyers, Aumer, Schoniwitz, Janicki, Pauker, Change, Gaither, & Williams, 2020; Mills, 2019). Research exploring the consequences of microaggressions concluded that microaggressions have had damaging impacts on the emotional health of racial and ethnic minorities such as African Americans, Asian Americans, Latin Americans, and Native Americans (Forrest-Bank & Cuellar, 2018; Sanchez et. al., 2018; Thai et. al., 2017). Microaggressions have also been known to have negative effects on an individual's psychological well-being (Sanchez et. al., 2018; Nadal, Wong, Sriken, Griffin & Fujii-Doe, 2015). The effects of microaggressions have also been examined on populations such as the indigenous people of Alaska, Canada, and Native Americans. In the research reviewed, it has been noted that members of these various populations have experienced, at one time or another, a microaggression within the classroom environment. Authors have found that there is also a positive correlation between experiencing microaggression and ethnic identity as well as psychological distress (Sanchez et. al., 2018; Nadal et. al., 2015; Thai et. al., 2017). It is hypothesized that due to the convoluted existence of microaggressions, the result may be injurious levels of psychological distress rather than flagrant discrimination (Sanchez et. al., 2018; Thai et. al., 2017).

Most research reviewed on microaggressions concentrated on populations that have migrated to the United States or who are attempting to assimilate into a society (Fu et. al., 2024; Zajac & Benton-Lee, 2023; O'Keefe & Greenfield, 2019; Allen et. al.,

2017). Like most indigenous populations, Hawaiian people and their culture are unique. The Hawaiian Islands were colonized by British Missionaries, and Hawaiian people were forced to acclimate to the ways of the White Man (Munnely et. al., 2018). Based on the 2018 Census, the Hawaiian population is a minority in their own homeland. There is currently no research that explores the experiences of microaggressions by the Hawaiian people within their own culture, especially in the classroom, where many of the academic instructors are not of Hawaiian descent (Department of Education, 2020).

Microaggressions in the Classroom

The purpose of a classroom is to establish a learning space in which children and adults can collaborate and learn without outside distractions (Cooper et. al., 2017; Bailey, 2015). Burch, Batchelor, Burch, Gibson, and Kimball (2018) describe the classroom as a warm, secure environment that protects and nourishes students until they are ready for the world. The classroom is a safe environment for learning, free from violence, emotional distress, and an environment that promotes positivity (Cooper et. al., 2017; Burch et. al., 2018). According to Burch et. al. (2018), the primary goal of education is to protect the student's self-esteem. Previous research has noted that racially minoritized students with ethnic names are associated with negative biases by teachers and students (Kim, Han, Wee & Meacham, 2023). Students who participated in a study conducted by Morrison et. al., (2023) felt that their learning experience was obstructed by their constant exposure to microaggressions. Being subjected to microaggressions in the classroom negatively impacted on the student's performance and well-being (Morrison et. al., 2023). Berk (2017) reports that instructors were the most common aggressors. Experiencing

microaggressions in the classroom can commonly evoke intense emotional reactions, resulting in explosive discussions and disruption (Berk, 2017).

The existence of racial microaggressions in the classroom perpetuates the persistent and unbalanced relationships that represent the institution's systematic condoning of racial subordination, inequalities, and systemic racism (Berk, 2017). African American students have withstood decades of degradation by teachers and peers for mispronouncing their non-Eurocentric names (Marrun, 2018). In a study by Zajac & Benton-Lee (2023), findings support that name-based microaggressions are still occurring and have infiltrated online educational environments. They develop negative perceptions of themselves and begin to develop feelings of inferiority and shame of their culture (Zajac & Benton-Lee, 2023). Subsequently, Latinx students have reported feeling like outsiders in the classroom (Chakraverty, 2022). African American students reported extreme levels of low self-esteem and self-doubt, specifically when they are treated like second-class citizens or perceived as criminals within an educational environment (Nadal et al., 2014). Microaggressions serve to disparage students and disenfranchise their place in an academic environment (Ellis, Powell, Demetrian, Huerta-Bapat & Panter, 2018; Chakraverty, 2022).

In a study performed by Kim et. al. (2023), Asian American children often experienced discrimination and racial discourse because their names embraced their cultural beliefs. The study revealed that the children began to reconstruct their given name as an attempt to be included in the classroom (Kim et. al., 2023). The study conducted by Chakraverty (2022) found that Hispanic/Latinx participants reported

experiencing identity-based microaggressions in STEM courses, which made these students doubt their capabilities and success in these courses. Mexican students felt inferior to the other white students and succumbed to their societal position of lower class within the educational setting (Hernandez & Villodas, 2019; Chakravarty, 2022).

Mexican students were perceived as foreign; their academic capabilities were questioned; and they were constantly being asked about their immigration status (Chakravarty, 2022).

Similarly, in a project conducted by Biernat et. al. (2024), it was also concluded that African Americans and Asian Americans experienced one form or another of racial microaggressions within the classroom environment that made them feel inferior to white students. Both Mexican, African American, and Asian American students experienced feelings of exclusion, cultural biases, and pressure to conform (Chakravarty, 2022; Kim et. al., 2023; Biernat et.al., 2024). Contrary to the success rate of the Mexican students, African American students dropped classes, became socially withdrawn, changed majors, or left the university due to the environmental racial microaggressions they experienced (Mills, 2019; Wintner, Almeida & Hamilton-Mason, 2017). American Asian students who experienced name-based discrimination reported feeling disrespected and considered anglicizing their names (Biernat et. al., 2024).

Mills (2017) discovered that most of the African American participants also experienced racial battle fatigue. Racial battle fatigue can be easily defined as race-related stress (Smith, 2023). Racial battle fatigue is highly reported within the African American community (Smith & Eatough, 2007). Similarly, indigenous students attending a Canadian University as well as Mexican students have reported feeling mentally

exhausted from the constant occurrences of microaggressions within the classroom (Bailey, 2015; Franklin, 2019). Racial battle fatigue causes both psychological and physiological stress responses in students who are exposed to daily racial microaggressions (Franklin, 2019). In a study performed by Nadal et. al., (2015) a link between microaggressions and negative mental health symptoms in Asian Americans was clearly defined. The project also confirmed that microaggressions were present within an educational environment and that the microaggression experiences were different depending on the educational level of the individual and the race of the individual initiating the microaggression (Nadal et. al, 2015).

Psychological stress responses include frustration, anger, resentment or fear (Fu et. al., 2022). Daily risk to racial microaggressions can lead to substance abuse and substandard academic performance (Franklin, 2019; Biernat et. al., 2024; Manuel et. al., 2024). In the study performed by Franklin (2019), it was also revealed that the behaviors of students were impacted by their continual encounters with microaggressions in the classroom. Students experienced negative outcomes, including increased anxiety, increased negative emotions, and increased blood pressure (Torres, Revetes, Mata-Greve, Schwartz, & Domenech Rodrigues, 2020). Microaggressions can be verbal, behavioral, or environmental indignities that project aggressive, derogatory, or prejudicial insults toward a culturally marginalized group (Nadal et.al., 2015). Microaggression is a pernicious behavior that pathologize the identities of minority groups and affect their well-being negatively (Tran, 2024).

Microaggressions and Psychological Well-Being

Race continues to be a prevalent contributing factor in the psychological well-being of an individual (Durham, 2018; Nadal et.al., 2015). In a meta-analysis of literature, Williams (2019) correlates exposure to microaggressions with chronic stress, ineffective coping, and psychological harm. Nadal et. al., (2019) concur that there is a distinct cause and effect interrelationship with the frequency of experienced racial microaggressions in school and the increase of traumatic stress symptoms. African American children who experienced racism are twice as likely to develop childhood mental health issues such as attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, oppositional defiant disorder, conduct disorder, and depressive symptoms (Wintner et.al., 2017). Low levels of self-esteem are a significant predictor of clinical depression and levels of anxiety (Wong-Padoongpatt, Zane, Okazaki, & Saw, 2017). Similarly, Durham (2018) concluded that African American children have experienced stressed race-based encounters that have fractured their psychological well-being. Microaggressions that were initiated by staff of the educational institution resulted in the participants feeling intellectually inadequate, deviant, unprotected, and powerless (Durham, 2018). The stereotypes created by perceived microaggressions can cause an individual additional stress, anxiety, and low self-esteem (Durham, 2018; Wintner et.al., 2017). Various studies have concluded that many African Americans have reported low self-esteem due to the amount of discrimination they perceive (Durham, 2018; Wintner et. al., 2017; Nadal, et. al., 2014). They can leave the individuals with feelings of hopelessness and suicidal ideations (Nadal et. al., 2014).

A CDC-funded research project focused on adverse childhood experiences indicated consistent effects on physical and mental health outcomes that in turn negatively impacted success in an educational or professional environment (Logan-Greene, Longhi, Green, & Nurius, 2014). Consequences of stress conditions resulting from experiencing microaggressions can be deficits of self-esteem, future-oriented, and social connections in their developmental years as a child, as well as having a long-lasting impact as an adult (Logan-Greene et.al., 2014; Wong-Padoongpatt et.al., 2017). Individuals can also develop a sense of mistrust towards others and the future (Logan-Greene et.al., 2014). Individuals plagued with the stresses of microaggressions lack optimism and positivity about the future. Life satisfaction becomes diminished, impacting the developmental outcomes in intrapersonal skills and poor quality of social bonding (Logan-Greene et.al., 2014). Combined, these processes depict the patterns of insufficient resilience that continue into adulthood, making individuals much more prone to become distressed and develop chronic conditions (Logan-Greene et.al., 2014). These effects may resonate and compound across the individual's lifespan, eroding their well-being. Physical health effects related to stress lead to chronic conditions that can be minimally exposed during young adulthood and then become fully expressed daily as an individual approaches their later years in life (Wong-Padoongpatt et. al., 2017). Children exposed to stressors, such as microaggressions, have been found to become ill earlier in life, remain ill for a longer period, and easily develop a chronic illness (Logan-Greene et.al., 2014).

Wong-Padoongpatt et. al. (2017) concluded that microaggressions adversely impact an individual's physical and psychological well-being, but the study also revealed

that the race of the perpetrator of microaggressions can cause more stress on the recipient. Based on sentinel studies performed by Wang et.al. (2022), it has been concluded that Asian Americans experience much higher levels of acculturative stress, which has been directly correlated with feeling marginalized (Wong-Padoongpatt et. al., 2017). Feelings of marginalization precipitate socioemotional struggles, risky behaviors, and stress (Wong-Padoongpatt et. al., 2017).

In all research reviewed, findings confirmed that there is an adverse link between experiencing microaggression and the individual's well-being. However, the research reviewed investigated minority groups such as African American, Latina/o and or Asian Americans and a small population of indigenous people. Such adversity can be found in their self-esteem, cultural identity and mental health. Previous research has not delved into the indigenous population of Hawaiian people, specifically, who have been considered involuntary immigrants.

First Names and Self-Identity

Allport (1954) believed that an individual's name was part of their identity and contributed to the shaping and defining of an individual's self-worth. Through his research, Allport (1954) discovered that an individual's forename influences the perception of others as well as the individual's own self-evaluation. In addition, Marcel Mauss (1985) regarded an individual's name to be one of the most crucial factors in the individual's personality development (Levi-Strauss, 1987). The founder of Transactional Psychology, Eric Berne (1964), believed that the name of an individual was a significant factor in the creation of personal identities, specifically the contribution a name makes to

the individual's life script (Barrow, 2015). It is undeniable that the social context of an individual's name cannot be ignored. Identities of marginalized students are often disparaged, diminished, or reinterpreted by teachers and peers using unsolicited nicknames because their ethnic given name was too difficult to pronounce (Roberts, Grayson & Rosser, 2023). Utilizing an individual's name to address or refer to demonstrates how an individual's identity is acknowledged and strengthens their connection to their language and culture (Ayon & Philbin, 2017).

Names play a momentous function in determining social status, rank, and relationships (Pilcher, Deakin-Smith, & Roesch, 2024). Names are a fundamental essence that constructs racialized and ethnic norms by encompassing the negative and positive consequences of identificatory experiences and affiliations (Pilcher et. al., 2024). In a study performed by Knight (2018), results revealed that individuals unconsciously become the meaning of their name or, in other instances, structure the individual's personality. A person's forename provides meaning and a sense of self in the world (Allport, 1954; Knight, 2018). For others, their name becomes a tool used to construe life itself (Knight, 2018). It then becomes an issue when an individual's name is mispronounced in public because the mispronunciation is associated with the falsification of their identity (Umera-Okeke, 2016). Some individuals may perceive a mispronunciation of their name as an insult (Umera-Okeke, 2016; Knight, 2018). Cooper et. al. (2017) discussed the effects on students who perceived the instructors knew their names. Data revealed that when students believed that the professor knew their name, their attitudes about the course, how they perceived the course and instructor, and their

self-reported behavior in class were affected (Cooper et.al., 2017). Students felt valued, were confident about the material, and felt that the instructor cared (Cooper et.al., 2017).

Racism and Indigenous People

As of 2011, there is a race-ethnicity diversity of classroom teachers in the public-school system of Hawaii (Department of Education, 2020). Approximately 21% of public-school teachers are Caucasian; 26% are Japanese, and 31% fall into the Other category (Department of Education, 2020). Scarcely, there are only 9% of the teacher population who are Hawaiian (Department of Education, 2020). Many Hawaiian children feel discouraged and embarrassed in school with the shift to Western cultural systems (Dela Cruz, Salzman, Brislin, & Losch, 2006). Although many of the Hawaiian experiences are under-reported or minimized by the students themselves, there is some evidence of the existence of racial microaggressions (Kohli & Solorzano, 2012; Dela Cruz et. al., 2006).

The state of Hawaii consists of 8 major islands and is logistically separated from the United States. Although American citizens, Hawaiians are recognized as an indigenous people. According to the Bureau of Census (2019), the state of Hawaii's population consists of 25.6% of white alone, 37.6% of Asian alone, 24% of two or more races, and 10.2% of Native Hawaiians and other Pacific Islanders. Most Native Hawaiian children are raised by their grandparents, aunt, or distant relative (Munnelly et. al, 2018). They have little ambition to succeed in academics, and for some, dropping out of high school is inevitable (Munnelly et. al, 2018). Many Native Hawaiian adolescents have

high levels of serious personal, emotional, behavioral, or mental health problems and report being concerned about their physical health (Munnely et. al, 2018).

In 1993, the United States declared the natives of the Hawaiian Islands to be identified as indigenous people. Results of numerous research studies conclude that indigenous children, due to their psychosocial factors are at risk for mental illness or stressors that prelude to mental illness (Young, Hanson, Craig, Clapham & Williamson, 2017). When indigenous children are displaced from their traditions and cultural beliefs and forced to acclimate to Western Culture, they are more at risk to develop mental illness than those non-indigenous children (Dela Cruz et. al. 200 6, Young et. al., 2017). Indigenous children have higher rates of anxiety, depression and externalizing behaviors, including high rates of suicide ideation and completion (Young et. al., 2017). For most children, this initial diagnosis of mental illness continues well into adulthood Munnely et. al., 2018; Young et. al., 2017).

Prejudice toward indigenous people is not a foreign concept in colonial societies. While a territory of the United States, a law pass implemented that mandated Hawaiians to take a Christian or English given name. Traditionally, Hawaiian names hold a rooted meaning and are revealed to a kupuna (elder) in a dream or vision to reflects such meanings. The law of 1860 refuted this life-long tradition and instructed the Hawaiian people to use their father's name as a surname and their Hawaiian name will now become their middle name. During the next decade, Hawaiian language names became less popular, and most children born within that time were given Christian or Eurocentrism first names.

Many factors contribute to the onset of mental illness; European colonization has become an additional and very pervasive factor for indigenous children in the United States (Young et. al, 2017). Discrimination is a prevalent predictor of the inauspicious well-being of indigenous people (Houkamau, Stronge, & Sibley, 2017). Psychosocial domains associated with poor mental health include poor mental health of caregiver; discrimination, co-morbid internalizing symptoms and substance use (Houkamau et. al., 2017; Young et.al, 2017). There is a strong association between children's identification with their indigenous culture and mental illness. Children who identify with their indigenous culture are more resilient to mental health, in fact, cultural identification be a protective factor in the presence of discrimination or inequalities (Young et.al, 2017). Events, behaviors, and or resources that foster or promote positive attitudes, self-esteem and self-efficacy mitigates the onset or development of mental illness in indigenous children (O'Keefe & Greenfield, 2016; Young et. al, 2017).

Investigations on microaggressions within the Indigenous communities continue to result in an adverse impact on health, including cardiac health; physical pain; low self-esteem; depression symptomology; and an indirect correlation to suicide ideation (O'Keefe & Greenfield, 2016). Others report experiencing feelings of hopelessness, anxiety and stress (Allen et. al., 2017; Houkamau et. al, 2017). Experiencing microaggressions affected various areas of daily life such as poor sleep; relationship dissatisfaction and conflict (Houkamau et. al, 2017). However, it cannot be determined if this relationship is a result of explicit or implicit discriminatory attitudes and/or behavior (O'Keefe & Greenfield, 2016; Young et. al, 2017). More specifically, males had more

occurrences of anxiety and depression, while females struggle more with their self-esteem (Allen et. al, 2017). This study also concluded that Polynesians experiences of racial discrimination is inversely associated with their satisfaction with life and self-esteem (Allen et. al, 2017).

Although Hawaiian people have not been displaced and remain connected to the aina (land), scientific literature has exposed the disparities experienced by the indigenous adolescents of Hawaii. Native Hawaiian adolescents have reported having low socioeconomic status and poorer mental health (Munnely et. al., 2018). The literature reviewed revealed that there is minimal research conducted on the contributory factors of mental illness in this specific indigenous population. Research that hypothesizes positive outcomes or measures resilience of an indigenous population report that family behaviors and attitudes are closely associated with the individual's resilience (Allen et. al., 2017; Young et. al, 2017).

Cultural Identity

Culturally, providing a name to a child is a fundamental step towards the creation and development of the child's identity (Umera-Okeke, 2017). The event of name giving precludes a contract between the individual and the community in which it is a member (Umera-Okeke, 2017; Jagiela & Gebus, 2015). The ritual establishes the child's presence as well as their participation in the community. The name makes a distinction between that individual and others within the community and society. It allows society to treat that individual as an individual, addressing their feelings and needs respectively (Jagiela & Gebus, 2015; Pilcher et. al., 2024). An individual's name can positively affirm identity

and provide them with a sense of belonging in the classroom. On the other hand, naming practices can also exclude the individual from the majority, stereotype and place students at a disadvantage, especially when the student's name is non-European (Umera-Okeke, 2017; Peterson et. al., 2015). Mispronunciation, changing or shortening an individual's first name can easily undermine the individual's sense of identity and self-worth (Peterson et. al, 2015). During early childhood, a child's name closes the gap between home and school culture. As instructors highlight a child's name in the classroom via print, daily routines and in activities, they begin to foster a sense of belonging in the classroom and affirm the child's personal identity (Pilcher et. al., 2024; Peterson et. al, 2015).

One of the most unique traditions of the Hawaiian culture is the naming of a child. In the early days of Hawaii, people did not have many personal possessions (McCubbin & Marsella, 2009). Poi pounders, woven mats, male's loin cloth or a spear were items of high value. However, native Hawaiians believed that a man's most prized possession was his name (McCubbin & Marsella, 2009). A name may refer to the area; describe the birthing event; declare family lineage or represent social class. More significantly, the name had mana (power and prestige). Native Hawaiians believed that the name of a child played a role in the development of the child's character and personality. Some believed the name was a predictor of fate and fortune.

Having a strong sense of cultural/ethnic identity is a significant contributor to the psychological well-being of the individual (Peterson et. al, 2015). Research on adolescent students reveal that positive social identity combined with a strong sense of belonging

and emotional support both at school and home are crucial to healthy social, psychological and educational outcomes (Peterson et. al, 2015). Unfortunately, these and many other students report feelings of alienation and negative perceptions of school as a safe place. Students report being verbally bullied by others who purposefully distort or mock their names (Peterson et. al, 2015). Misrepresentation of a name amounts to misrepresentation on the person. On the contrary, a study performed by Hernandez & Villodas (2019) reported that individuals who experience microaggressions develop a distinct sense of belonging to their ethnic group which in turn dwindles their feelings of isolation (Hernandez & Villodas, 2019).

Results from a study performed by Forrest-Bank & Cuellar (2018), concluded that microaggressions are positively associated with ethnic identity. Mispronouncing or (re)naming students with non-Eurocentric names forces students to reject portions of their identity to “fit in,” specifically in the classroom (McCubbin & Marsella, 2009; Marrun, 2018). Students who have first names that do not conform to the current dominant school culture, they are plagued with feelings of inferiority, strange, or being difficult (McCubbin & Marsella, 2009; Umera-Okeke, 2017; Marrun, 2018). It was also concluded that microaggressions have a substantial affiliation to psychological distress. Surprisingly, the study revealed that ethnic identity was used as a defense mechanism and reversed the negative impact that microaggressions have on an individual’s psychological well-being (Forrest-Bank & Cuellar, 2018). Those individuals with a refined sense of ethnic identity can easily mitigate the negative impact of such microaggressions as well as blatant forms of discrimination. The post hoc multigroup analysis uncovered that there

was a significant correlation between microaggression and self-esteem within the Latino subgroup (Forrest-Bank & Cuellar, 2018).

In a study exploring the concept of microaggressions as a predictor to reduced psychological well-being, it was revealed that an increase in microaggression experiences increased the cultural mistrust for Asian American college students (Kim, Kendall, & Cheon, 2016). This study confirmed the link between racism mistrust and mental health outcomes in Asian American context (Kim et. al, 2016). It is theorized that as an individual experience an accumulation of microaggression experiences, a defense mechanism is unconsciously developed as a means of coping with the adverse experiences. Thus, concluding that racial microaggressions can be a trigger to cultural mistrust resulting in damaging psychological outcomes (Kim et. al, 2016; Thai et. al., 2017). Unlike previous research that implicated racial microaggressions as a direct cause of individual anxiety or depression, this project revealed little association between microaggression experiences and an individual's psychological well-being. In other words, the individuals that develop a cultural mistrust defense mechanism can experience a disconnect to intrapersonal relationships (Kim et. al., 2016).

Additional research has revealed a link between microaggression experiences and individual and collective self-esteem in Asian American adults. Results of a project conducted by Thai et. al, (2017) conclude that there is a direct correlation between racial microaggression experiences and individual and collective self-esteem. Through the analysis of data, evidence emerged to confirm the negative relationship between microaggression experiences and psychological well-being of young Asian American

adults (Thai et. al, 2017). Evidence confirms that although microaggressions continue to be obscured, the experiences have a negative and lasting impact on an individual's psychological well-being (Kim et. al., 2016; Thai et. al., 2017). Data also revealed that Asian Americans who are active members of an Asian American organization appear to be much more ethically aware due to the fundamental racial socializations provided by their parents (Thai et, al., 2017). Native Hawaiian students have a similar experience. Native Hawaiian students who are aware of the various forms and spaces in which racial microaggressions occur, compounded with their personal historical account and cultural belonging become a strong asset to combat those feelings of inferiority and inadequacy as being referred to as "other" (Borrero, Yeh, Cruz and Suda, 2012). Behaviors by instructors within the classroom environment, solidify the institution's marginalization of the student's cultural identity.

Research has proven that mispronouncing a child's name can have a negative impact on their cultural identity, physiological and psychological well-being. Hawaiian people have a strong connection to their name. Much thought, effort and tradition are put forth in providing a child with an ethnic Hawaiian name, however, there is little to no research that investigates the correlation or connection to the psychological well-being of a child and the microaggression of mispronunciation of their name in an academic environment. This study will explore if the mispronunciation of a child's Hawaiian name in a classroom has similar, different or any effect on their psychological well-being.

Summary and Conclusions

Between the ages of 12 and 14, adolescents are beginning to discover who they are and where they come from. A significant representation of their identity is their given name by their parents. Therefore, when their names are continuously mispronounced by an instructor, the student may internalize negative feelings from the instructor, such as the instructor does not care about them individually or care about their cultural/family identity (Nadal et. al., 2014). Collectively, the research reviewed determined various unfavorable results on an individual's psychological being. Anxiety, depression and anger were a common theme in the research for the different races of minority groups. Other research concluded that racial microaggressions can have an adverse impact on the individual's self-esteem. Additionally, it was discovered that an association between self-esteem and negative mental health outcomes existed. Low levels of self-esteem are a significant predictor of clinical depression and high levels of anxiety (Wong-Padoongpatt et. al., 2017). In an educational environment, the stress of being exposed to microaggressions caused academic failure that for some precipitated additional personal or societal despair. It is indictive to state that these negative results of microaggressions are usually salient to the marginalized individual.

Critical Race Theory provided an essential focal point to race and racism within institutions, specifically the education system for most of the research reviewed. This theoretical framework approach assisted in understanding the educational inequality and structural racism that exist. Identifying such racism and its adverse effects can lead to solution driven conversations. The proposed study investigated and explored the effects

of microaggressions experienced by individuals in a classroom with traditional Hawaiian names. By utilizing Critical race Theory, the existence of overt and covert racist ideologies will be revealed.

The literature review provided insight into the experiences of individuals with traditional Hawaiian first names in a classroom. Mispronouncing and having total disregard to learn an individual's name can have an effect. Constantly mispronouncing a student's name or making racially motivated comments was considered a microaggression within the classroom. The erosion of African American student's psychological well-being due to teachers and peers mispronouncing their non-Eurocentric names has spanned over decades of time. Asian American students are programmed to believe that having a Christian Eurocentric first name affords access to more resources and professional opportunities. The presence of microaggressions in the classroom affirmed the existence of systematic racism and the tolerance by the institution. Individuals on the receiving end of microaggressions, minority groups reported adverse effects of their psychological well-being, academic performance and cultural identity. Although no literature was found describing these experiences among individuals with a culturally esthetic first name, they paralleled the experiences of microaggressions and racism towards other minority and indigenous groups in an academic setting. Coupled with non-Hawaiian instructors, limited amount of resources, and a higher likelihood of having their names being mispronounced in a classroom, the educational system and policy makers may benefit from these studies and their findings. Positive social change

may be affected as communication is fostered, and social support is created to assist academic instructors to identify and promote best practices in the classroom.

Chapter 3 will utilize a qualitative approach using the Critical Race Theory that will include a discussion of the research design, the role of the researcher and qualitative methodology. The chapter will address the target population, sampling process and size. The data collection methods and the ethical considerations will be discussed. This approach will examine the significance of this study in conjunction with answering the posed research question.

Chapter 3: Research Method

The purpose of this study was to explore the lived experiences of individuals with ethnic Hawaiian names in academic classroom environments. The proposed study explored the experiences of individuals with an ethnic Hawaiian first name encounter in a classroom environment as a child. These experiences may affect the individual's worldview perspective of their own culture as well as their cultural identity which may lead them to adjust in their adult life to minimize the anxiety and shame previously felt. In this chapter an overview of the methodology adopted to conduct this study will be provided. First the research design and rationale will be discussed, followed by a description of the role of researcher. The methodology will then be presented, which will include a discussion of ethical procedures and data analysis.

Research Design and Rationale

I developed the following research questions to guide the study:

RQ1: What are the lived experiences by adults with traditional Hawaiian first names encountered in academic settings as children?

RQ 2: How do adults with traditional Hawaiian first names describe their experiences of race in the classroom?

A phenomenological design was used for this study, specifically an interpretive phenomenological analysis to illustrate and characterize the experiences in a classroom environment of individuals with traditional Hawaiian first names and other concepts of the study. By utilizing phenomenological design, the research can query the experiences of an individual or group of individuals, as well as grasp an appreciation for both the

meaning and the structure of said experiences (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). The goal of this study was to explore the lived experiences of adults with traditional Hawaiian first names in an academic setting as children. To further examine this phenomenon, a qualitative phenomenological approach was used and semistructured interviews conducted. Edwards (2012) characterized semistructured interviews as a tool used by researchers to guide the interview as well as develop an environment that allows for situation-specific questions to be asked to gain clarification. The data collected from the semistructured interviews were transcribed and coded to generate themes and sub themes pertaining to the concept of mispronunciation of a child's first name within the classroom environment.

This form of research tradition was chosen because there is minimal research done on perceived microaggressions by students with non-Eurocentric first names in an academic environment. Qualitative research is valuable when there is a lack of research, and an introductory method is needed to precipitate new knowledge (Smith & Eatough, 2007). Interpretive phenomenological analysis permits the researcher to organize the collected data into reoccurring themes that increase awareness of how individuals experience the phenomenon of microaggressions in the classroom, specifically the mispronunciation of a child's ethnic first name (Smith & Eatough, 2007).

Role of the Researcher

I was a primary researcher and data collector. With direct contact and high intensity of involvement in the experiences of the participants, personal and ethical dilemmas may become a concern. In situations of concern, the researcher identified any potential biases, personal values, or their own experiences that affected the analysis of the

research (Creswell, 2022; Tuffard & Newman, 2012). I was also an active participant in the process of data collecting, which entailed one-on-one, semistructured interviews with adults who had traditional Hawaiian names and who attended school as children.

Issues such as confidentiality were addressed by providing written and verbal assurances to all participants that any identifying factors will not be included in the paper. Participants were assigned an arbitrary Hawaiian word that coincides with the participants' contact information, which was kept separate from the actual data collected. There were no personal, work-related, or supervisory relationships with the participants that may cause potential ethical issues.

IRB approval was obtained to ensure the ethical treatment of all participants. Participants were provided with a referral to free psychological assistance if the interview resulted in emotional distress. Participants were informed that they were able to terminate the interview at any given moment without consequences.

Methodology

Participant Selection Logic

Research participants selected for this study were over the age of 18 who had a traditional Hawaiian first name. Participants were recruited through purposive sampling and by utilizing the snowball effect. Patton (2015) stated that by selecting information-rich cases, the probability of obtaining data of depth is much greater. The inclusion criteria for participants included having a traditional Hawaiian first name as it appears on their birth certificate and that they attended school in the state of Hawaii. There were no limitations on age, type of school (private or public), or the specific time of occurrence

(elementary, middle, or high school). None of the participants had a personal interest in the results. Creswell (2022) emphasized that employing participants with preexisting relationships, personal or professional, may restrict objectivity as well as attract questions of conflict of interest.

A brief description of the study was posted on a public page on Facebook, requesting people of interest to respond directly to the post or to send a private message. The number of participants to be recruited was undetermined, but due to data saturation, there were 10 participants recruited for the study. After 10 participants, the information provided in the interviews became redundant and no new themes or insights were revealed. Creswell (2022) provides guidelines for qualitative sample size, specifically for a phenomenological study, with a minimum of 6 and a maximum of 25.

Instrumentation

The most fundamental and significant instrument in a qualitative study is the researcher (Gall et al., 2007). The researcher, as a tool, can observe behaviors of the participants chosen for the study and maintain an ongoing log through the reflective notes (Gall et. al., 2007). Additional instruments that were implemented in this study were the demographic collection form of the participant and the interview protocol. The abovementioned instruments maintained the validity and reliability of the project. Each participant received detailed instructions for each instrument and were privy to an abundance of guidance and assistance.

Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection

Methods

Recruiting research participants entailed generating a brief and simple synopsis of the study. This information was placed on social media sites that have a target audience of people of Hawaiian descent. When a potential participant contacted me, information on the interview process was sent electronically, either by email, text, or messenger. The response also included a consent form as well as a SurveyMonkey link to complete a demographic form. This method permitted specific questions to be asked, clarifications made, and feedback prior to continuing the interview process. Participants answered all questions and agreed to the terms of the interview. Once the participants consented, an agreed upon schedule for the interview was determined. Due to the current societal situation of a pandemic of COVID-19, I followed all guidelines set forth by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the local governments. Each participant was given the option to conduct their interview in person, at video conferences, on the phone or via chat. If the participant elected to do the interview in person, along with the participant wore a face mask and six feet of social distancing was maintained. In this instance, data collection was done with audio recording via Rev. Semistructured interviews were administered using a list of predetermined questions. Each interview was audio recorded and transcribed verbatim. Interviews were scheduled in 60-minute increments with the understanding that the interview may be longer or shorter depending on the engagement of the participant. Participants were informed that they may terminate

the interview at any time for any reason. Prior to each interview, participants were apprized that they could receive verbatim transcripts of the interview.

Interview Protocol

The study used semistructured interviews that contained questions to answer the research questions: What are the lived experiences by adults with traditional Hawaiian first names encountered in academic settings as children? How do adults with traditional Hawaiian first names describe their experiences of race in the classroom? To capture and describe a person's experience of a phenomenon, it was imperative to recruit participants for in-depth interviews who have had explicit experiences with the phenomenon of interest being studied.

All interviews were audio recorded utilizing Rev, a smart phone app that allowed for audio recording and verbatim transcription. This app was downloaded and stored on a Samsung Smart Phone that was protected by password recognition software. All recordings were sent to secure transcription and accessed through password protected email and stored on Dropbox.

Data Analysis Plan

After the interviews were complete and the data collected, the information was transcribed verbatim. The data were reviewed using the process of interpretive phenomenological analysis (Smith & Shinebourne, 2012). This process allowed the researcher to review each transcript determining the overall meaning as well as coding the frequency of phrases or similar responses. Interpretive phenomenological analysis also revealed responses that have the implication of theoretically relevant concepts

(Smith & Shinebourne, 2012). NVivo Software was used to code the data. The codes were then grouped or categorized into themes depicting the various dimensions of the experiences in a classroom.

Issues of Trustworthiness

To safeguard the reliability and validity of the data, comprehensive notes were taken, and a reflexive journal was managed as a reference guide during the project. With the researcher being the only tool in qualitative research, it is critical for the researcher to enact credibility, transferability, confirmability and dependability to ensure the reliability of the research (Morrow, 2005; Shenton, 2004). One approach to establish reliability was to maintain a reflective journal and extensive notes (Shenton, 2004). It is also crucial that all biases were identified in order not to endanger the role of the researcher. To control biases, peer briefing was conducted. Peer debriefing and member checking allowed for biases within the researcher to surface (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). A benefit of utilizing peer debriefing and member checking was to assist the researcher to remain open and refrain from habitual thoughts that can easily impede the outcome of the study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Shenton, 2004).

Member Checking

Member checking is a technique used in qualitative research chosen to validate the results and the interpretation of data with the participants. Member checking was used to ascertain the accuracy of the study's findings (Lincoln & Guba, 1986). A summary of the results was shared with the research participants (Lincoln & Guba, 1986). The participants reviewed the information, added additional information, if needed, as well as

edited the information. If the participant did not provide any confirmation of the data provided via transcript or summary, a follow-up appointment was scheduled to conduct a member check.

Reflective Journal and Notes

Reflective journaling and notes were techniques used by the researcher to maintain a systematic organization of thoughts and ideas (Shenton, 2004). This technique also assisted in revealing the accuracy and essence of the findings (Shenton, 2004).

Ethical Procedures

Each participant was required to complete a consent form prior to participating in the study. Informed consent is a significant function in research because it protects the participants and helps to safeguard the ethical guidelines that are in place (Creswell, 2022; Patton, 2015). Informed consent is also a key element in guaranteeing that the research follows the standards and expectations of the Institutional Review Board (IRB) (Creswell, 2022; Patton, 2015). The informed consent contained a brief synopsis of the purpose and intent of the study. It also included the method that was used for data collection and other information pertaining to the study. Due to the societal situation of the COVID-19 virus, each participant received the consent form electronically, preferably in the body of an email prior to the scheduled interview date and time (email or messenger). Each participant responded electronically with “I consent” or “Yes.” Participants were also given the option to email, text or scan a copy of the signed consent. The informed consent was reviewed over the phone prior to the scheduled interview. The

informed consent was created using the guidelines to include modifications due to the COVID-19 pandemic provided by Walden University.

Compensation

Each participant was informed in writing and verbally that there was no monetary compensation for participating in the study. Instead, each participant was reminded how valuable their contributions will be to social change. Confirmation was made with each participant, prior to the start of the interview, that they understood that there was no monetary compensation for their time and participation.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality is an extremely important aspect of the study. The research has a moral and ethical obligation to protect the privacy of each participant (Creswell, 2022). Therefore, each participant was identified by a random Hawaiian word during the process of the study. This approach provided a higher probability that the identity of each participant remained confidential.

Summary

This chapter specified the plan used for this research study by explaining the research design and rationale, role of the researcher, instruments used, methodological approach, trustworthiness, and ethical standards as well as a comprehensive description of the data collection process and procedures. This chapter creates the groundwork for chapter 4, which will describe and interpret the results.

Chapter 4: Results

The purpose of this exploratory phenomenological study was to explore the experiences in a classroom environment of individuals with traditional Hawaiian first names. Two research questions were investigated in his study:

RQ1: What are the adult lived experiences with traditional Hawaiian first names encountered in academic settings as children?

RQ 2: How do adults with traditional Hawaiian first names describe their experiences of race in the classroom?

In Chapter 4, results from the analysis of the interview responses are presented. Research setting, participants demographics, and the data collection process are also discussed in this chapter. Evidence of trustworthiness and a discussion of the methods used to ascertain credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability are reviewed.

Setting

To reach a significant number of individuals for an effective study, recruitment flyers were posted on various social media sites, such as Facebook and Instagram seeking qualified participants with a Hawaiian first name. There were no responses or inquiries. Continuing to utilize social media, I searched friends of friends of friends who had profiles with a Hawaiian name. A private message was sent explaining my study and requesting an interview. There were responses received by these private messages, however, the responses remained sparse. More than 30 private messages were sent. Three people responded immediately, and interviews were scheduled. There were four people

who responded and agreed to participate, however, when a second message was sent to schedule an interview there were no responses. Three more attempts were made to schedule an interview, but there was still no response received at that moment. However, I received a response to my inquiry a week later and approximately four additional interviews were scheduled later in the week. Within a three-week period, 10 interviews were completed.

Demographics

This study included 10 individuals who shared their classroom experiences with non-Hawaiian instructors. To participate, individuals had Hawaiian first names who attended school in the state of Hawaii. The sample consisted of two males: six females and two transgender individuals. Participants ranged from the age of 30 to 60. Each participant was Native Hawaiian along with an additional race. Everyone had graduated from high school, and two participants had a college degree. All participants went to school in the state of Hawaii; however, three participants had relocated to another state.

Characteristics of Participants

Figure 1 consists of demographic information of the research participants.

Figure 1*Demographic Information of Participants*

Demographic Information	Number of Participants (n = 10)
Gender	
Female	7
Male	1
Trans Woman	2
Current age range (y)	
26-32	1
33-37	3
38-45	3
46-52	2
53-70	1
Island	
O'ahu	9
Moloka'I	1
Education	
High School	4
Bachelor	4
Master	1
Trade School	1
Marital Status	
Single	4
Married	5
Household Income	
\$25,000 - \$49,999	4
\$50,000 - \$99,999	5
\$100,000 - \$200,000	1
Number of Children	
None	4
2 - 4	6
Language spoken at Home	
English	9
Pidgin	1
Religion	
Christian	6
Catholic	1
Non-Denominational	2

Data Collection

Due to the state of Hawaii being in a pandemic during May 2021 to July 2021, the 10 interviews were conducted via video chat or messenger via Facebook to adhere to the state's requirements for gatherings. Consent forms, which detailed criteria for inclusion, an explanation of the study's purpose and approach were sent electronically to participants prior to their scheduled interview. All questions and concerns regarding the process of the interview, confidentiality and purpose of the study were addressed. Each participant reviewed the consent document and provided their consent electronically. The duration of each interview was 30 to 60 minutes. Prior to the interview, an overview of the study's purpose and the collection of demographic information was done. Each participant was asked 15 questions and provided detailed responses. Semistructured questions were asked providing flexibility for follow up questions for further elaboration and enriched data. Interviews were transcribed, documented and labeled with a coded name for anonymity purposes. Participants were contacted electronically, by messenger or email, for follow-up member checking interviews. Utilizing the member check process, data were reviewed with the participants to ensure the correct understanding of the information. Member-checking interviews were conducted by video and lasted between 10 and 20 minutes. Corrections and further explanations were made at this time. Interview transcripts were coded using an excel spreadsheet. All electronic documents containing data were saved on a cloud.

Data Analysis

Utilizing Microsoft Word and Excel software, interview data were coded and analyzed. I adhered to the guidelines set forth by Saldana (2025). The first step of the thematic analysis was to familiarize myself with the data collected from the interview. I transcribed the audio recordings of each interview and reviewed the transcripts numerous times, noting significant phrases and statements. Next, I generated initial codes by identifying relevant sections of data. After the coding process, similar codes were grouped into possible themes, perceiving broader patterns with related ideas. The themes that were identified were cross-referenced with the data collected from the interviews to ensure that there was sufficient evidence to support the theme. The themes initially determined were refined by either merging or splitting them to ensure that the themes were apparent and precise. Each finalized theme was defined and named to concisely embody key concepts. The meanings of the themes were interpreted as related to and answered either of the two research questions. Themes were also evaluated as to how it contributed to the field, existing research and social change, by identifying areas that were in alignment with previous research as well as providing new insights.

After the thematic data analysis was completed, I furnished detailed descriptions of each theme and provided participant quotes supporting each theme as well as aligning the theme with the appropriate research question. The implications of each theme were interpreted and related to the literature. Each participant was asked to review the identified themes. Each step of the analysis process was documented to guarantee transparency and trustworthiness.

Evidence of Trustworthiness

Qualitative research explores and understands human behavior, attitudes, and experiences, through non-numerical data (Creswell, 2022). Trustworthiness in qualitative research is crucial in establishing the credibility and reliability of the participants' experiences (Creswell, 2022). In this study, I explored the lived experiences of individuals with an ethnic Hawaiian first name in an academic environment. Trustworthiness was validated by implementing credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability.

Credibility

Credibility is a component of the research's trustworthiness. Credibility is crucial to measure how accurate the findings of the research are. Essentially, credibility ensures that the research emulates the experiences and perspectives of the participants and that the conclusions drawn are supported by the data. To confirm the quality of the research being performed, I used strategies such as member checking and saturation. Member checks were performed by having each participant review their interview data for accuracy and clarification. The process of member checking assisted in the assurance of the credibility of the data and its interpretation (Ravitch & Carl, 2019). Saturation was also achieved after the completion of 10 interviews; no new themes or insights surfaced from the interviews. After the 10th interview, themes were repetitious, indicating that data collection process could be ended. Continuing the interview would be mute since no further knowledge was revealed.

Transferability

This study was conducted with 10 participants. Transferability was applied by using detailed descriptions of the research framework, research methods and participant's demographics. In doing so, this allowed me to assess the relevance of the findings and their appropriateness on other populations. The demographics of each participant were documented (i.e. age, education, income), which helped me to determine if the findings were applicable to similar groups. By providing a detailed account of the data collection and analysis process, I was able to determine if the results of this study could be transferred to similar situations or academic environments. The congruency of the themes from the interviews buttressed the study's applicability to expansive contexts (Creswell, 2022). The patterns that emerged from the 10 participants conveyed that the findings of this study may also echo experiences of other individuals in similar situations, therefore, improving their transferability to other populations or settings.

Dependability

Dependability of results can assist in the event this study is ever replicated (Mores, 2015). Dependability of the research project is ascertained when the research process is transparent (Saldana, 2025). Providing the step-by-step research path allows others to follow, validating the consistency of the decisions made throughout the research project. To guarantee dependability of this project, each stage of the research was documented. Each interview transcript was reviewed for accuracy and consistency. Each transcribed interview was hand coded, and themes were identified. The transcription and analysis of the participant's interviews permitted for a transparent workflow.

The research questions, methodology and overall research project were subject to review by a dissertation committee. The guidance provided during the research process ensured that my approach was aligned with current standards. Member checks were conducted, and participants were given an opportunity to clarify or elaborate on their interview. Detailed records of all coding and thematic decisions were made to provide pellucidity and to remain consistent during the research process.

Confirmability

To avoid any projection of the researcher's personal biases, participating in journaling provided an outlet for the researcher to examine any concerns, preconceptions and assumptions that may influence the study. Reflexivity provides a continual assessment of the researcher's beliefs, judgements and practices during the research process (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). The rationale and perceptions of those thoughts were also included in the journal. The journal revealed the researcher's personal assumptions and goals as well as clarifying individual beliefs and subjectivity. Reflective journaling was completed after each interview to establish dependability as well. This reflective journal provided thoughts, processes and emotions during the data analysis.

Results

Themes materialized through iterative review and coding of the interview transcripts. When exploring the lived experiences of individuals with Hawaiian first names, six major themes surfaced.

Research Question 1

RQ1 was: What are the adult lived experiences with traditional Hawaiian first names encountered in academic settings as children? The following themes arose from the analysis: anxiousness, desensitization and education as a coping skill.

Theme 1: Anxiousness

Each participant experienced their name being mispronounced in school multiple times at various times of their academic career. Participants experienced anxiousness with the anticipation of the teacher calling their name in the classroom. Participant 5 said “Teachers would always pause before calling my name. During attendance, my heart would beat so loud and fast. I knew that my classmates could hear it, it was so loud.” Participant 2 shared “By the time I was in the 3rd grade, I would blurt out my name before the teacher could even try to say it, like ripping off a band-aid.” Participants 6 and 7 created or shortened their names and encouraged the teacher and classmates to refer to them as that name to avoid feeling anxious. Participant 7 stated, “I made my name so simple, I told my teachers to just call me Ke, pronounced Kay, easy because it sounds like an English name.” Participant 6 also included just the first phrase of her name Kalei, “I let people call me Kalei because it was easy teach my instructor to pronounce it correctly. I usually introduce myself as Kalei when I meet foreigners here and abroad.”

Theme 2: Desensitization

Desensitization was a crucial element in participant’s coping skills experiencing name-based microaggressions. Through active listening and probing further regarding the participant’s reaction to having their name mispronounced in the classroom, this theme

indicated that participants realized the importance of self-regulation and self-awareness. Although all participants experienced their name being mispronounced more than a handful of times at various situations in school, most participants reacted rather less intensely.

Participant 3 stated

I can't say that I had any bad experiences in school except just the normal teachers not being able to say my name during roll call. They never get that the W is a V sound. But I've learned to roll with it.

Participant 3 also added, "For me, it hasn't affected me at all. I know that people not from Hawaii would have difficulties with pronouncing Hawaiian names." Participant 5 expressed her own personal feelings about her name being mispronounced, "I am quite surprised honestly how common it is in Hawaii for people to pronounce your name wrong. I don't think there's enough Native Hawaiian education given to staff that are teaching here (Hawaii)." Participant 6 shared that in elementary school she began to shorten her name herself, to avoid it being mispronounced. "Although my name is Kalei o'kalani, I just introduce myself as Kalei. Kalei o'kalani is too long for most people, especially foreigners to pronounce." Participant 7 eloquently stated "It was no bother when my name was mispronounced. It is unrealistic for an untrained ear to speak Hawaiian correctly." Participant 8 expressed that she had never felt discriminated against when her name was mispronounced. She even went on to say "It was actually kind of funny having people try to pronounce my name. Many of my friends shortened my name to Ho'o. I still go by that today."

Theme 3: Education as a Coping Skill

Every participant established that when their name was mispronounced, they would provide the teacher with the correct pronunciation immediately. Most participants were not bothered with educating the teacher on the correct pronunciation of their name. Participant 10 shared that having individuals mispronounce her name provided the opportunity to teach people the correct way to pronounce her name as well as other people's names or just everyday words. She stated, "people would decide on their own which part of my name was easy to pronounce. Some people would call me using only the first two syllables of my name or they took it upon themselves to just use whatever group of letters that they could easily pronounce because it was like the English language. I am very knowledgeable about my culture, and it is about teaching people the right way to pronounce a word or a name. When people shorten your Hawaiian given name, it cuts it and the kauna (hidden layers of meaning) to that they cut off a part of you." Participant 4 revealed that when she would say her name correctly for the teachers, they became intrigued and wanted to know more about her name. "Our names have deep meaning. Our language is like no other...melodious." Participant 7 expressed that the intent behind the correction should be to better the person being corrected and not to put them down. "Corrections should be kind with the intent to better whom you are correcting, not a put down, but if someone were to misuse the name with ill intent a much more assertive approach would be needed" (Participant 7). Participant 8 thought that it was funny when non-Hawaiian teachers would mispronounce her name. "You can't get mad at them for trying. Teach them how to say it. Help them learn your language. And if

someone gets mad and irritated, then you go and correct them, in a gentle manner”
(Participant 8).

Research Question 2

RQ2 was: How do adults with traditional Hawaiian first names describe their experiences of race in the classroom? The themes that arose from this question were: non-discriminatory environment; cultural pride and frustrations with their own race.

Theme 1: Non-Discriminatory Environment

None of the participants in this study has experienced racism in the classroom due to their first name being Hawaiian. Only participant 2 knew what microaggression was. The other participants were provided with a simplified definition for their immediate understanding. None of the participants claimed to experience any form of microaggression in the classroom because of having a Hawaiian first name. One participant claimed “Everyone had a Hawaiian name, so it was a normal thing to me. The Samoans had a Samoan name; the Tongans had a Tongan name. Growing up everyone had a name from their ethnicity. It wasn’t a big deal.” Participant 3 stated that “I don’t understand how mispronouncing a person’s name would result in racist behavior. I have never felt discriminated against or treated differently because of my Hawaiian name” Participant 5 stated “other kids in the classroom would laugh when the teacher mispronounced my name during attendance, but I never experienced extreme forms of discrimination like bullying or anything violent. Hawaii truly is a melting pot of ethnicities. There’s a lot of mixed races here.” Participant 6 directly stated, “I have never been treated differently or experienced any adverse situations because of my name. My

skin color yes but my name no.” Participant 8 shared “Growing up in Hawaii I never had a bad experience or ever treated differently for having a Hawaiian name.” Participant 9 stated “Everyone made fun of each other’s names. That’s how kids are. I wasn’t bothered or treated any differently because I had a Hawaiian name, even if I was the minority in school that most of the other kids were Japanese. It made us unique.” Participant 10 expressed “I never had a problem of any issues in school. Maybe because I carry my name well. I was pretty popular in all my school years.”

Theme 2: Cultural Pride

All the participants in this study stated that they felt that having a Hawaiian name made them proud to be Hawaiian. “Having a Hawaiian name confirmed my identity as a Hawaiian.” A participant stated, “As oldest son, I was given this name as protector over my 'Ohana (family). Each name is a layer of my internal mana (spiritual energy).” Another participant shared “As our culture struggles to survive and Western mentality continues to influence us in many ways. My name remains true to who I am and the values of my Kupuna (elders) still exists in my name.” Everyone had continued the tradition by having an elder give their child a Hawaiian name or being asked to give someone else’s child a Hawaiian name. Participant 9 expressed ‘it was so important for my kids to have Hawaiian names that years ago I asked my grandma for a list of special names knowing that she would not be around by the time I had kids. Participant 9 also said that his named defined him as a Hawaiian, “when people shorten your Hawaiian given name, it cuts it and the kaona (hidden meaning) to that, they cut part of you off.” Participant 10 shared “having a Hawaiian name affected my beliefs and shaped me to

where I am today as a Kanaka (Hawaiian) and mana wahine (strong woman).” Participant 3 no longer lives in the state of Hawaii stated “I wear my name loud and proud. I work in retail, and my name tag has my whole name.” Participant 5 shared “It’s given me a purpose, a reason for being, walking a certain path I feel honors my name and ancestors. It reminds me of where my family came from, reminds me of who I am and how I shall remain in this life.”

Theme 3: Frustrations With Their Own Race

As stated previously, all participants in this study had their Hawaiian name mispronounced in school by a teacher or person that was non-Hawaiian. However, 5 of the 10 participants had also experienced their name being mispronounced by other Hawaiian people. Participant 5 shared “I was quite surprised honestly how common it is in Hawaii for people to pronounce your name wrong.” Participant 4 stated “In Hawaii it bothers me I guess cause just about everyone has had Hawaiian class growing up.” Participant 7 disclosed “awful. Like the last kid being picked for the baseball team.” Participant 10 said “Some Hawaiian blooded people care not to practice Hawaiian culture is that they are so used to living western.” Participant 8 stated “But the Hawaiian way of thinking has dissipated overtime. Before Hawaiian never spoke so frivolously as they do now.”

Summary

This chapter revealed the results of the analysis. Ten participants were interviewed for this phenomenological study. Participants consisted of 2 males; 6 females and 2 transgender females with Hawaiian first names who attended school in the state of

Hawaii. Interview questions were structured to understand their lived experiences in an academic setting having a Hawaiian first name. All participants had more than one experience of having their name mispronounced in a classroom setting.

Themes relevant to the RQ1, How do adults with traditional Hawaiian first names describe their experiences of race in the classroom, were *non-discriminatory environment; cultural pride and frustrations with their own race*. Themes relevant to the RQ2, How do adults with traditional Hawaiian first names describe their experiences of race in the classroom, were *non-discriminatory environment; cultural pride and frustrations with their own race*. Chapter 5 will provide a discussion and conclusion of the study, and recommendations for future research.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

The purpose of this study was to explore the lived experiences of individuals with ethnic Hawaiian names in academic classroom environments. The study explored the experiences of individuals with an ethnic Hawaiian first name encounter in a classroom environment as a child. By examining these lived experiences in the classroom, my objective was to provide insight to the academic environments in Hawaii schools in prioritizing correct pronunciation of traditional Hawaiian names by educators from outside of the Hawaiian culture. Additionally, the study identified the need for a systematic process of integrating non-Hawaiian educators to fundamental aspects of Hawaiian culture (i.e., name pronunciation). There were limited studies that focused on the indigenous population of Hawaiians regarding the long-term effects of name mispronunciation in an academic setting. Fifteen interview questions were created to answer the following research questions:

RQ1: What are the lived experiences by adults with traditional Hawaiian first names encountered in academic settings as children?

RQ2: How do adults with traditional Hawaiian first names describe their experiences of race in the classroom?

The study revealed several key findings. It revealed that Hawaiian students have experienced microaggressions in the classroom with regards to the mispronunciation of their name; however, there was no indication that these microaggressions were severe or persistent. Participants experienced feelings of anxiousness or frustration having their names mispronounced in the classroom but there were no long-term adverse effects on

their mental health or their cultural identity. Results of this study demonstrate positive outcomes such as a strength in cultural identity and developing coping skills through education or sharing of their naming tradition. Participants used their love and passion for their culture to navigate through these unpleasant situations, resulting in advantageous experiences and teachable moments. Lastly, a significant limitation presented itself during the data collection phase of the project, COVID-19 pandemic. The restrictions caused by the pandemic made it difficult to locate willing participants, suggesting that further research should be conducted in an environment that is in person with minimum restrictions.

Interpretation of the Findings

Findings of this study on the lived experiences by adults with traditional Hawaiian first names in an academic setting as children significantly contributed to the existing body of knowledge in the discipline. Previous studies in both name-based microaggressions and the mispronunciation of a child's ethnic first name have discovered results of poor academic achievement; psychological harm and the undermining of an individual's self-worth. Contrary to a study conducted by Kim et.al., (2023), participants of my study were not associated with negative biases by teachers and students. Participants of this study reported having no adverse or discriminatory experiences in school due to having a Hawaiian first name. However, in this study compared with others, although participants' names were mispronounced one time or another throughout their academic career, the adverse results such as anxiety or embarrassment were instant and brief. The anxiety and embarrassment felt at the time had no long-term impact on

their learning or psychological well-being. All participants of my study graduated from High School, and a few had continued their education and acquired a college degree. Nadal et. Al., (2019) concluded that there is a distinct cause and effect interrelationship with the frequency of experienced racial microaggressions in school and the increase of traumatic stress symptoms. Unlike studies conducted by Forrest-Bank and Cuellar (2018); Sanchez et.al. (2018) and Thai et al. (2017) in which the researchers concluded that minorities such as African Americans, Asian Americans and Latin Americans have had damaging impacts on their emotional health resulting from name-based microaggressions. None of the participants of my study reported concerns of their psychological well-being from the mispronunciation of their Hawaiian name in school. Participants did not contribute any adverse experiences in their life to having their Hawaiian name mispronounced in school as a child.

Study results did not align with existing literature emphasizing the adverse effects of having your first name mispronounced in the classroom. Previous studies conducted by Sanchez et al. (2018); Nadal et al., (2015); and Thai et al. (2017) discovered a positive correlation between name-based microaggressions and psychological distress. None of the participants in my study suffered from any long-term distress resulting from their experience in school. Participants of my study responded to their name being mispronounced with positivity. None of the participants did receive the mispronunciation as racially motivated. Each participant acknowledged that their first name was mispronounced multiple times throughout their academic career; however, these behaviors did not have an impact on their cultural identity, self-identity or sense of

self negatively. Peterson et al. (2015) concluded that students with non-European names are often on the receiving end of stereotyping; are placed at a disadvantage or felt excluded. No one in my study reported feeling excluded or at a disadvantage with a non-European name. In fact, participants reported that the mispronunciation of their Hawaiian name strengthened their cultural pride and identity. Each time their names were mispronounced they would take the time to educate their instructor on the correct spelling of their name. Participants accepted that the Hawaiian language is a difficult language to speak, especially since the Hawaiian language was forbidden in schools between 1896 and 1986. Participants felt a connection to their name and felt that it was their role as a Hawaiian to teach the instructor the correct pronunciation of their name, even if it took multiple tries. One participant talked about an instance in which she was in intermediate school, and the instructor was new to the school. She immediately walked to the front of the class and introduced herself to the instructor. She like the other participants of my student felt it was their responsibility to their Hawaiian culture to ensure that the instructor pronounced their name correctly. Umera-Okeke (2016) concluded that the mispronunciation of a person's name in a public setting is associated with the falsification of their identity or may be perceived as an insult. Participants in my study did not feel insulted with their instructor mispronouncing their name. All the participants concluded that there was no malice or ill intent behind the mispronunciation of their name. Participants believed that the instructor mispronounced their name simply because they were not familiar with the Hawaiian language. Participants in my student did not report feeling devalued or lacked confidence in the classroom. In the study conducted by

Cooper et. al., (2017), the student's perception of their instructor, attitude towards the course and classroom behavior were influenced on the instructor knowing them by name or pronouncing their name correctly.

Participants reported that the mispronunciation of their Hawaiian name strengthened their cultural pride and identity. Having a Hawaiian name made them feel connected to their Hawaiian heritage and culture. The mispronunciation of their name did not waver that connection. Hawaii is the most isolated populated place on earth, approximately 2500 miles from the nearest continent, which contributes to beliefs and traditions, such as naming a child, who can be found in no other culture. Most people who are born in the state of Hawaii, of Hawaiian blood or not, remain steadfast and strong in these beliefs and traditions. McCubbin and Marsella (2009) reminds us that the most prized possession of a Hawaiian is their name. Hawaiian names have mana (power and prestige) and a development of the individual's character and personality. One participant whose name literally means alert and prompt but has a deeper meaning of having an energetic path. She believed that her name not only fits her but created an energetic path for her. This participant shared that she is always 30 minutes early to any appointment, but her name connects her to the legacy of her tutu (grandmother) who gave her that name. She can feel the strength of her tutu in her bones when advocating for Hawaiian land rights.

Although only one participant was able to define microaggression and had basic knowledge of the concept. After a brief explanation of microaggression, none of the participants in this study identified the mispronunciation of their Hawaiian name as the

social construct microaggression. They never felt that they were being marginalized or that the mispronunciation of their name was racially motivated. Critical race theory explains that microaggressions, such as mispronunciation, shortening, or renaming an individual for the benefit behaviors such as the mispronunciation of a person's name explains name for no other reason but to oppress or discriminate the individual is considered systematic racism (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). Critical race theory helps us to understand microaggressions by exploring the aspect of the microaggression type; context; effects and the response of the person on the receiving end. Incorrect pronunciation of someone's name could be considered a microinsult, a comment or action that is unintentionally discriminatory. In the situation of my study, the participants believed that the instructors mispronounced their name because they were not familiar with the Hawaiian language of the idiosyncrasies of the language. Instructors who did not pronounce their name correctly were either new to the school, new to the island, and new to the culture. After reviewing the transcripts of the semistructured interviews, the participants of my study who were at the receiving end of these microaggressions did not have long-term adverse effects on their psychological well-being, instead they felt that the cultural wealth that they possessed was celebrated and honored by their instructors. Finally, analyzing how students with Hawaiian first names responded to their names being mispronounced. Participants in my study chose to respond with patience and education. Each participant would respond with the correct pronunciation of their name. One participant would arrive at the classroom early and introduce herself to the instructor. If the instructor had difficulty with the pronunciation of her entire name, she

would provide an option for the instructor. “Call me Pua (Poo Ah). Pua means flower.” Another participant shared that she was not afraid to correct people multiple times until they pronounced it correctly. Participant 7 of my study found it humorous when instructors attempted to pronounce his first name which consisted of 21 letters. His philosophy was “not everyone understood the pronunciation, the diphthongs, let alone the diacritical markings. You can’t get mad at them for trying. Teach them how to say it. Help them learn your language.”

Participants confirmed that they had continued the Hawaiian naming tradition with their own children. Unlike the participants in Pennesi’s (2017) project, these participants never felt singled out or ignored in the classroom because of their Hawaiian first name, even if the teacher had difficulty pronouncing it. The participants in Pennesi’s (2017) study lived in two major cities in Canada which great diversity in the names and naming practices are present, due to the multiple languages and cultures from which names and name-givers originate. Similarly, Hawaii is considered a melting pot, with an influx of groups of various immigrants travelling to work on either the sugar cane or pineapple plantations. However, unlike the participants interviewed, the participants of my study did not feel that the mispronunciation of their name was a means to make them feel excluded or disadvantaged. In addition, the participants of my study did not feel that they had to conform to non-Hawaiian norms, by disregarding their family traditions of gifting their children a Hawaiian name.

Overall, the participants of this study claimed that their academic experience was not faced by negative biases by the teachers or other students because of their ethnic

name (Kim et. al., 2023). Participants of my study reported that their experiences in school were not tainted or created adversity because of their Hawaiian name. In the study conducted by Kim et. al., (2023) participants were concerned with the potential discrimination and racism prior to the child being born. Unlike the participants in my study who gifted their child(ren) a Hawaiian first name, having their own name being mispronounced was not a deterrent for naming their child(ren). The participants of my study did not share the same negative experiences as Asian American parents (Kim et. al., 2023).

The first research question in this study focused on exploring the lived experiences of adults with traditional Hawaiian first names encountered in academic settings as children. To answer this question, the participants shared their experiences and memories of their childhood school years. A few participants attended college courses in the state of Hawaii and shared their encounters with having their name mispronounced by teachers and how those occurrences shaped their academic career.

Several studies have shown that microaggressions create an environment that consists of negative racial perceptions and has individuals feeling frustrated as well as contribute to the escalation of their anxiety in the classroom (Biernat et. al., 2024). Anxiousness was a theme that had surfaced during the data analysis process. Some of the participants did experience anxiousness during the first few roll calls in the classroom. They expressed the anxiousness they felt during the long pause prior to their name being called for attendance. Existing research demonstrated that being on the receiving end of microaggression can produce adverse results on an individual's mental and physical well-

being (Hernandez, 2016; Sanchez, Adams, Arango, and Flannigan, 2018). Some of the results of microaggressions noted in previous research were isolation, psychological stress and adverse academic performance due to the impediment of processing information (Nadal et. al, 2014; Sanchez, et. al., 2018). Although feeling anxious during the roll call, these participants reacted to the instructor with empathy and education. It is common for a Hawaiian name to have an extensive amount of letters and syllables. Most Hawaiian names are compounding poetic phrases (i.e., Kalei o'kalani means beloved child of the heavens). The participants decided to shorten their own name to mitigate the anxiousness felt during roll calls or when being addressed in the classroom. Because of the structure of the name, the participants who decided to shorten their name did not feel that their identity or cultural pride was diminished in any way.

Research exploring the consequences of microaggressions concluded that microaggressions have had damaging impacts on the emotional health of racial and ethnic minorities such as African Americans, Asian Americans, Latin Americans and Native Americans (Forrest-Bank & Cuellar, 2018; Sanchez et. al., 2018; Thai et. al., 2017). Authors have found that there is also a positive correlation between experiencing microaggression and ethnic identity as well as psychological distress (Sanchez et. al., 2018; Nadal et. al., 2015; Thai et. al., 2017). All the participants in the study firmly agree that having their name mispronounced in the classroom did not result in any adverse long-term effects on their self-identity or cultural identity. Most of the participants did not consider the mispronunciation of their name as a microaggression but rather as ignorance of the Hawaiian language. Having this perception, participants of my study the

mispronunciation of their name did not conjure feelings of frustrations or escalate their frustrations in the classroom as concluded in the study by Biernat et. al., (2024). Every participant established a positive response when their name was mispronounced. The each provided the teacher with the correct pronunciation immediately. Participants felt that that it was their obligation to their culture to teach the correct pronunciation and to perpetuate the Hawaiian language. All participants confirmed that the mispronunciation of their name in the classroom did not tarnish their school years experiences.

The focus of the second research question was to examine how adults with traditional Hawaiian first names describe their experiences of race in the classroom. Microaggressions create an environment that consists of unfavorable racial perceptions and has individuals feeling frustrated as well as contribute to the escalation of their anxiety in the classroom (Biernat et. al., 2024). Previous research revealed that Asian American children often experienced discrimination and racial discourse because their names embraced their cultural beliefs (Kim et. al., (2023). None of the participants in this study had experienced racism in the classroom due to their first name being Hawaiian. None of the participants perceived the mispronunciation of their name as a name-based microaggression. Most of the participants had any or no expectation of their non-Hawaiian instructor to pronounce their name correctly on the initial meeting. A few participants experienced classmates laughing at the mispronunciation of their name, but the laughter and teasing were not constant and persistent. None of the participants ever experienced any form of racism, bullying or violence because of their Hawaiian name.

Culturally, providing a name to a child is a fundamental step towards the creation and development of the child's identity (Umera-Okeke, 2017). Mispronunciation, changing or shortening an individual's first name can easily undermine the individual's sense of identity and self-worth (Peterson et. al, 2015). None of the participants claimed to feel excluded, stereotyped or placed at a disadvantage in an academic setting for having a non-European first name. Previous research has noted that racially minoritized students with ethnic names are associated with negative biases by teachers and students (Kim et. al., 2023). The theme of cultural pride that had surfaced in the data analysis was a theme that did not align with the previous literature. Results from a study administered by Marrum (2018) attained that mispronouncing or (re)naming a student forces the student to reject aspects of their identity as an attempt to fit in, specifically in the classroom. Mccubbin & Marsella (2009) claim that students who have first names that are not from the dominant culture develop feelings of inferiority. All the participants in this study stated that they felt that having a Hawaiian name made them proud to be Hawaiian. Each participant had continued the Hawaiian name ritual tradition by having an elder give their child a Hawaiian name or being asked to give someone else's child a Hawaiian name. Their experiences with instructors or peers having difficulties pronouncing their Hawaiian name did not deter them from continuing the tradition. A study performed by Hernandez & Villodas (2019) concluded that experiencing microaggressions strengthens a sense of belonging to their ethnic group. Hernandez & Villodas (2019) also claimed that this sense of belonging mitigated the individual's sense

of belonging. This would explain why more than half of the participants in my study felt that their name structured their beliefs and defined them as a Hawaiian.

Another result that did not align with previous research was frustrations with their own race. In the previous literature reviewed, mispronunciation of first names was done by an instructor of a different race. Most research reviewed on microaggressions concentrated on populations that have migrated to the United States or who are attempting to assimilate into a society (Fu et. al., 2024; Zajac & Benton-Lee, 2023; O’Keefe & Greenfield, 2016; Allen et. al, 2017). In this study, half of the participants experienced the mispronunciation of their first name by someone of the same race. This is a long-term result of the colonization of Hawaii. Prior to the overthrow of the last reigning monarch, Queen Liliuokalani, the law of 1860 discredited the life-long naming tradition of the Hawaiian people and mandated that all Hawaiians take a Christian or English name (Munnely et. al., 2018). In 1893, the Queen was disposed and just three years later, in 1896, the Hawaiian language was banned in schools and English became the primary language of Hawaii (Dela Cruz et. al., 2006). It was not until 1987, almost a decade later that the Hawaiian language was allowed in the public schools (Pukui et. al., 2014). In 1993, the United States finally declared natives of the Hawaiian Islands as Indigenous people in 1993. For some native Hawaiians, the Hawaiian culture has dissipated overtime, and the language has become frivolous (Pukui et. al., 2014). Having a concept of the revival of the Hawaiian language most participants reacted less intensely to their Hawaiian name being mispronounced. In doing so, the constant mispronunciation of their first name did not cause a distraction, nor did it impede their learning process.

The Critical Race Theory (CRT) was used in this study to provide a central focal point to race and racism within our education system. By utilizing CRT, the lived experiences of each participant were analyzed on a larger racial scale as microaggressions and how these microaggressions affect individuals of Hawaiian ancestry with given Hawaiian names. Although CRT affirms the existence of institutional racism, the mispronunciations in these lived experiences were not in a result of the dominant ideology of the educational system or malice intent, but instead a simple form of ignorance which were immediately rectified between the student and educator through education of the Hawaiian culture and the correct pronunciation of the Hawaiian language (Warmington, 2020). Utilizing the CRT to analyze the lived experiences, the existence of power struggles between the students and non-Hawaiian educators were not present with the participants. The mispronunciation of Hawaiian names was not motivated by the self-interest, power or privilege of the non-Hawaiian educators (Hernandez, 2016). CRT was used as an allegorical method to view the lived experiences in the context of how each participant related to their environment which did not result in their disparage by the non-Hawaiian educator. Most importantly, CRT provided a holistic comprehension of the socio-cultural component of the student's perceptions, experiences and responses to racism.

Limitations of the Study

This phenomenological study purpose was to provide a better understanding of the lived experiences, racism and microaggressions, of individuals with Hawaiian first names in a classroom setting. Due to the lack of qualitative research involving the

Indigenous population of Hawaiians, this study addressed this gap. A significant limitation was the findings which lacked generalizability. This study addressed a specific gap, lack of research on the lived experiences of Hawaiian people regarding name based microaggression and racism. These findings would not be applicable to other indigenous populations or settings. To address this limitation, the study acknowledges the specificity of the findings and indicates the need for further research in other settings to validate and expand on the gained awareness.

The potential for research bias was another limitation of this study. Bias that has surfaced from the preconceived notions or existing perspectives of the researcher inadvertently influenced the data interpretation and analysis. This was addressed by utilizing the journaling technique, but the effectiveness of this reflexive practice could not be validated. This study also admits to the likelihood of biases from the participants. Participants were obligated to provide politically correct or socially acceptable answers to the interview questions. There is a possibility that the participant bias could have distorted the data and affected its authenticity. Mitigating participant bias was done by using strategies such as building rapport of trust, confirming confidentiality, and creating a safe and non-judgmental setting during the interview.

Although the study assured transparency in the process of data collections and analysis, administered detail descriptions of the coding process, member checks and the use of reflective journal and notes, any clarity deficiency in any of these areas questioned the trustworthiness of the findings. The methods such as comprehensive reporting on

coding procedures and member checking were implemented to ensure the credibility and dependability of the study.

The data collected for this project was done during the COVID-19 Pandemic and interviews were done via Zoom. Strong efforts were made to build rapport and trust with each participant, but with the state of panic that the entire world was in proved difficult to do so. Another significant limitation resulting from the pandemic, the difficulty of locating participants and their willingness to participate. It is possible that the answers to the interview questions were short and direct, lacking true meaning of the lived experience. Although every COVID-19 precaution was made, participants may have felt uneasy and unsafe to engage in the interview.

Every effort possible was made to address these limitations, the findings of this study should be elucidated with an amount of discretion. The definitive nature of this study revealed the need for further research in divergent educational institutions and locations to reinforce the generalization and application of the findings. Future research should examine different educational institutions and broader participant samples.

Recommendations

Most recommendations in prior research focus on the reduction of microaggressions and the promotion of equality and inclusion. However, strategies and policies for change are not well documented. Students, foreign or indigenous continue to experience name-based microaggressions. It is recommended that instructors develop strategies to promote a sense of belonging that are associated with positive academic outcomes. When student feel valued and cared for, they begin to invest more in the

course and are more willing to seek assistance from instructors (Cooper et. al., 2017). By instructors learning the name of each student and taking the time to pronounce it correctly, student-teacher relationships become robust and healthy, and the classroom feels more like a community (Cooper et. al., 2017). The first step is that instructors and the education system must recognize and take responsibility for their part. Instructors must accept the blame when mispronouncing a student's name rather than blaming the student for having a difficult name to pronounce. Instructors can commit to practice and learn the correct pronunciation of the student's name. Mispronunciation of a student's name, Hawaiian or otherwise can be resolved through consistency and persistency.

In my study, participants choose to deal with the situation in the moment, instead of having it manifest into a situation with adverse results. Although this study revealed similar themes, it additionally advocated for individuals with similar experiences to deal with it in the moment, at the point of the occurrence. Each participant of my study decided to respond with their name being mispronounced with kindness. Participants gently corrected the instructor. The instructors were receptive, and the participants appreciated the efforts of the instructor, even if it took several tries. Instructors can use this opportunity to make notations on the attendance sheet that could assist them in the future.

An instructor could implement simple aids to learn the correct pronunciation of a student's name, such as name cards that have the student's name phonetically spelled to facilitate learning a student's name. With today's technology, students can send an audio recording with the correct pronunciation to the instructor for practice. There are also

several web-based applications that instructors can use to practice pronunciation of a name (i.e. NameShouts; Pronounce Names; NameCoach).

A person's name has strong ties to their identity. Another strategy is to create an icebreaker or learning activity that can assist in learning the student's name along with the correct pronunciation. Students can introduce themselves and share stories that relate to their name. This not only can help the instructor to learn the correct pronunciation of the student's name, but it can also strengthen the community structure of the classroom. Instructors can also implement learning activities that focus on the student's name. During these types of activities, it is important that it is facilitated with sensitivity and any microaggressions that may occur be addressed.

Prioritizing correct name pronunciation supports a more inclusive classroom for students of all ages. Future interventions should promote inclusivity and a sense of "ohana" family. In the academic setting, safe places should be developed in which students can freely speak about their experiences with name-based microaggressions and to improve their understanding of microaggressions; faculty training and curriculum that promotes diversity, racism and various forms of social equality.

Implications

The implications for social change yielded from this study are telling because it contributed to the current research of Hawaiian people and their experiences in an academic setting. The study explored both affirmative and adverse experiences individuals with a Hawaiian first name have in an academic setting. Suggestions, such as self-awareness of the problem, being intentional and trying; using aids and including

learning activities that focus on the student's name were provided to assist stakeholders improve the inclusivity of the learning environment for all children.

All students, at any age, need an inclusive and equitable environment to gain academic achievement. However, experiencing name-based microaggressions could impede and disrupt an individual's learning. In a previous study, students felt that their learning experience was obstructed by their constant exposure to microaggressions (Morrison et. al., 2023). Kim et. al., (2023) noted that racially minoritized students with ethnic names are associated with negative biases by teachers and students. African American students have weathered decades of humiliation by teachers and peers for mispronouncing their non-European name (Marrun, 2018). It is evident that children with Hawaiian first names are currently having their names mispronounced in the classroom. Each participant could easily recall the incidents and the impact they had on them at that moment, as well as the long term. However, the participants of my student did not experience the same discrimination and racial discourse that Asian Americans experience because their names embrace their cultural beliefs (Kim et. al., 2023). The participants of my study did not report feelings of exclusion; cultural biases; and pressure to conform as students of Mexican, African American and Asian American students have reported (Chakravarty, 2022; Kim et. al., 2023; Biernat et. al., 2024).

Conclusion

This was the first study exploring the lived experiences of individuals with their Hawaiian name being mispronounced in an academic setting. This study extended the current knowledge of indigenous and Hawaiian people's experiences of name-based

microaggressions and their impact on the student's psychological well-being, academic achievement and cultural identity. In this study, individuals reported experiencing their first name being mispronounced that had no long-term adverse effects on their psychological well-being or cultural pride. Efforts and future recommendations focus on institutional change, education and training of staff and a "hear it, deal with it" response. As more parents continue to perpetuate the naming tradition of their Hawaiian ancestors, educators should be compelled to actively remove existing barriers and continue to support students to thrive in an academic setting whether their instructor is Hawaiian decent or not. Educational institutions have a moral obligation to address all forms of racism, including name-based microaggressions.

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Appendix A: Interview Questions

Tell me the story behind your name?
Did you like your name growing up? Do you like your name now?
Do you think your name fits you?
Did you ever consider changing your name? If yes, to what and why?
Tell me about your experience in school with having a Hawaiian name
tell me about a time when you felt discriminated against in school
Have you ever had your name mispronounced in school? (If participant answers yes, Tell me more about that)
Have you ever been called by a name other than your given name by a teacher or school staff?
How have these experiences affected your day-to-day life?
Do you know what a microaggression is? In your own words, describe or define microaggression.
How do you think your experiences in school were different than the experiences of students with Eurocentric first names?
Have you continued the Hawaiian naming tradition with your own children?
Did having a Hawaiian name contribute to or precipitate any adverse situations in school?
How did having a Hawaiian name affect you?
What changes in your life, if any, do you associate with having a Hawaiian name?