Disengagement by a thousand cuts:
The impact of microaggressions on employee engagement

A Dissertation
Submitted to
College of Public Affairs
University of Baltimore
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
degree
of
Doctor of Public Administration

By

Courtney J. Jones Carney

College of Public Affairs
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Baltimore, Maryland
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DEDICATION

I want to acknowledge that the final two chapters of this dissertation were written during dual pandemics – COVID-19 which took a total of 631,440 lives by the completion of this dissertation (8/27/2021) and what Dr. Ibram X. Kendi refers to as metastatic racism which has impacted lives in a manner that cannot be quantified. Both pandemics continue to have disproportionate impacts on Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC), and are directly connected to structural racism and the manner in which white supremacy ideology -- the all-encompassing centrality and assumed superiority of people defined and perceived as White, and the practices and standards of norms based upon that assumption -- produces and maintains systems that benefit White people while disenfranchising BIPOCs.

I would like to dedicate this dissertation to all those who lost their lives and those who lost loved ones during the dual pandemics. In particular, my niece, Morgan Jones, who lost her father in November 2020 due to COVID-related complications. Her life has been forever changed because the principles of public administration, advancing the common good, and effecting positive change in all levels of government, were poorly executed during this unprecedented time.

Next, I dedicate this to two deceased prominent writers – Maya Angelou and Chinua Achebe. Through the words of Angelou, "still I rise," despite the structurally oppressive forces designed to restrict my movement and contribute to my slow "death by a thousand cuts." And to Achebe who helped promote the African proverb that proclaims "until the lions have their own historians, the history of the hunt will always glorify the hunter."

Finally, I dedicate this to all the lions. May our voices be heard!

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

ABSTRACT

Disengagement by a thousand cuts:
The impact of microaggressions on employee engagement

Courtney J. Jones Carney, DPA, MBA

Employee engagement has been explored in many fields and is recognized as an important factor in organizational success (Prasad, 2013). However, less is known about how microaggressions impact employee engagement. This cross-sectional study was conducted to examine the association between the psychological components of employee engagement and occurrence of racial and ethnic microaggressions on Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) in the workplace, and the impact of coping style and perceived stress levels in attenuating or exacerbating the impact of microaggressions on employee engagement. The results indicated that BIPOC employees have significantly lower employee engagement compared to White employees; race/ethnicity is a significant factor in the relationship between frequency of occurrences of racial and ethnic microaggressions and the psychological safety element of employee engagement; intersectionality significantly impacts the occurrence of microaggressions and employee engagement, respectively; and coping style and perceived stress act as partial mediators in the relationship between frequency of occurrence of microaggressions and employee engagement. Importance, limitation, implications, and future directions are discussed.

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Introduction

Researchers and practitioners have long grappled with understanding workplace employee engagement. This topic spans academic management, human resources professional organizations, and consulting firms, and is recognized as an important factor in organizational success (Prasad, 2013). According to Saks and Gruman (2014), employee engagement is one of the most popular topics in the human resources management academic discipline, as illustrated through various meta-analyses and publications. While Kahn (1990) offers an employee engagement construct that considers the impact of psychological factors on employee functioning, there is a lack of research on employee engagement in the public sector. Many public administration scholars assert that public sector employees are different from their private sector counterparts, noting that public sector employees are motivated by "work that assists others and benefits society, involves self-sacrifice, and promotes responsibility and integrity" (Rainey, 2009, p. 267). Continuing to understand public sector employee engagement is important, given that the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported in September 2020 that 15.8 percent of the U.S. workforce occupied jobs in federal, state, and local government. According to Borst and colleagues (2019), public administration literature has focused on the more extrinsic aspects of employee well-being, such as motivation, satisfaction, and organizational commitment, while not examining psychological components of work engagement prior to 2013, additionally noting that public sector employee engagement literature is still quite limited. Perhaps more limited, is the examination of the impacts of microaggressions in public administration. Racial and ethnic microaggressions have been found to compete with attentiveness and productivity at work (Sue, 2010). Therefore, this

study will seek to examine the relationship between employee engagement and exposure to racial and ethnic microaggressions.

Definition of Key Terms

      Employee engagement. *Employee engagement* is the emotional, physical, and cognitive expression of self in the performance of work (Kahn, 1990). Engagement is the result of a combination of the satisfaction and purpose derived from work (psychological meaningfulness), freedom to fully express oneself without fear of reprisal (psychological safety), and the ability to engage, considering distractions and responsibilities (psychological availability). Conversely, disengagement is defined as "the simultaneous withdrawal and defense of a person's preferred self in behaviors that promote a lack of connections, physical, cognitive, and emotional absence, and passive, incomplete role performance" (Kahn, 1990, p. 701).

      Latinx. According to Salinas & Lozano (2019), the term *Latinx* first appeared in United States online search engines in 2014 and spiked in 2016 as an internet search term. In this study, Latinx will be used in place of Hispanic/s, Latino/s, and Latina/s. This is done to eliminate the gender bias of the terms Latino/s and Latina/s by offering a non-binary or gender-neutral option.

      Southwest Asia and North Africa (SWANA). Use of the term *SWANA* as opposed to common terms such as the "Middle East," "Middle East and North Africa," "Near East," "Arab World," and/or "Islamic World" takes a decolonizing approach to applying a name to a region that has previously been referenced based on its proximity to Europe (SWANA Alliance, n.d.). Use of the antiquated terms "Middle East," "Far East" (China) and "Near East" (Turkey) are examples of Eurocentric language (Finlayson,

2016), while SWANA is a "decolonized term that centers geography rather than a history of European colonialism and American imperialism. By focusing on geography, it is also more inclusive of the various cultural histories that exist within the region" (Jones Carney & Ferreira, 2021, 1:10).

Black, Indigenous and People of Color. The term *Black, Indigenous and People of Color* or *BIPOC* will be used to refer to members of a racial and ethnic groups often referred to as "minorities." While the term "minorities" can be used to describe groups who have been historically underrepresented, it also emphasizes numerical presentation, which is globally inaccurate and soon to be nationally inaccurate. According to the United Nations World Population Prospects' 2017 report, 59.6%, 17%, 9.6%, 5.5%, and 4.7% of the world's population is accounted for in Asia, Africa, Europe, South America, and North America, respectively. Although this data cannot be used to calculate racial distribution by continent, it suggests a strong improbability that individuals of European descent would represent the majority of the world's population. Nationally, the U.S. Census projects that the White population will decrease in the coming decades. Frey, 2018 writes that demographers suggest a White-minority by 2045. Furthermore, Ortman and Guarneri (2008) project Latinx and Asian populations are expected to increase, while Black, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander (NHPI), and American Indian populations are expected to maintain their percentages of the population, accounting for 50.5% of the U.S. population (24.6% Latinx, 13.1 % Black, 7.9% Asian, 1.2% American Indian, 0.3 NHPI, and 3.4% multiracial). Additionally, the term People of Color will be used throughout this study as a collective term that includes all racial identities (except for White) and the Latinx population, which constitutes an ethnicity representing many racial

groups. Researchers have found that the racialization of the Latinx population in a U.S. context results in the Latinx population being viewed as not White, which in turn subjects this group to microaggressions that communicate similar messages of inferiority and invalidation as that of other BIPOC racial groups (Golash-Boza & Durity, 2016; Massey, 2013). Additionally, the terms *employees of Color* and *BIPOC employees* will be used interchangeably to describe BIPOC employees in the workplace.

Historically Underrepresented Groups. The term *historically underrepresented groups* refers to the collective identity of individuals considered underrepresented in comparison to the general public. Historically underrepresented groups have been excluded from employment, education, housing, etc. at various points in history because of their racial, ethnic, gender, ability or other social identity (Allen, 2017).

Microaggressions. *Microaggressions* are a form of discrimination directed at individuals or segments of a population based on their group membership. Microaggressions can be verbal, non-verbal and/or environmental (Sue et al., 2007). For this study, microaggressions will be viewed through the lens of race and ethnicity.

Intersectionality. The term *intersectionality* captures the intersection of two or more oppressed identities, which can result in discrimination that would not necessarily be experienced by each isolated oppressed identity (Crenshaw, 1989). Instead, a new form of discrimination is created by the intersection of these oppressed identities.

Stress Response. *Stress response* describes the ways in which individuals respond to or cope with stress.

Foundations of Public Sector Motivation

When exploring the relationship between microaggressions and employee engagement, it is imperative to explore the historical theories of public administration. Once the foundation of public administration was set, it became necessary for managers to focus their attention on the productivity of workers. The writings of Taylor (1912), Gulick (1937), Follett (1926), Maslow (1943) and McGregor (1957) helped to explore productivity as it related to management and supervision, motivation, and skills and abilities. Although some of the authors' theories are contradictory, there are many shared points that undoubtedly shaped modern theories of motivation. These shared and contradictory theories will be explored in greater detail in the next several paragraphs.

The introduction of scientific management by Taylor (1912) challenged the type of management used at the time. Taylor declared that this new form of management would result in receiving the best quality of the work with "absolute regularity" (p. 36). He postulated that if managers created specific rules that governed the work, recruited and developed workers, rolled the aforementioned concepts together and then had managers work side-by-side to complete the tasks, this would lead to more dependable productivity of the workers. Follett (1937) supported the "depersonalized orders" (p. 60) of scientific management, which she asserted allowed workers and managers to take orders from the situation and not from one another. Follett alleged that receiving orders, especially in a disrespectful manner, could be damaging to the self-esteem of the worker, thus negatively impacting productivity. Like Follett, Gulick (1937) purported that the changing rules of a situation should result in managers and workers adapting as opposed to acting out of habit. Gulick believed that managers should divide work among their

workers to get the best possible outcome. He instructed managers to coordinate work within the separation to ensure that all employees are working toward the same goal, a thought also shared by Taylor.

Maslow described the five needs of individuals in the Theory of Human Motivation (1943). This theory suggests that these five needs: physiological, safety, love, esteem and self-actualization, respectively; have a hierarchy and to satisfy the next need, the former must first be satisfied. Although Maslow successful introduced this theory, it was McGregor (1957) who most successfully applied the hierarchy of needs to employee productivity. McGregor suggests that supervisors may be able to control employees under certain instances through what he describes as a "carrot-and-stick approach" (p. 161). This approach is said to only work on the basic physiological and safety needs. McGregor asserts that once the worker feels confident in their ability to meet their basic needs, they will want to meet higher needs which are not easily satisfied by employment alone (p. 162).

This is where the New Theory of Management (NTM) is introduced by McGregor. While this theory is grounded in Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, it factors in more advanced motivations of workers. NTM requires management to assist workers building identifying and building upon skills and abilities. A similar sentiment is also expressed by Taylor (1912), as he instructs managers to study workers' potential and provide training to better develop workers over time. Gulick (1937) believed that the division of work would concentrate workers' skills and abilities and result in the creation of specializations. Both McGregor and Taylor suggest "flat systems" where employers work side-by-side with supervisors and where managers allow workers to become more

involved in their jobs by empowering workers, thus satisfying the need for esteem and self-actualization. McGregor offers criticism of Taylor's scientific management, as he found that it did not consider the advanced forms of motivation and focused on the most basic needs of employees. He added that the theory of scientific management "tied men to limited jobs which do not utilize their capabilities, have discouraged the acceptance of responsibly, have encouraged passivity, and have eliminated meaning for work" (1957, p. 164).

Such theories seek to rationalize employee behavior and choice as it relates to rewards, either intrinsic, extrinsic or both. Vroom's definition of motivation is addressed by expectancy theory. It explains human behavior by simplifying it into a selection of options. Expectancy theory assumes that people: (1) associate rewards with specific behaviors; (2) that the selection of a certain behavior will result in a reward; and (3) that the reward is attainable. When applied to the work setting, expectancy theory can provide a better understanding of why and how employees are motivated to choose one behavior over another (1964).

Although early proponents of expectancy theory believed that it could be applied across the board, Miller and Grush (1988) offer an alternative view when they suggest that determinants of expectancy theory are dependent upon "forces in an environment as well as factors within an individual" (p. 108). Adapting Vroom's expectancy theory, Fishbein and Ajzen (1975) conceptualize an expectancy-value model that incorporates the variables of individual differences and environmental factors while integrating the impact of social norms on behavior and choice.

Public Service Motivation. Much of the work of the aforementioned theorists is evident in the modern application of employee motivation and shaped the work of Public Service Motivation (PSM), first introduced by Perry and Wise (1990) to address a surge in a public lack of confidence in American institutions by advancing the literature around the unique predilection towards public service. The concepts theorized by Perry and Wise (1990) contradicted the classic belief that public employees' motivations were "self-maximizing" (Battaglio, 2015, p. 219). Instead, PSM suggests that public service employees seek employment with agencies that satisfy at least one of the following: private interest or desire to impact policy (rational motive), a desire to serve the public interest (norm-based motives), and/or a desire to protect the rights of individuals as outlined in the country's founding documents (affective motives).

In 2000, Perry furthers his previous work with Wise (1990) by offering a complex process theory that acknowledges the role of societal forces on identity development that impact work motivations and behaviors. He offers four theoretical premises with proposed reciprocal causal relationships for motivation:

1. *Sociohistorical context*, including the societal environmental influences of education, socialization, and life events that shape preferences and identity;

2. *Motivational context*, including organizational factors like job characteristics, incentives, and work environment;

3. *Individual characteristics*, including components like abilities, self-concepts, and self-direction; and

4. *Behavior*, including factors that influence how an individual behaves.

Battaglio (2015) adds, "Over time, individuals come to strongly identify with these life events, values, self-concepts, and behaviors, and their influence on work is unavoidable" (p. 219). Thus, Perry (2000) asserts that public employees are differently motivated compared to those who seek employment in the private sector because "the primary motivators for public-sector employees are the interests that attract them to public service" (p. 484).

Differentiating Public Service Motivation from Public Sector Motivation. Battaglio (2015) offers an important distinction between public service motivation and public sector motivation: the desire to participate in a particular type of work versus the desire to work for a particular type of organization, respectively. Furthermore, while the public sector includes federal, state and local governments, it also includes state-owned entities and public corporations, such as public educational institutions. With that in mind, it is important to recognize that while public educational institutions are a part of the public sector, the motivations of employees of public educational institutions may not be connected to PSM.

Shifting from Motivation to Engagement. There has been a recent shift in public administration literature from PSM to employee engagement, which Noesgaard and Hansen (2018) attributes to "its positive influence on both employee and organizational performance" (p. 1047). A study of the relationship between public service motivation and employee engagement found support of PSM as an antecedent of employee engagement (Cooke, 2019). However, employee engagement public administration literature is limited and does not include a depth of research on various factors that can impact employee engagement, including exposure to acts of

discrimination via microaggressions. Furthermore, public administration literature that focuses on microaggressions does not exist. A 2020 search of *Public Sector Communications, Australian Journal of Public Administration, Public Administration Review, Public Administration and Development, Canadian Public Administration, Review of Public Personnel Administration, The American Review of Public Administration, and Public Participation for the 21st Century Democracy* yielded zero articles on microaggressions. With the changing racial and ethnic demographics of the United States and U.S. Census projects that People of Color (those not classified as White, including Latinx Americans) will account for more than half of all Americans by 2044 (Colby & Ortman, 2015), the continued diversification of the American workplace can be expected. This study seeks to explore the impact of incidents of discrimination, such as microaggressions, on employee engagement. While microaggressions have been found to adversely contribute to various health and employment outcomes, such as job satisfaction, there is limited research on how individual responses to stress can mediate and moderate the impact of racial and ethnic microaggressions on employee engagement. Sue and colleagues (2007) urge that additional research should explore "the coping mechanisms used by People of Color to stave off the negative effects of microaggressions" (p. 283). Correspondingly, Kahn (1990) found that "people were more or less available to place themselves into role performances depending on how they coped with the various demands on both the work and non-work aspects of their lives" (p. 714). Last, exploring the paradigm of intersectionality, a construct originating from academic feminism, there is opportunity to understand employee engagement when employees possess two or more oppressed identities. This study merges constructs from

human resource management and psychology to better understand the psychological components of employee engagement in relation to impact of microaggressions, response to stress, perceived levels of stress, and intersectionality.

Significance of the Study

This study is important because it takes an interdisciplinary approach to understanding the complex constructs of employee engagement, typically studied in human resources management, and microaggressions, with origins in psychology, in the public sector setting. Much of the literature on workplace environment and personnel management in public administration concentrates on motivation, satisfaction, and work commitment versus the psychological components of meaningfulness, safety, and availability in relation to employee engagement. Vigoda-Gadot, Eldor & Schohat (2013) suggest that **"**focusing on [employee engagement] may offer public sector organizations a competitive advantage and may contribute to a better understanding of employee functioning in public service" (p, 521). Similarly, as this study seeks to explore how employees function in the workplace, it is equally important to investigate how the psychological components of employee engagement are impacted as a result of everyday occurrences of racism, bias, and discrimination in the workplace. Kahn (1990) purported that the psychological conditions of meaningfulness, safety, and availability were enacted at the "intersection of individual, interpersonal, group, intergroup, and organizational factors" (695). Thus, interactions at work that are perceived as invalidating or communicate messages of inferiority in the form of microaggressions may impact employee engagement.

Research Questions

This study will address the following question: What are the effects of frequency of exposure to microaggressions, stress response/coping style, and perceived stress levels on employee engagement?

Hypothesis 1: BIPOC employees have statistically significantly lower employee engagement compared to White employees, when adjusting for employment factors such as classification status, years of service, and presence of supervisory duties.

Hypothesis 2: Employment factors, such as employee classification, years of service, and supervisory duties have a significant impact on employee engagement.

Hypothesis 3: Occurrence of racial and ethnic microaggressions by BIPOC employees has a significant negative impact on employee engagement as assessed by analysis of variance.

Hypothesis 4: BIPOC employees with two or more intersecting oppressed identities have greater frequency of occurrence of racial and ethnic microaggressions and lower employee engagement, respectively.

Hypothesis 5: The relationship between occurrence of racial and ethnic microaggressions and employee engagement is either mediated or moderated by certain forms of coping. A high *education/advocacy* score on the Coping with Discrimination Scale will have a positive effect in mediating or moderating the relationship between occurrence of racial and ethnic microaggressions on employee engagement. Conversely, it is hypothesized that a high score in *internalization, drug and alcohol use, resistance,* and *detachment* on the Coping with Discrimination Scale will have a negative effect in mediating or moderating the relationship between occurrence of racial and ethnic microaggressions on employee engagement.

Hypothesis 6: The relationship between frequency of occurrence to racial and ethnic microaggressions and employee engagement is negatively impacted by perceived high stress levels. That is, the relationship of frequency of occurrence of microaggressions on employee engagement becomes more salient when perceived stress is high.

Summary

Although the immediate impact of microaggressions may not seem significant, the accumulation of microaggressions over time can seem like what Maya Angelou referred to as "death by a thousand cuts." Racial and ethnic microaggressions have workplace implications, such as diminished problem-solving abilities and decreased work productivity (Salvatore & Shelton, 2007; Dovidio, 2001), organizational difficulties in recruiting, hiring, retaining, and promoting (Sue, 2010) BIPOC employees and other historically underrepresented groups, which may affect employee engagement. It is important to study the impact of racial and ethnic microaggressions as it relates to employee engagement, while examining if stress response/coping style and stress levels can mediate or moderate this relationship. Data and findings from this study can be used by public administration scholars to better understand the interrelationship of employee engagement, microaggressions, and how experiences related to identity can impact employees' connection to work.

Review of the Literature

The purpose of this study is to determine the relationship between exposure to racial microaggressions and employee engagement in a university setting as mediated or moderated through employees' stress response/coping style and recent perceived stress levels. The literature has not clarified the role of racial microaggressions in the workplace and their impact on employee engagement. In particular, the literature is silent on how stress response/coping style and intersectional identities influences the effect of microaggressions on employee engagement. The gap in the literature regarding the relationship between racial microaggressions and employee engagement exposes the need for further study in this area. Additionally, employee engagement has been studied and written about across academic disciplines; however, there is limited focus on this concept within the discipline of public administration. This chapter presents a review of literature germane to employee engagement, microaggressions, stress response/coping style, and intersectionality. The literature is organized by section headings for structure and concludes with a section on identified gaps in the literature.

The Case for Employee Engagement

The first definition of engagement appeared in academic literature in 1990. Kahn's holistic definition, "the simultaneous employment and expression of a person's 'preferred self' in task behaviors that promote connections to work and to others, personal presence (physical, cognitive, and emotional), and active, full role performance," (p. 700) centered the employee identity. Kahn's study began with the premise that implications for experiences at work were connected to the various parts of one's self used while at work. Kahn's guiding assumption was that people physically,

cognitively, and emotionally accessed various parts of themselves when performing

different tasks. This included nuances of engagement, or what Goffman (1964) described

as brief work performance attachments and detachments, describing the ebbs and flows

that take place over time based on "individual difference and situational factors that

influence the psychological importance of work" (p. 693). Kahn's study sought to

understand the variables that explain this self-regulated shifting of self to perform

necessary tasks and "yield a grounded theoretical framework illustrating how

psychological experiences of work and work contexts shape the processes of people

presenting and absenting their selves during task performances" (p. 694). By contrast,

prior studies and literature on organizational behavior suggested that employees were

either committed to the organization (Mowday, Porter, & Steers, 1982; Porter, Steers,

Mowday, & Boulian, 1974), self-estranged from work (Seeman, 1972), or having some

degree of job involvement (Lawler & Hall, 1970; Lodahl & Kejner, 1965). Similarly,

public administration literature did not explore the nuances of engagement; instead, it

focused on productivity and how concepts such as motivation (Vroom, 1964),

compensation (Pearce & Perry, 1983), and rewards (Rainey, 1982) impact job

performance. Conversely, Vigoda-Gadot, Eldor & Schohat (2013) suggest that **"**focusing

on [employee engagement] may offer public sector organizations a competitive

advantage and may contribute to a better understanding of employee functioning in

public service" (p, 521).

  Psychological Engagement Construct. Kahn proposed three psychological

conditions that resulted in employee engagement or disengagement. *Psychological

meaningfulness* is achieved through stimulating and personally fulfilling work and "a

feeling that one is receiving a return on investments of one's self in a currency of physical, cognitive, or emotional energy" (Kahn, 1990, pp. 703-704). An employee's personal assessment of their ability to freely express themselves without reprisal (May et al., 2004), known as *psychological safety*, can also be described as a "sense of being able to show and employ one's self without fear of negative consequences to self-image, status, and career" (p. 708). Last, *psychological availability,* or an employee's readiness to engage within life's demands, was defined by Kahn (1990) as "a sense of having the physical, emotional, or psychological resources to personally engage at a particular moment" (p. 714). The final condition in the construct called for the consideration of responses to stress. This construct of psychological engagement as presented by Kahn (1990) allows for the consideration of various factors that can impact an employee's engagement or disengagement.

Impacts of Disengagement. Kahn (1990) defines disengagement as "the simultaneous withdrawal and defense of a person's preferred self in behaviors that promote a lack of connections, physical, cognitive, and emotional absence, and passive, incomplete role performance" (p. 701). There are many outcomes of disengagement, some of which have financial implications for organizations. A 2001 study by the Gallup Research Group estimates that actively disengaged employees miss 3.5 more days of work per year compared to all other workers, resulting in a total of 86.5 million more days of missed work by actively disengaged employees compared to all other workers. When compared to engaged workers, the number of missed days by actively disengaged employees increases to 118.3 million more missed days of work. Gallup projects that a

decrease of 5% of actively disengaged employees will increase U.S. productivity by close to $80 billion per year.

Disengagement also contributes to the engagement gap, or the difference between employee performance and ability. Gallup's 2018 survey (N=30,628) indicated that 13% and 53% of employees were actively disengaged or disengaged, respectively (Harter, 2018). The disengagement gap has significant financial consequences, as illustrated by Kowalski (2003), who estimates that the U.S. workforce engagement gap costs organizations $300 billion each year.

The phenomenon of burnout is another outcome of disengagement. Maslach and colleagues (2001) refer to burnout as "a prolonged response to chronic emotional and interpersonal stressors on the job" (p. 397). They describe the three dimensions of burnout -- exhaustion, cynicism, and inefficacy -- as a stepwise process. Angerer (2011) found negative correlations between burnout and job performance, with outcomes of turnover, low productivity, diminished effectiveness, reduced satisfaction, decreased commitment, and increased absenteeism. He adds that when employers create work environments where "respect and justice are the norm" (p. 105), employees will exhibit more connection with their work.

Measuring Employee Engagement. Consistent with the various definitions for engagement, there are various measures for this phenomenon. The literature available on validated instruments of broad employee engagement measurement include the Gallup Workplace Audit (GWA; Harter et al. 2002), the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004), the Maslach Burnout Inventory (Maslach & Leiter, 2001), and the Psychological Engagement Measure (PEM; May et al. 2004).

The GWA, also referred to as Q^{12}, is a 12-item instrument. The Gallup Research Group is one of the leading consulting firms for employee engagement. They have been credited with the widespread use of the term *employee engagement* after the publication of Buckingham and Coffman's 1990 book, *First Break All the Rules,* which was based on extensive research conducted by Gallup. According to Schaufeli and Bakker (2010), at the time of its publication, the GWA had been administered to over 7 million employees in 112 countries. Scholars question the use of the GWA as an engagement tool, purporting that it measures job satisfaction (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2010), management practices (Saks and Gruman, 2014), and work conditions (Christian, Graza, & Slaughter, 2011).

The 17-item questionnaire, UWES, is available in 19 languages and has been administered to over 30,000 employees. A student version, as well as a 9-item abridged version, are also available. The UWES is based on Schaufeli and colleague's (2002) definition of work engagement as "a positive, fulfilling work-related state of mind that is characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption," (Schaufeli et al., 2006, p. 702) and measures burnout rather than engagement (Saks & Gruman, 2014). Cole and colleagues (2012) describe the UWES as "empirically redundant with a long-established, widely employed measure of job burnout" (p.1576).

Similar to the UWES, the Maslach Burnout Inventory measures burnout through the dimensions of exhaustion, cynicism, and inefficacy (Rana & Ardichvili, 2015). The 22-item instrument is the most frequently used tool for measuring burnout (Poghosyan, Aiken, & Sloane, 2009); however, it has received criticism for conflating engagement, or lack thereof, with burnout (Saks & Gruman, 2014).

Based on Kahn's (1990) definition of engagement and the conditions of psychological meaningfulness, psychological safety, and psychological availability; May, Gilson and Harter (2004) offer a 14-item instrument that aims to measure "a person's 'preferred self' in task behaviors" (Kahn, 1990, p. 700). Shrotryia and Dhanda (2019) found that the engagement scale of the PES was significantly related to psychological meaningfulness, psychological safety, and psychological availability.

In conclusion, upon reviewing the literature on employee engagement scales, there is no standard tool for measuring engagement. The inconsistent definitions of engagement have resulted in the development of several instruments; therefore, Shrotryia and Dhanda (2019) advise practitioners and scholars to select an instrument with good psychometric properties that is "well grounded in theory so that a clear linkage can be made between the instruments and agreed upon definition of employee engagement" (p. 44). All the instruments reviewed in this section were found to have high internal reliability, but not all of them were found to be grounded in theory (Shrotryia & Dhanda, 2019; Poghosyan, Aiken, and Sloane, 2009; Rana and Ardichvili, 2015). Although the Psychological Engagement Measure has not been used extensively in empirical studies, it demonstrates good psychometric properties, and there is considerable evidence that the PEM is a useful tool for measuring engagement in accordance with Kahn's theoretical framework and psychological conditions for engagement.

Employee Engagement in Public Administration

The central principles of effectiveness and efficiency have driven the foundations of public administration and have been readily applied to organizations and personnel management. Theorists of the early-to-late 20th century offered solutions focused on

creating manuals that governed work tasks known as *scientific management* (Taylor, 1912), depersonalizing orders by allowing the situation to dictate the response (Follett, 1926), instituting incentive-based division of work and the use of specializations (Gulick, 1937), and considering psychological needs in understanding motivation (Maslow, 1943). Zihn (1980) argues that Taylor's scientific management promoted an interchangeability of workers to the detriment of employee individuality and humanity. While many of these theories supported financial effectiveness and workforce efficiency, they also supported long hours, low pay, and depersonalization (Angerer, 2011). The introduction of new public administration introduced paradigms of management that continue to grapple with "complex issues associated with fairness, justice, and equality in public administration" (Frederickson, 2005, p. 33) through systems of social equity that prepare the profession to support greater levels of gender and racial diversity.

The New Public Administration Movement of the 1960s introduced the concept of social equity. While Rutledge (2002) attributes preliminary discussions on social equity to Aristotle and Plato, 20th century social equity integration into the field of public administration is primarily associated with the work of Dwight Waldo, who emphasized the importance of administrator discretion in creating and upholding just policies, and H. George Frederickson (2005), who proposed that public administrators add equity to the foundational values of economy and efficiency. As defined by the Standing Panel on Social Equity in Governance of the National Academy of Public Administration (NAPA), social equity is:

> The fair, just and equitable management of all institutions serving the public
>
> directly or by contract, and the fair and equitable distribution of public services,

and implementation of public policy, and the commitment to promote fairness, justice, and equity in the formation of public policy (NAPA, 2000).

Johnson and Svara (2011) call for a refresh of the NAPA definition, proposing that:

Social equity is the active commitment to fairness, justice, and equality in the formulation of public policy, distribution of public services, implementation of public policy, and management of all institutions serving the public directly of by contract. Public administrators, including all persons involved in public governance should seek to prevent and reduce inequality and injustice based on significant social characteristics and to promote greater equality in access to services, procedural fairness, quality of services and social outcomes (p. 282).

Wyatt-Nichol, Brown, and Haynes (2017) recognize that the concentration of social equity research in public administration has examined race, ethnicity, and gender while neglecting to explore socio-economic status, social class. Frederickson (2005) notes that since the 1960s, social inequities have shifted from overt forms of discrimination to more covert discrimination that impacts access and influence, which could include employee engagement.

To address the social inequities related to race, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, etc. that are perpetuated in public administration, trainings can be offered to increase awareness of inequities (Gershenson, 2015), while providing considerations and tools for the creation and implementation of equitable policies and practices (Johnson & Svara 2011). Wyatt-Nichol and Antwi-Boasiako

(2012) add, "while diversity training is essential to raise awareness and provide skills to improve organizational communication and performance, training itself will be unsuccessful if diversity is not valued within the organizational culture" (p. 768).

Yet there is a limited focus on employee engagement in public administration. While the majority of employee engagement literature originates from consulting firms and practitioner associations, there is a dearth of empirical and academic research (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2010; Saks & Rotman, 2006). Similarly, there is limited information in the public sector on employee engagement. In the 2013 debut of employee engagement in public administration literature, Vigoda-Gadot and colleagues referred to the concept as emerging with implications for theory and research in the public sector.

Borst and colleagues (2019) add, "work engagement is an important addition to current public administration and public HRM research both theoretically and practically" (p. 18). They continue by stating that employee engagement serves as a better performance predictor compared to satisfaction, urging public administration researchers to further analyze the correlation between employee engagement and performance outcomes.

Public Service Motivation. Formalized in 1990, the Public Service Motivation (hereafter, PSM; Perry & Wise) emerged as a response to diminished confidence among Americans in the public sector and subsequent impact on civil service (Perry & Wise, 1990). They asserted that prior public administration research did not display a sophisticated understanding of effective methods for motivating public servants. While prior theories on motivation focused almost exclusively on extrinsic needs, PSM integrates concepts of identity and values (Anderfuhren-Biget et al., 2010). Furthermore,

PSM purports that the motivation of public servants is unlike that of those working in the private sector. Perry and Wise offered a construct that examined "an individual's predisposition to respond to motives grounded primarily or uniquely in public institutions and organizations" (p. 368).

Diversity Management. Affirmative Action and other anti-discrimination policies contributed to opening education and labor markets to women, People of Color, and those of varying ethnicities; however, they were designed as a "temporary measure" (Kelly & Dobbin, 1998, p. 971) and neither provided an actual framework of execution, nor enforced the creation of environments that acknowledged an individual's needs for psychological meaningfulness, safety and availability.

Diversity management was first introduced by Thomas in his 1990 article "From Affirmative Action to affirming diversity." The concept of diversity management focuses on the steps taken following recruitment that contribute to retention, success and advancement of historically underrepresented groups. Choi and Rainey (2010) suggest that diversity management shifts the focus of compliance as a result of laws and policy to concentrate on ways to voluntarily harness the power of diversity to meet organizational goals. Similarly, Thomas (1990) adds that organizations need to progress from Affirmative Action to diversity management to create a culture where diverse groups can thrive and not plateau in their positions. Guy and Schumacher (2009) challenge organizations to examine how their environment affects diverse groups' perceived need to assimilate or to remain true to their degrees of *otherness.*

Diversity management does not call for the lowering of standards, as Affirmative Action opponents argue, but instead examines ways to foster growth, inclusion, and

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equity. In 1990, Thomas asserted that Affirmative Action was still a necessary component of increasing diversity in organizations and that if an organization had not achieved diversity at all levels, Affirmative Action could be utilized to help achieve this goal. Once an organization has achieved compositional diversity, it can then use diversity management to examine and combat organizational cultures that reinforce exclusion, structures of oppression, and discrimination.

Diversity in the Workplace

Colby and Ortman (2015) highlight the U.S. Census Bureau projection that the nation's population will increase from 319 million people to 417 million people by 2060. Of this growing number, People of Color are projected to account for more than half of all Americans by 2044. In 2017, the Bureau of Labor Statistics produced data indicating that nearly 40% of the current workforce was comprised of People of Color. By 2043, it is projected that 26.6 % of the working age population in the workforce will be Latinx/Hispanic. In response to the current diverse workforce, and in preparation for increases in racial and ethnic diversity, there is currently a critical need for organizations to explore how to create environments where employees of historically marginalized groups can thrive and remain engaged at work.

According to Selden (2006), within the past 50 or so years, the public sector has been an ideal employer for individuals from historically underrepresented groups. In employing these individuals, the public sector lessened the gap in "attaining a workforce that 'looks like America'" (p.911). However, these organizations often fail to change the institutional culture, which "prevented organizations from realizing any benefits from diversity" (Pitts & Wise, 2010, p. 47). Von Bergen and colleagues (2002) declare that

ineffective diversity management practices can result in increased company legal liabilities, devaluation of employees of color, reinforcement of stereotypes by inept trainers, and claims of reverse discrimination by White employees.

Microaggressions

The concept of microaggressions was first coined by Chester Pierce, a Black psychologist, in 1970 to describe the covert racial encounters impacting Black employees at work. His research focused on what he described as "subtle, stunning, often automatic, and nonverbal exchanges which are 'put-downs'" (Pierce, Carew, Pierce-Gonzalez & Willis, 1978, p. 66). Building on the framework of Pierce, researchers described this phenomenon as "modern racism" (McConahay, 1986) and "symbolic racism" (Sears, 1988). The construct of microaggressions received little to no academic attention through the 1990s; however, a resurgence of interest in the concept emerged in 2000 with the work of Solorzano and colleagues, whose broadened definition of the construct accounted for the experiences of various People of Color. They offered, "subtle insults (verbal and/or nonverbal) directed toward People of Color, often automatic or unconsciously" (p. 60) as an improved definition that recognized the breadth of the phenomenon. However, this definition still did not recognize the wide net cast upon various populations through microaggression. Sue, one of the foremost experts on microbehaviors in society, and colleagues has been credited for the surge in microaggression research to the conceptualization as a result of their 2007 publication (Wong, 2014), when he and his colleagues offer the following definition for the microaggressions construct: "brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral, and environmental indignities, whether

intentional and unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory or negative racial slights and insults to the target person or group" (p. 273).

Taxonomy of Microaggressions. Sue (2007) identified three forms of microaggression: *microinsults,* which are often unconscious yet demean someone based on their group membership; *microinvalidations,* which are also often unconscious and negate experiences based on group membership; and *microassaults,* which are usually conscious and display intentionally harm as a result of group membership. Microaggressions can be verbal or non-verbal. To further understand the construct of microaggressions, Sue (2007) offers the Taxonomy of Microaggressions and presents nine common microaggressive themes that map back to either the microaggressive forms of microinsult or microinvalidation. Later iterations of these themes were refined to include sexual orientation and gender. The theme of *alien in own land* focuses on the perpetual state of foreigner applied to some groups, regardless of nationality. *Ascription of intelligence* describes the idea that intelligence can be assigned based on group membership. *Color blindness* attempts to ignore group membership, yet often applies concepts of assimilation to these groups while centering whiteness. *Criminality/assumption of criminal status* attributes criminal behavior or the assumption of criminal status to individuals based on group membership. Through *denial of individual racism,* perpetrators of microaggressions try to explain away their behavior under the guise of not being racist. The *myth of meritocracy* aims to reinforce the idea that success is entirely based on hard work and not impacted by inequities. *Pathologizing cultural values/communication styles* prioritizes White values as they relate to culture and communication. The theme of *second-class citizen* describes behavior that gives lesser

service or favor based on group membership. Last, *environmental microaggressions* communicate the societal, political, educational, social, or economic cues of inferiority and a sense of not belonging based on group membership.

While these themes provide a sufficient overview, they are not exhaustive. Wong and colleagues (2014) posit that it is likely that more themes exist to describe the manifestation of microaggressions, and suggest the exploration of themes such as hypersensitivity, exoticization, and objectification (see Appendix A for further details on the Taxonomy of Microaggressions.)

Impacts of Microaggressions. Perhaps the influential author and poet Maya Angelou described the cumulative impact of microaggressions best when she wrote that they were likened to death by a thousand cuts. Pierce (1995) purported that microaggressions across a lifetime negatively impacted morbidity, confidence, and mortality. Additional evidence supports that microaggressions and other forms of racial stress can contribute to an organizational culture being viewed as hostile (Solórzano, Ceja, & Yosso, 2000), an adverse impact on mental health (Sue, Capodilupo, & Holder, 2008), negative impacts to physical health (Clark, Anderson, Clark, & Williams, 1999), diminished problem-solving abilities and decreased work productivity (Salvatore & Shelton, 2007; Dovidio, 2001). Furthermore, Sue indicates that "this contemporary form of racism is many times over more problematic, damaging, and injurious to persons of color than overt racist acts" (Sue, 2003, p. 48). In a study of the impact of racial and ethnic microaggressions of graduate students of Color, Lilly and colleagues (2018) concluded that the common occurrence of microaggressions, among 98.8 percent of their

sample, contributed to significant distress and impacted depression, producing results with intervention implications in the higher education setting.

In addition to health impacts, microaggressions are found to have consequences in the workplace. In 2008, 75% of new employees entering the workplace were women and/or members of racial/ethnic groups (Sue & Sue, 2008). Additionally, in 2017 the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics estimated that 78% of all employed people in the U.S. identified as White, yet they represented 90% of all chief executive roles. According to Williams and Wilson's (2019) analysis of U.S. Census data, Black college graduates are 28% more likely to occupy jobs that do not require a college degree compared to White college graduates. Sue (2010) highlights the potential long-term financial impacts on retirement contributions and support. He hypothesizes that the rampant underemployment and underpayment of People of Color and women will result in insufficient funds for pensions and social security benefits to properly support retirees through their golden years.

Sue (2010) summarizes several researchers' findings on the impact of microaggressions at work as follows:

Marginalized groups continue to describe their work climates as hostile, invalidating, and insulting because of the many microaggressions that assail their race, gender, or sexual orientation identities, deplete their psychic energies, restrict their work options, lower their work productivity, generate suppressed rage and anger, stereotype them as less worthy workers, and detrimentally impact their recruitment/hiring, retention, and promotion in organizations (p. 213).

Consequently, Sue adds that employees identifying as women and/or racial/ethnic group members are constantly distracted by microaggressive behavior, which competes with attentiveness and productivity at work. Likewise, Wong and colleagues (2014) note the cognitive impacts of the internal processing, evaluation, and appraisal, which can shift an employee's focus away from decision-making, problem-solving, learning and task completion. Furthermore, Root's (2003) Ten Common Sequelae suggests that the cumulative effects of microaggressions, discrimination and harassment in the workplace can be described with the following symptoms: *anxiety,* or behaviors that manifest in irregular work attendance, lower connection to work or career, and panic attacks; *paranoia,* manifesting in doubts and fears of reputation damage; *depression,* presenting through isolation or withdrawal and overtiredness as a result of basic work tasks; *sleep difficulties,* often associated with depression and characterized as an inability to sleep or stay asleep without interrupting thoughts about work; *lack of confidence,* presenting as second guessing one's work, contributions, and decisions; *worthlessness,* manifesting in doubts of self-worth and value to the organization; *intrusive cognitions,* presenting as the constant reliving of discriminatory events at work that reinforce ideas on inferiority; *helplessness,* described as the feeling associated with an ability to put an end to the discriminatory practices at work; *loss of drive,* referring to the energy lost as a result of enduring discriminatory events, actions, and policies; and finally, *false positives,* presenting in an overgeneralization of discrimination within the organization.

Connecting Employee Engagement & Microaggressions

Root (2003) suggests that the constant exposure to microaggressions and other acts of discrimination and harassment in the workplace "profoundly challenges a person's

sense of causality in the world and [their] sense of safety" (p. 491). Additionally, Kahn (1990) describes protecting "the self … to hide true identity, thoughts, and feelings during role performances" (p. 701) as an outcome of disengagement, thus connecting the impacts of exposure of microaggressions with those of disengagement. Saks and Gruman (2014) add that engagement is higher among employees who experiences greater levels of psychological meaningfulness, safety, and availability.

The impact of microaggressions and other forms of discriminations can also be evident at the macro-level. In a 2018 report, the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (henceforth EEOC) issued a report announcing that close to 85,000 workplace discrimination charges were filed in the 2017 fiscal year. The bases for the charges were as follows: 33.9% race, 31.9% disability, 30.4% sex/gender, 21.8% age, 9.8% nation of origin, 4.1% religion, and 3.8% color (totals sum greater than 100 due to multiple bases alleged in some charges). The EEOC estimates the 2017 financial impact of workplace discrimination charges at $398 million across the public and private sector. Burns (2007) found that 2 million employees annually leave their jobs in response to "cumulative small comments, whispered jokes, and not-so-funny emails" (np). Since attrition can be an outcome of employee disengagement (Angerer, 2011; Gallup Research Group, 2001), there is an organizational need to explore the impact of forms of discrimination, specifically microaggressions, and their relationship to employee engagement.

Stress Response as Coping Style

Lazarus and Folkman (1994) concluded that exposure to stressors can result in detrimental psychological and physical consequences. The way in which one responds to

stress is known as coping. There are two types of coping according to Suls and Fletcher (1985): *active approach*, which involves active problem-solving, and *avoidance*, which employs passive strategies. As suggested by Decuir-Gunby and Gunby (2016), when applying stress response/coping style as a mediator to occurrences of microaggressions, approaches will be individual and situational. Mellor (2004) adds, "coping with racial microaggressions or racism requires coping skills beyond those needed for dealing with everyday emotions or situations", such as "protecting the self, engaging in self-control, and confronting the racism that was experienced" (p. 394). Sue and colleagues (2019) suggest that limited research on microinterventions, acts or behaviors that provide reassurance and validation to those experiencing microaggression, as coping strategies calls for the need for additional studies to explore the effectiveness of these "race-related response strategies" (p. 140).

Decuir-Gunby and Gunby's 2016 study on the impact of exposure to microaggressions on job satisfaction among Black educators with stress response as a mediator found a negative association between microaggression exposure and job satisfaction and a propensity toward passive coping strategies. With a sample size of 75 Black educators in primary, secondary, and higher education settings, there are great limitations on the generalizability of this study.

Intersectionality and its Importance

Defined as "a lens through which you can see where power comes and collides, where it interlocks and intersects (Columbia School of Law, 2017)", intersectionality was first introduced in 1989 by attorney and professor, Kimberlé Crenshaw, who sought to define the unique experience of Black women in the workplace. Initially categorized as a

feminist theory, Carbado and colleagues (2013) remark on the interdisciplinary and global versatility and application of the concept. Using three discrimination court cases as examples (DeGraffenreid v General Motors, Moore v Hughes Helicopter, and Payne v Travenol), Crenshaw argued that the experiences of Black women could not be evaluated based on the experiences of White women or the experiences of Black men. Although at times the discriminatory experiences of Black women may mirror those experiences of White women and Black men, this is not always the case. Thus, the intersection of race and gender, two distinctly different oppressed identities, can result in "double-discrimination - the combined effects of practices which discriminate on the basis of race, and on the basis of sex" (p. 149). Crenshaw adds, "Race and sex, moreover, become significant only when they operate to explicitly *disadvantage* the victims; because the *privileging* of whiteness or maleness is implicit, it is generally not perceived at all" (p. 151).

Through its evolution, intersectionality has grown to acknowledge the phenomenon of overlapping oppressions such as racism, ableism, homophobia, transphobia, and sexism that combine to create unique modes of discrimination. Most intersectionality research is qualitative in nature. Dubrow (2008) urges for more quantitative methods in exploring this paradigm. He offers a practical methodological approach for quantitative researchers investigating the "intersections of disadvantage within gender, ethnicity and class groups" (p. 89).

Gaps in the Literature

Foundationally, public administration literature on employee engagement does not adequately investigate the psychological components of meaningfulness, safety, and

availability, instead focusing on financial effectiveness and workforce efficiency. Borst and colleagues (2019) provide "confirmation to public personnel managers that work engagement is a very important measure of employee well-being, as it leads to high job satisfaction, high commitment, low turnover, and high performance" (p. 20). Wyatt-Nichol and Antwi-Boasiako (2012) recognize the presence of empirical studies that examine the impact of diversity management in federal government and note a scarcity of studies that examine diversity management at the state and local level. Additionally, they note a lack of clear understanding of the meaning of diversity management, citing a recent study of human resource professionals conducted by Society for Human Resource. This study found that only 39 percent of respondents reported that their organization had an official definition for diversity management (Wyatt-Nichol & Antwi-Boasiako 2012).

The majority of current microaggressions research focuses on the experiences of students in the higher education setting and from the perspective of faculty experiences. However, there is a need to critically examine the presence of microaggressions in various employment settings, sectors, and among employees of varying classifications and ranks to add to the literature on the occurrences of microaggressions and their impacts on individuals in terms of engagement in the U.S. workforce (Wong et al., 2014). There is also a need to further explore how stress response/coping style can mediate or moderate the effects of exposure to microaggressions (Sue, 2007; Wong et al., 2014). Furthermore, research is needed on how microaggressions are experienced through multiple intersecting oppressed identities (Decuir-Gunby & Gunby, 2016). The merging of the concepts of employee engagement, microaggressions, stress response/coping style, perceived stress, and intersectionality represents a novel framework for examining a

phenomenon not thoroughly explored in any academic discipline, let alone public administration.

Theoretical Framework

The Needs-Satisfaction Framework (NSF, Kahn, 1990) guides this study to understand the impact of microaggressions on employee engagement. The NSF is based on Kahn's definition of engagement and his qualitative research involving architects and summer camp counselors. This model was first tested by May and colleagues (2004) through a quantitative study of employees of an insurance firm. According to Schaufeli (2013), the NSF "assumes that when the job is challenging and meaningful, the social environment at work is safe, and personal resources are available, the needs for meaningfulness, safety and availability are satisfied and thus engagement is likely to occur" (p. 16).

A Working Model

Based on NSF, Figure 1 shows the working model that was used to test the study hypotheses. The working model was adapted to incorporate the independent variables of microaggressions, stress response/coping style, and perceived levels of stress.

The working model denotes that employee engagement and exposure to microaggressions have consequences for organizational effectiveness and efficiency. The following definitions were utilized in the adaptation of the NSF: (a) employee engagement is "the harnessing of organization members' selves to their work roles; in engagement, people employ and express themselves physically, cognitively, and emotionally during role performance" (Kahn, 1990, p. 694) and (b) microaggressions are "brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral, and environmental indignities, whether

intentional and unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory or negative racial slights and insults to the target person on group" (Sue, 2007, p. 273). Additionally, stress response/coping style, the way in which one addresses stress (Lazarus and Folkman, 1994), and perceived levels of stress will be applied to the model to examine its ability to mediate or moderate microaggressions and other acts of discrimination. Lastly, the impact of intersecting oppressed identities will be examined through the lens of intersectionality, pulling from Crenshaw's definition.

This study will combine interdisciplinary concepts from human resource management and psychology in a public sector setting to examine how the psychological components of employee engagement are impacted by the occurrence of racial and ethnic microaggressions and the effect of coping style and perceived stress levels to attenuate or exacerbate the impact of microaggressions on employee engagement. Additionally, the role of intersecting oppressed identities will be explored as they relate to the occurrence of racial and ethnic microaggressions and employee engagement, respectively.
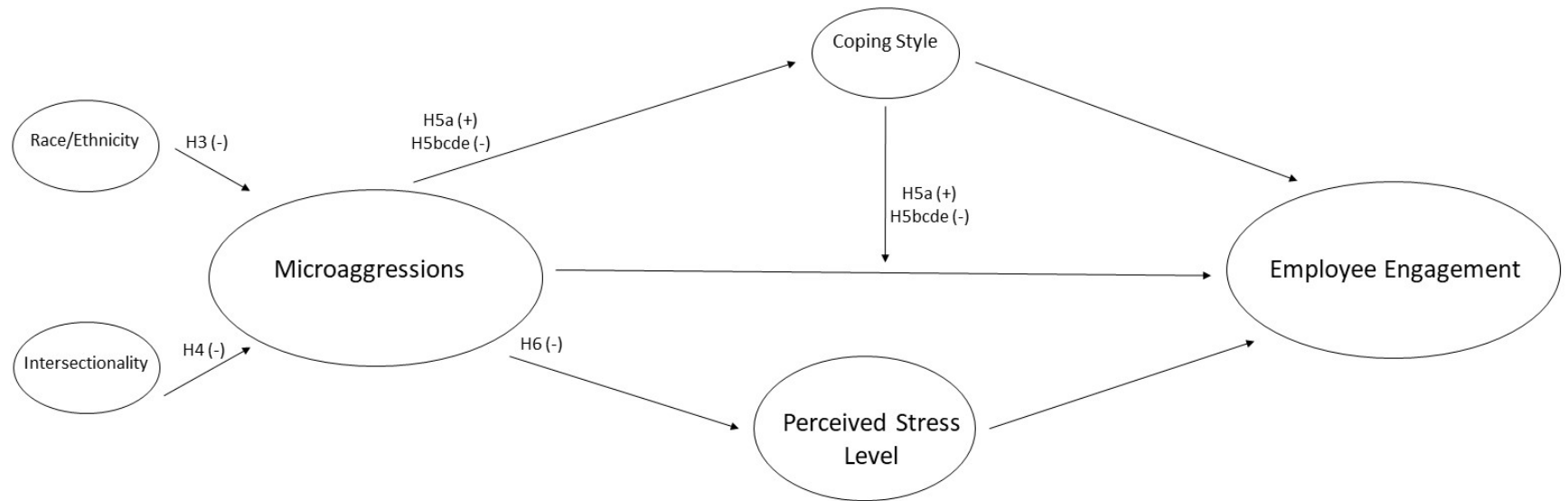
Figure 1. A Working Model – the hypothesized impact of race/ethnicity and intersectionality on the effects of microaggressions (microinsults and microinvalidations) on employee engagement (psychological meaningfulness, psychological safety & psychological availability) with coping style as a mediator or moderator and perceived stress as a mediator.

Methods

For this study, a cross-sectional survey design was utilized to determine the role of frequency of exposure to microaggressions, stress response/coping style and perceived stress levels of employee engagement in a university setting. This study utilized non-probability voluntary response sampling. Participants were required to be 18 and above and provide consent. Additional participation criteria included being employed by the University of Maryland, Baltimore.

Participants

This study was conducted at the University of Maryland, Baltimore (UMB), a major graduate-level public research institution belonging to the University System of Maryland, concentrating on post-baccalaureate studies in health and human services. According to Spring 2020 data retrieved from the office of Institutional Effectiveness, Strategic Planning, and Assessment at UMB, the university employs 7,631 people (16.3% identify as Asian or Pacific Islander, .16% identify and American Indian or Alaska Native, 23% identify as Black or African American, 3.5% identify as Latinx, 1.2% identify as bi- or multi-racial, 55.8% identify as White, and .1% have undisclosed races). Additionally, 61.37% percent of the UMB employee population identifies as women and 38.63% identify as men. UMB does not formally allow for the collection of genders that do not comply with the woman/man binary; however, the 2019 climate survey issued by UMB's office of Human Resource Services found that 1% of survey participants indicated a non-binary gender identity.

On June 26, 2020, the University of Maryland, Baltimore approved and certified that this research study was exempt under 45 CFR 46.101(b) from IRB review based on

the following category(ies): Category (2): Research that only includes interactions involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures or observation of public behavior (including visual or auditory recording). Subsequently, the University of Baltimore deemed that UMB IRB approval could be accepted at UB on Monday, July 6, 2020, approving the researcher to begin collecting data.

All UMB employees with a university-issued email address received the 149-question survey on Friday, July 24, 2020. As a result of the initial survey communication, 578 survey responses were received. On Thursday, July 30, 2020, employees who had not completed the survey received a reminder email, resulting in the collection of 394 responses. With the last communication sent on Thursday, August 6, 2020, there were a total of 1190 respondents. Of the 1190 respondents, 556 were missing extensive data and were subsequently excluded (i.e. respondents did not complete the instruments and/or the socio-demographic questionnaire), resulting in 634 completed response, resulting in a final response rate of 9.2 %.

Data Collection Procedures

Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval was sought at UMB prior to the start of the study. Online data collection has been found to decrease costs, reduce the time needed for surveying, allow for greater flexibility in format, and ease the burden of data entry (Granello & Wheaton 2004). However, varying levels of computer literacy and familiarity (Denissen et al., 2010) and limitations to online opportunities as a result of lower socio-economic status (Roberts & Foehr, 2008) can impact the response rate. McMaster and colleagues (2017) found that the use of a paper-based survey in later

contact increased sample representativeness by increasing "responses from individuals who were older, less educated, and who had lower incomes" (p. 2). With this in mind, the original data collection procedure involved a sequential mixed-mode design within a three-week time period by employing a self-administered online-based survey for two weeks and following up in week three with non-respondents via self-administered and interviewer-administered paper-based surveys (interviewer-administered method would only be used when literacy levels limit participation in the self-administered survey). However, due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, which resulted in widespread episodic teleworking and rigid policies prohibiting travel to the site of this study, the researcher was unable to conduct in-person, paper surveys. As such, this was eliminated from the data collection procedures.

All University of Maryland, Baltimore faculty and staff were eligible to participate in the survey. University employees received email notifications with a link to the survey, along with information pertaining to the survey's purpose, potential risks, potential benefits, confidentiality, and voluntary nature. The online-based survey was issued through the University of Maryland, Baltimore's assessment tool licensed through Anthology (formerly CampusLabs). Each recipient received a unique participation link to eliminate the ability to complete the survey more than once and to enable the ability to send automatic follow up emails to those who had not yet completed the survey. Upon receiving the first email notification (Appendix B), recipients were informed that they had three weeks to complete the online survey with two reminder emails automatically sent seven and fourteen days later, respectively, to any initial recipients who had not completed the survey (Appendix C and D). The participants were informed that the

estimated survey completion was 20 minutes. The first 50 participants to complete the survey were eligible for a prize drawing to receive a $5 e-gift card to Starbucks. Additionally, participants had the option to enter a drawing to win a pair of Apple AirPods. The first page of the survey included detailed information about the survey and a question regarding consent (Appendix E). If participants declined to provide consent, the survey automatically ended and could not be reattempted. The survey was sent at the end of July 2020 during COVID-19, at a time when the institution had transitioned to a primarily tele-working environment. Additionally, the survey was issued during a time marked by national racial injustice that erupted with the murders of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor by law enforcement in Minneapolis, MN and Louisville, KY, respectively.

Measures

This study utilized four instruments that have undergone psychometric validation. A brief sociodemographic questionnaire was issued to all survey participants, which aided in ensuring a proportional representative sample and allowed for exploration of differences in exposure to microaggression, employee engagement, and stress response/coping style by self-reported social identity.

Psychological Engagement Measure. Psychological engagement at work is the primary outcome measure for this study and was measured using the Psychological Engagement Measure (PEM; May, Gilson, & Hunter, 2004).The PEM (Appendix F) consists of three dependent variables, including psychological meaningfulness, psychological safety, and psychological availability. This instrument collects self-reported perceptions of meaningfulness, safety and availability related to job tasks. The

PEM is based on Kahn's (1990) ethnographic work on employee engagement. This instrument consists of 14-items that examine the factors of (a) *meaningfulness* (6 items, e.g. "the work I do on this job is worthwhile"), (b) *safety* (3 items, e.g. "I'm not afraid to be myself at work"), and (c) *availability* (5 items, e.g. "I am confident in my ability to handle competing demands at work"). The PEM is measured on a 5-point agreement/disagreement Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neither disagree or agree, 4 = agree, and 5 = strongly agree). Two of the 14 questions were reverse coded to address the converse wording of the questions (e.g. "There is a threatening environment at work").

The PEM has demonstrated good reliability with acceptable Cronbach's α for the three scales of *meaningfulness* ($\alpha = .90$), *safety* ($\alpha = .71$), *availability* ($\alpha = .85$). Furthermore, the Harmon's one-factor test for common method bias indicates good discriminate validity for the PEM (May, Gilson, & Hunter, 2004).

Racial Microaggressions Scale. As an independent variable in this study, occurrence of racial and ethnic microaggressions is measured by frequency and distress as assessed though the Racial Microaggressions Scale (RMAS; Torres-Harding et al., 2012). The RMAS (Appendix G) is a 32-item instrument that collects self-reported occurrences and associated distress of "brief, everyday exchanges that send denigrating messages to certain individuals because of their group membership" (Sue et al., 2007). The questions within this scale are divided into a frequency sub-scale and a distress sub-scale. The frequency sub-scale is rated on a four-point Likert scale that evaluates frequency (0 = never, 1 = a little/rarely, 2 = sometimes/a moderate amount, and 3 = often/frequently). Questions are included to measure the 9 themes identified by Sue and

colleagues (2007) in their studies of racial microaggressions. These themes represent the following factors: (a) *foreign/not belonging* (3 items: e.g., "Other people ask me where I am from, suggesting that I don't belong"), (b) *criminality* (4 items: e.g., "I am singled out by police or security people because of my race and/or ethnicity"), (c) *sexualization* (3 items: e.g., "Other people hold sexual stereotypes about me because of my racial and/or ethnic background"), (d) *low achieving/undesirable culture* (9 items: e.g., "Other people assume that I am successful because of affirmative action, not because I earned my accomplishment"), (e) *invisibility* (8 items: e.g., "My contributions are dismissed or devalued because of my racial and/or ethnic background"), and (f) *environmental invalidations* (5 items: e.g., "Sometimes I am the only person of my racial and/or ethnic background in my class or workplace").

The distress sub-scale is used to assess the level of distress associated with the occurrence. This sub-scale corresponds to the frequency sub-scale questions and is enacted only if the participant indicates that they have experienced an occurrence (any answer other than 0 = never on the frequency sub-scale). This was assessed through the question "How stressful, upsetting, or bothersome is this for you?" which was rated on a 4-point Likert scale (0 = not at all, 1 = a little, 2 = moderate level, and 3 = high level).

The questions included in the RMAS are asked exclusively from the perspective of race. In this study, the questions will be modified to be applicable to race and ethnicity by adding the term ethnicity to an existing question (i.e. "Because of my race, people suggest that I am not a 'true' American" will be changed to "Because of my race and/or ethnicity, people suggest that I am not a 'true' American"). This is important, as it creates an opportunity to capture the experiences of participants who identify as Latinx, an

ethnicity that is often racialized in the U.S. According to Golash-Boza & Durity (2016), "Hispanic is a racialized ethnic label because it is used and applied in a very similar way to other racial labels in the U.S." (p. 90). The frequency and distress sub-scale scores were computed as means, respectively.

Among racially and ethnically diverse groups, such as Asian, Black, Latinx, and Southwest Asia and North Africa (SWANA), the RMAS has demonstrated good reliability. The 32-item instrument indicated very good reliability, with a Cronbach's alpha level of .93 (Torres-Harding et al., 2012). The Cronbach's for the six factors were as follows: *foreign/not belonging* ($\alpha = .78$), *criminality* ($\alpha = .85$), *sexualization* ($\alpha = .83$), *low achieving/undesirable culture* ($\alpha = .87$), *invisibility* ($\alpha = .89$), and *environmental invalidations* ($\alpha = .81$). Moreover, in concurrent validity testing against the Schedule of Racist Events (SRE, Landrine & Klonoff, 1996) scale, the RMAS was found to have good convergent validity. Through a series of *t* tests using race as the independent variable, Torres-Harding and colleagues (2012) found that the RMAS correlated positively with the SRE at p < .05. Additionally, the six RMAS factors correlated positively with the SRE subscales as follows: *foreign/not belonging* ($t(544) = -8.71$, *p* < .001), *criminality* ($t(537) = -11.98$, *p* < .001), *sexualization* ($t(538) = -8.07$, *p* < .001), *low achieving/undesirable culture* ($t(527) = -16.681$, *p* < .001), *invisibility* ($t(520) = -11.61$, *p* < .001), and *environmental invalidations* ($t(524) = -14.92$, *p* < .001).

Perceived Stress Scale. As a covariate, perceived stress was assessed through the 10-item instrument Perceived Stress Scale (PSS; Cohen, Kamarck & Mermelstein, 1983), which gauged the level of perceived stress associated with events that took place within the last month. The self-reported PSS (Appendix H) is on a 5-point Likert scale with 0 =

never, 1 = almost never, 2 = sometimes, 3 = fairly often, and 4 = very often (e.g. "In the last month, how often have you been able to control irritations in your life?"). Two of the 10 questions were reverse coded (e.g. "In the last month, how often have you felt confident about your ability to handle your personal problems?"). The ten items were then summed to create a total PSS scale score.

The PSS has demonstrated good convergent validity across racial and ethnic groups. In a 2006 psychometric study (Roberti, Harrington, & Storch, 2006) the PSS's construct validity and divergent validity were tested by computing the Pearson product–moment correlations of the PSS and the State-Trait Anxiety Inventory–Trait version (STAI-T, STAI-A, and STAI-D; Spielberger, 1983), State-Trait Anxiety Inventory–Anxiety factor (STAI-A; Spielberger, 1983), State-Trait Anxiety Inventory–Depression factor, (STAI-D; Spielberger, 1983), and the Multidimensional Health Locus of Control (MHLC; Wallston et al., 1978). The PSS had a high correlation with the STAI Total Score, STAI-A, and STAI-D factors, and a low to moderate correlation with MHLC scores. The PSS has a high internal reliability, as indicated with a Cronbach's α of .89 (Roberti, Harrington, & Storch, 2006).

Coping with Discrimination Scale. The Coping with Discrimination Scale (CDS, Wei et al., 2010) is a 25-item scale designed to measure active and passive coping in response to discrimination. Participants identified the strategy that best described their coping response to discrimination. The CDS (Appendix I) is measured on a six-point Likert scale of 1 = never like me, 2 = a little like me, 3 = sometimes like me, 4 = often like me, 5 = usually like me, and 6 = always like me. According to Wei and colleagues (2010), "CDS has the potential to advance the literature by providing scholars with a

psychometrically sound instrument for assessing how individuals cope with discrimination" (p. 341).

The internal consistency reliability estimates for the five factors range from .75 - .88, with *education/advocacy* (α = .86), *internalization* (α = .88), *drug and alcohol use* (α = .75), *resistance* (α = .80), and *detachment* (α = .76). The CDS has demonstrated good construct validity across racial and ethnic groups, with significant differences in the participation rate for the different ethnic groups (x^2(4, N = 67) = 1.76, p = .78) and genders (x^2(1, N = 66) = 3.45, p = .06.), and has good internal consistency reliability, which is adequate for research purposes.

Sociodemographic Questionnaire. Additional covariates of race, age, gender, and sexual orientation will be measured through sociodemographic data collected though a self-identifying sociodemographic questionnaire. These questions (Appendix J) captured information on ethnicity, race, gender identity, sexual orientation, education, immigration status, age, social-economic status, employee classification and supervisory status.

Data Analysis

First, the relationship between the sociodemographic characteristics (race, gender, age, and sexual orientation) and the dependent variables of employee engagement (psychological meaningfulness, psychological safety, and psychological availability) were assessed through analysis of variance. Correlation analysis was conducted to examine the relationship between the sociodemographic characteristics. Next, the relationship between employment factors (employee classification, years of service, and supervisory duties) and the dependent variables of employee engagement (psychological

meaningfulness, psychological safety, and psychological availability) were assessed through analysis of variance. Correlation analysis was conducted to examine the relationship between employment factors. Then, the association of frequency of microaggressions and employee engagement with control variables of race, gender identity, and sexual orientation were assessed. This was achieved through regression analysis. Then, logistic regression with multiplicative interaction terms was utilized to measure how intersecting categories, in this case intersecting oppressed sociodemographic characteristics, influenced the impact of microaggressions on employee engagement. Next, responses to stress in either moderating or mediating the effects of microaggressions on employee engagement were examined through the covariate of coping, which was added to a regression using both single sociodemographic characteristics and the combined intersecting sociodemographic characteristics identified in the previous step. This aided in understanding the ways in which participants' coping styles affected the impact of microaggressions on employee engagement. Levels of perceived stress in either moderating or mediating the effects of microaggressions on employee engagement were examined through the covariate of perceived stress level, which was added to the regression using both single sociodemographic characteristics and the combined intersecting sociodemographic characteristics identified in a previous step, thus increasing the understanding of how perceived stress affects the impact of microaggressions on employee engagement.

For this study "Hispanic, Latino/a/x, or Spanish" was treated as a race and collapsed into the category of Latinx. Hitlin and colleagues (2007) recommends that

Latinx be included in the race category to appropriately highlight the lived racialized experiences of Latinx individuals.

Intersectionality was explored through intersecting categories. Although very little guidance has been provided for exploring intersectionality theory in quantitative research, Dubrow (2008) elucidates that multiplicative interaction terms can be applied to explore the variants of intersectionality through "cumulative disadvantage" (p. 85). The concept of cumulative disadvantage aligns with Crenshaw's definition of intersectionality, or the way that two or more societally disadvantaged identities overlap to form unique occurrences of interpersonal and systemic discrimination and oppression.

Results

Exploratory Factor Analysis

Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was utilized to assess the reliability of the factors for each of the study sample's four scales: the dependent variable of psychological engagement, and the independent variables of racial microaggressions, perceived stress, and coping with discrimination. Sampling adequacy was based on a minimum acceptable value for KMO of 0.6, with values of mediocre (.60 - .69), middling (.70 - .79), meritorious (.80 - .89), and marvelous (.90 – 1.00), as outlined by Kaiser (1974). Cronbach's Alpha was used to assess the reliability of each scale and sub-scale, with a score of 0.6-0.7 indicating an acceptable level of reliability and scores >.70 indicating a very good level of reliability (Hulin, Netemeyer, and Cudeck, 2001). All of the scales and subscales demonstrated acceptable reliability or better, and were therefore confidently utilized in the study. For additional information on the factor analyses of the scales, please see Appendix K.

Data Analysis

Socio-Demographic Factors. The following socio-demographic variables were analyzed through descriptive statistics, specifically frequency statistics: race, ethnicity, gender identity, and sexual orientation. Preliminary frequency statistics for race and ethnicity resulted in a total of 726 responses. Since study participants were permitted to select more than one race/ethnicity, this number summed greater than the total number of 634 completed surveys. As a result, dummy variables were created to condense the race and ethnicity responses.

This study calls for categorizing Latinx as a race due to the racialization experienced by the Latinx population. This is supported by Rodríguez (2016), who asserts that many who identify as Latinx "regard their 'race' as primarily cultural" (p, 243). Additionally, Golash-Boza and Darity (2016) liken the Latinx ethnicity to a race due to the manner in which the racialized label is applied in a similar manner as other racial labels in the U.S. context. The Latinx variable was created by consolidating participants who identified as Mexican, Mexican American, or Chino/a/x; Puerto Rican; Cuban; and Other Hispanic, Latino/a/x, and Spanish origin into one category. Participants who identified Latinx and one or more race were still categorized as Latinx only.

Similar to Latinx, the ethnicity of Southwest Asia and North Africa (SWANA; sometimes referred to as Middle Eastern) will be treated as a race in this study. While many individuals of SWANA descent in the U.S. have been legally considered White since the beginning of the 20th century, the SWANA experience in the U.S. is often viewed through what Tehranian (2016) calls selective racialization. This term refers to the juxtaposition of a dual identity that is "both privileged and damned by their proximity to the white dividing line" (p. 254). Additionally, a biracial/multiracial category was created to account for participants who identified one or more race.

The creation of the various race/ethnicity variables resulted in the following frequency statistics: Black/African American (n=182), American Indian/Alaska Native (n=0), Asian American/Asian Descent (n=54), Latinx (38), SWANA Descent (n=7), Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander (n=0), White (n=324), and Bi-Racial/Multi-Racial (n=30). Since all participants who selected American Indian/Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander also identified one or more other race or ethnicity, these

participants were either labeled as Latinx (4) or Bi-Racial/Multi-Racial (11). Last, a

BIPOC variable was created by combining all participants in the newly-created African

American/Black, Asian American/Asian Descent, Bi-Racial/Multi-Racial, Latinx, and

SWANA Descent categories. The final dataset included 311 BIPOC study participants

and 324 White study participants (refer to Table 1).

Table 1

Race and Ethnicity Descriptive Statistics

	Self-Identified (n=704)	Categorized (n=635)	Institutional Data (n=7,756)
American Indian/Alaska Native	1.4% (10)	0	2% (12)
Asian/Asian American	9.2% (65)	8.5% (54)	16.3% (1,265)
Black	28.8% (203)	28.7% (182)	22.7% (1,762)
Bi-Racial/Multi-Racial	---	1.3% (30)	1.3% (102)
Latinx	5.4% (38)	6.0% (38)	3.8% (294)
SWANA	1.3% (9)	1.1% (7)	Not collected
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	0.6% (4)	0	0.1% (9)
White	52.3% (368)	51% (324)	55.5% (4,303)
Not Reported	---	---	0.1% (9)
Write-in*	1.0% (7)		
BIPOC	---	49% (311)	44% (3,444)

Note: The values in the final column on the right were obtained by eliminating race from all
participants who identified Latinx as an ethnicity, moving all participants who identified two or
races to the Bi-Racial/Multi-Racial categories, and analyzing write-in options and reassigning
based on text and race selections. *Reassigned based on response.

Prior to exploring the hypotheses, extensive preliminary analysis was conducted

to understand the scales and the socio-demographic variables. Preliminary analyses were

conducted to explore socio-demographic characteristics of the sample. Additionally,

descriptive statistics were gathered on each of the scales examined in the EFA and mean

scores, standard deviations, minimum and maximum values .95% confidence intervals,

when appropriate, were calculated (refer to Table 2).

Self-reported responses regarding gender yielded a response of 73.8% women

(n=469), 25.4% men (n=161), and 0.8% nonbinary/genderfluid (n=5), compared to

biological sex data collected by the institution that reports that 61.7% of employees as

female (n=4,786), 38.3% of employees as male (n=2,970). It should be noted that the

University of Maryland, Baltimore does not currently capture gender identity data and

does not allow for biological sex options outside of the female/male binary. The sexual

orientation of participants was 83.6% heterosexual and LGBQ+ responses (asexual,

bisexual, gay, lesbian, pansexual, queer, questioning, and same-gender loving or

attracted) were collapsed into a single variable representing 16.4% of respondents. It

should be noted that LGBQ+ is purposely explored, instead of LGBTQ+. This is because

transgender is not a sexual orientation and individuals who identify as transgender may

identify as asexual, bisexual, gay, lesbian, pansexual, queer, questioning, or same-gender

loving or attracted (Glaad, n.d.). It should also be noted that the University of Maryland,

Baltimore does not currently capture institutional data on employee sexual orientation.

Three covariates of employee classification, length of service, and supervisory

role were assessed. Young, Anderson, and Steward (2015) assert that an employee's

identity and institutional value is often attached to their role within the institution, thus

highlighting the potential impact of employee classification and job type on employee

engagement. For this reason, employee classification was used to examine how staff and

faculty status may impact employee engagement. Staff respondents represented 68%,

while faculty respondents totaled to 32%.

Employees' length of service was selected as a control variable due to the

extensive research indicating that an employee's length of service impacts their

engagement (Hoath, Schneider & Starr, 1998; Duffy, Ganster & Shaw, 1998; Sorenson &

Garman, 2013; Harter, 2018; and Ryba, 2020).

The most frequent range for respondents' length of employment at UMB was 1-4 years (36.2%). Additionally, "supervisory role" was selected as a control variable, as prior research indicates that employees who supervise others have greater job autonomy and satisfaction (Robie, et. al., 1998). In this study, 45.5% of participants indicated that they supervise others, while 51.7% and 2.8% indicated that they did not supervise others or were unsure, respectively.

As indicated in Table 3, race was connected to both employee classification and supervision. Employee classification was significantly different for employees who identified as Black compared to employees who identified as Asian and White. Employees who identified as Black had higher representation in staff roles rather than faculty roles, compared to employees who identified as White and Asian. Similarly, employees who identified as Black supervised others at statistically significantly lower rates when compared to employees who identified as Asian and White. No statistical significance was indicated across race and ethnicity for length of employment.

Table 2

Characteristics of the Sample

Variables	Mean ± SD or *n* (%)
PEM score	4.244 ± .52
PEM Meaningfulness score	4.42 ± .69
PEM Safety score	3.76 ± .87
PEM Availability score	4.26 ± .6
RMAS score	0.64 ± .63
RMAS: Foreign/Not Belonging score	0.42 ± .73
RMAS: Criminality	0.32 ± .59
RMAS: Sexualization	0.26 ± .59
RMAS: Low Achieving/Undesirable Culture	0.86 ± .8
RMAS: Invisibility	0.57 ±.77
RMAS: Environmental	0.97 ± .95
PSS	17.21 ± 7
CDS	1.73 ± .6
CDS: Detachment	1.19 ± .99
CDS: Drug and alcohol use	0.98 ± .71
CDS: Advocacy and Education	2.52 ± 1.33
CDS: Internalization	1.98 ± 1.29
CDS: Resistance	2 ± 1
Race/Ethnicity	
Asian	54 (8.5%)
Bi/Multi-Racial	30 (4.7%)
Black	182 (28.7%)
Latinx	38 (6%)
SWANA	7 (1.1%)
White	324 (51%)
Gender Identity	
Women	469 (73.9%)
Men	161 (25.4%)
Non-Binary/Gender Fluid	5 (.8%)
Sexual Orientation	
Straight	534 (84.1%)
LGBTQA+	97 (15.3%)
Supervisory Duties	289 (45.5%)
Classification	
Staff	433 (68.2%)
Faculty	202 (31.8%)
Length of Employment	
Less than 1 year	68 (10.7%)
1 – 4 years	230 (36.2%
5 – 9 years	115 (18.1%
10 – 14 years	84 (13.2%)
15 – 24 years	87 (13.7%)
25 years or more	51 (8%)

Note: PEM = Psychological Engagement Scale; FRMAS = Racial Microaggressions Scale: Frequency of Occurrence; DRMAS = Racial Microaggressions Scale: Distress; PSS = Perceived Stress Scale; and CDS = Coping with Discrimination Scale.

Table 3
Analysis of Control Variables

Index	Asian/Asian American	Bi-/Multi-Racial	Black	Latinx	SWANA	White	ANOVA
Employee Classification	1.56(.50)*	1.27(.45)	1.18(.38)*	1.21(.41)	1.43(.54)	1.37(.49)*	F=8.094; p = .001
Supervisory Role	.67(.58)*	.50(.57)	.36(.53)*	.53(.57)	.71(.49)	.57(.55)*	F=4.383; p =.001
Length of Employment	1.72(1.20)	1.90(1.58)	2.09(1.46)	1.82(1.11)	1.43(.54)	2.18(1.57)	F=1.525; p =.180

Notes: *Employee classification was coded as 1 for staff and 2 for faculty – lower score indicates more staff; Supervisory role was coded as 0 for no and 1 for yes – lower score indicates lower rate of supervision; and Length of employment was coded 1 – 5 with various ranges – lower score indicates less time employed at UMB. * Bonferroni test was used to indicate significantly different variables.*

The purpose of this study was to explore the effect of: (a) racial and ethnic identity on employee engagement, (b) employment factors, such as employee classification, years of service, and supervision of others, (c) racial and ethnic microaggressions on employee engagement, (d) two or more oppressed identities on microaggression and employee engagement, respectively, (e) coping style on mediating and moderating exposure to microaggression on employee engagement, and (f) high levels of stress on impact of racial and ethnic microaggressions on employee engagement.

Hypothesis 1. The first hypothesis investigated (Table 4) whether BIPOCs have lower employee engagement compared to White employees. First, an independent-samples t-test was conducted, with the employee engagement constructs as the dependent variables and BIPOC as the independent variable. This analysis showed a statistically significant employee engagement construct (p <.000), employee engagement *meaningfulness* subscale (p <.000), and the employee engagement *availability* subscale (p=.045). There was no statistical significance in the employee engagement *safety* scale (p =.129). This indicates that BIPOCs are less engaged at work, find less meaning in their work, and feel less available to engage at work when compared to White employees.

Table 4
Impact of Race and Ethnicity on Employee Engagement

Index	BIPOCs	White	df	t	p
Psychological Engagement Measure Construct	4.19(.58)	4.30(.45)	633	-2.71	.000
PEM: Meaningfulness	4.39(.80)	4.55(.55	633	-2.86	.000
PEM: Safety	3.67(.91)	3.84(.82)	633	-2.38	.129
PEM: Availability	4.25(.65)	4.28(.55)	633	-0.60	.045

Note: PEM = psychological engagement measure

To further understand employee engagement across racial and ethnic groups, an ANOVA with the PEM full-scale and the PEM subscales as the dependent variables was conducted, with race as the categorical variable (Table 5). The PEM full-scale indicated no statistically significant differences across racial/ethnic groups for the construct of employee engagement [F(5,629) = 1.673, p =.139]. However, the analysis, with Bonferroni test, revealed that the PEM subscale of *meaningfulness* had a statistically significant difference between Black and White employees [F(5,629) = 2.80, p =.016]. This indicates that Black employees find their work less meaningful than White employees. Therefore, the hypothesis that BIPOCs have lower employee engagement compared to White employees was supported.

Table 5
Impact of Race and Ethnicity by Group on Employee Engagement

Index	Asian/Asian American (N=54)	Bi/Multi-Racial (N=30)	Black (N=182)	Latinx (N-38)	SWANA (N=7)	White (N-324)	ANOVA
PEM Construct	4.21(.60)	4.17(.68)	4.17(.53)	4.26(.52)	4.30(.45)	4.17(.68)	F=1.67; p =.139
PEM: Meaningfulness	4.5(.71)	4.38(.69)	4.33(.76)	4.53(.73)	4.29(1.48)	4.55(.55)	F=2.80; p =.016
PEM: Safety	3.66(.78)	3.52(1.02)	3.65(.92)	3.76(.91)	4.43(.66)	3.84(.82)	F=2.50; p =.030
PEM: Availability	4.14(.68)	4.31(.81)	4.29(.58)	4.23(.53)	4.01(1.44)	4.27(.55)	F=.01; p =.544

Note: PEM = psychological engagement measure

Hypothesis 2. This hypothesis examined if employment factors, such as employee classification, years of service, and supervisory roles, impacted employee engagement, using the PEM full-scale and subscales as the dependent variables. An

independent samples t-test were conducted (Table 6) to compare the effect of employee

classification on employee engagement. The results of the independent-samples t-test

indicated a significant difference in employee engagement based on the scores of staff

(M=4.19, SD=.56) and faculty (M=4.37, SD=.39) conditions; t(633)=-4.20, p <.001 at the

full scale level. Additionally, the *meaningfulness* subscale was found to be statistically

significant for staff (M=4.35, SD=.75 and faculty (M=4.74, SD=.40) conditions, t(633)=-

7.0 p <.001. However, the results for the *safety* and *availability* subscales did not indicate

any significance in classification on employee engagement. Overall, these results suggest

that staff have less overall engagement than faculty and staff find their work less

meaningful than faculty.

Table 6
Impact of Employee Classification on Employee Engagement

Index	Staff	Faculty	df	t	P
Psychological Engagement Measure Construct	4.19(.56)	4.37(.39)	633	-4.20	.000
PEM: Meaningfulness	4.35(.75)	4.74(.40)	633	-7.00	.000
PEM: Safety	3.75(.90)	3.77(.81)	633	-0.28	.777
PEM: Availability	4.25(.62)	4.26(.60)	633	-0.60	.546

Note: PEM = Psychological Engagement Measure

A one-way ANOVA was conducted (Table 7) to examine the effect of years of

employment on employee engagement, with less than 1 year, 1-4 years, 4-9 years, 10-14

years, 15-24 years, and 25 years or more as the conditions. The PEM full-scale score and

subscales for employee engagement were utilized. The results indicated statistical

significance at the PEM full-scale [F(5,629) = 4.529, p <.001] and the sub-scale levels of

meaningfulness [F(5,629) = 4.043, p =.001], *safety* [F(5,629) = 2.59, p =.025], and

availability [F(5,629) = 2.97, p =.012] for those employed 1-4 years and those employed

for 15-24 years. The ANOVA indicated a significant effect of length of employment on

employee engagement at the p <.05 level for the six conditions. Post-hoc comparisons

using the Bonferroni test indicated that the mean score for those employed 1-4 years for the PEM full-scale (M=4.13, SD=.55), *meaningfulness* (M=4.33, SD=.76), *safety* (M=3.67, SD=.86), and *availability* (M=4.18, SD=.66) were significantly different from those employed for 15-24 years (M=4.40, SD=.43), *meaningfulness* (M=4.67, SD=.54), *safety* (M=3.77, SD=.85), and *availability* (M=4.44, SD=.49). However, less than 1 year (M=4.30, SD=.40), 5-9 years (M=4.28, SD=.54), 10-14 years (M=4.22, SD=.57), and 25 years or more (4.36, SD=.45) did not significantly differ from the other conditions. These results suggest that those employed for 1-4 years are overall less engaged and find their work less meaningful, feel less safe at work, and have less availability at work compared to those employed for 15-24 years. Thus, the hypothesis that employment factors, such as employee classification, years of service, and supervisory roles impacted employee engagement was supported.

Table 7
Impact of Length of Employment on Employee Engagement

Index	Less than 1 year	1-4 years	5-9 years	10-14 years	15-24 years	25 years or more	ANOVA
Psychological Engagement Measure PEM:	4.30(.40)	4.13(.55)	4.28(.54)	4.22(.57)	4.40(.43)	4.36(.45)	F=4.529; p =.001
Meaningfulness	4.47(.53)	4.33(.76)	4.50(.71)	4.54(.70)	4.67(.54)	4.59(.54)	F=4.043; p =.001
PEM: Safety	4.02(.73)	3.67(.86)	3.82(.87)	3.61(.97)	3.77(.85)	3.88(.81)	F=2.59; p =.025
PEM: Availability	4.26(.51)	4.18(.66)	4.29(.58)	4.21(.63)	4.44(.49)	4.36(.60)	F=2.97; p =.012

Finally, a one-way ANOVA (Table 8) was conducted to compare the effect of supervisory duties on employee engagement among those who supervise others, do not supervise others, and were unsure about supervisory duties while utilizing the PEM full-scale score and subscales for employee engagement. The ANOVA showed a significant effect of supervisory roles on employee engagement at the p<.05 level for the three

conditions for the full-scale [$F(2,632) = 9.33$, p <.001] and the sub-scale of

meaningfulness [$F(2,632) = 17.18$, p <.001], with those who do not supervise being less

engaged than those who do supervise. Utilizing the Bonferroni test to perform post-hoc

comparisons showed that the full-scale mean score for those who supervise others

(M=4.34, SD=.48) was significantly different from those who do not supervise others

(M=4.16, SD=.54) and the *meaningfulness* sub-scale indicated mean scores for those who

supervise others (M=4.64, SD=.53) was significantly different from those who do not

supervise others (M=4.32, SD=.74). This indicated that those who supervise are more

engaged than those who do not supervise, and those who supervise find their work to be

more meaningful. The *safety* and *availability* sub-scales were not statistically significant.

Additionally, the condition of Unsure was not significantly different from the other two

conditions at the PEM full-scale level (M=4.20, SD=.45) or the subscale levels of

meaningfulness (M=4.48, SD=.53), *safety* (M=4.74, SD=.75), and *availability* (M=4.14,

SD=.60).

Table 8
Impact of Supervision on Employee Engagement

Index	Do Not Supervise Others	Supervise Others	Unsure	ANOVA
Psychological Engagement Measure	4.16(.54)	4.34(.48)	4.20(.45)	F=9.327; *p* =.001
Meaningfulness	4.32(.74)	4.64(.53)	4.48(.53)	F=17.176; *p* =.001
Safety	3.71(.90)	3.82(.83)	3.74(.75)	F=1.215; *p* =.297
Availability	4.24(.63)	4.30(.58)	4.14(.60)	F=.993; *p* =.371

It has been found that the employment factors of employee classification, length

of employment, and supervisory duties significantly impact employee engagement. Thus,

this hypothesis can be confirmed for all three employment factors.

Hypothesis 3. The third hypothesis explored the correlation between frequency of occurrences of racial and ethnic microaggressions by BIPOCs and employee engagement controlled for covariates. Linear regression analysis (Table 9) was used to analyze the full-scale score of the frequency of occurrence of racial microaggressions (RMAS) as a predictor, while the full-scale score of employee engagement (PEM) and the subscales were used as the dependent variables. To explore race/ethnicity, Asian, Bi-/Multi-Racial, Black, Latinx, SWANA were entered as independent variables. The racial category of White, those who do not supervise others, faculty, those employed less than one year, and those who identify as men were excluded from the linear regression and used as the reference covariates. After controlling for years of employment, classification, and supervisory role, it was found that race/ethnicity did not statistically significantly impact the relationship between frequency of occurrences of racial and ethnic microaggressions and the full scale of employee engagement or the employee engagement dimensions *meaningfulness* and *availability*. However, statistical significance was found in the relationship of occurrences of racial and ethnic microaggressions and the employee engagement dimension of *safety* among employees who identified as Asian/Asian American ($\beta = .092$, $p = .028$), Black ($\beta = .221$, $p < .000$), and SWANA ($\beta = .132$, $p = .001$). This indicates that race/ethnicity is a significant factor in the relationship between frequency of occurrences of racial and ethnic microaggressions and employee engagement, specifically as it relates to the dimension of *psychological safety* in the employee engagement construct. Furthermore, as frequency of occurrence of microaggression increases, overall employee engagement and the employee engagement dimension of psychological safety decreases. Thus, the hypothesis that race and ethnicity

impacts the relationship between frequency of occurrences of racial and ethnic

microaggressions and employee engagement cannot be completely confirmed; however,

there is confirmation in the dimension of *psychological safety*.

Table 9

Linear Regression Models Examining Effects of Race and Ethnicity on the Relationship Between Frequency of Occurrence of Microaggressions and Employee Engagement

Outcome variables

Predictor variables	Employee engagement		Meaningfulness dimension of employee engagement		Safety dimension of employee engagement		Availability dimension of employee engagement	
	β	p	β	p	β	p	β	p
Supervisor (yes)	.119	.004	.133	.001	.073	.071	.042	.335
Classification (staff)	-.119	.004	-.204	.000	.005	.907	-.014	.737
Length of Employment (1-4 years)	-.143	.026	-.089	.160	-.183	.003	-.065	.329
Length of Employment (5-9 years)	-.044	.443	-.029	.614	-.097	.083	.014	.811
Length of Employment (10-14 years)	-.063	.244	.009	.871	-.147	.005	-.034	.539
Length of Employment (15-24 years)	.046	.396	.066	.215	-.089	.089	.096	.086
Length of Employment (25 years or more)	.020	.676	.030	.531	-.034	.472	.039	.443
RMAS	-.235	.000	-.067	.186	-.444	.000	-.085	.109
Asian/Asian American	.024	.577	.003	.947	.092	.028	-.025	.582
Bi-Racial/Multi-Racial	.012	.772	-.022	.584	.022	.585	-.037	.383
Black	.099	.068	-.032	.548	.221	.000	.083	.139
Latinx	.054	.183	.037	.365	.077	.052	.012	.772
SWANA	.020	.602	-.028	.467	.132	.001	-.029	.475
Model fit	F = 5.582		F = 6.555		F = 8.518		F = 1.661	
	(p > .000)		(p < .000)		(p < .000)		(p = .065)	
	R^2 = .037		R^2 = .011		R^2 = .126		R^2 = .010	

Notes: RMAS = Racial Microaggressions Scale.

Hypothesis 4. Hypothesis 4 examined the impact of possessing two or more intersecting oppressed identities on frequency of occurrence of racial and ethnic microaggressions and employee engagement, respectively, among BIPOC employees. To test this hypothesis, dummy variables were computed to categorized participants who identified as the following: BIPOC and a marginalized gender; BIPOC and LGBQ; and BIPOC, marginalized gender, and LGBQ. Marginalized gender represented participants who identify as women and those who identify as non-binary/gender fluid. It should be noted that the LGBQ variable does not include individuals who identified as transgender or non-binary as neither of those identities is a sexual orientation. After controlling for years of employment, classification, and supervisory role, a linear regression (Table 10) was conducted, with the RMAS full scale and sub-scales as outcome variables representing frequency of occurrence of racial and ethnic microaggressions. The RMAS subscales include *foreign/not belonging, criminality, sexualization, low achieving/undesirable culture, invisibility*, and *environmental invalidations*. Similarly, to examine the impact of possessing two or more intersecting oppressed identities among BIPOC employees on employee engagement, the same linear regression model was used, except the PEM full scale and subscales were entered as dependent variables (Table 11). The PEM subscales include *psychological meaningfulness, psychological safety, and psychological availability.* For both models, the following variables were excluded and served as a reference covariate: race category of White, those who do not supervise others, faculty, those employed less than one year, and those who identify as men.

The linear regression did reveal a significant impact on frequency of occurrence of microaggressions based on intersecting oppressed identities for the full RMAS

construct and each of the RMAS subscales, among all but one oppressed identity

combination and subscale. For those who identified as BIPOC/Marginalized Gender,

there were significant positive relationships across the full RMAS scale (β = .496, $p <$

.000) and each of the subscales: *foreign/not belonging* (β =.172, p = .002) *criminality* (β

= .314, $p <$ .000), *sexualization* (β = .172, p = .003)*, low achieving/undesirable culture* (β

= .413, $p <$ .000)*, and invisibility* (β = .482, $p <$ .000)*,* with the exception of a negative

relationship found on the *environmental invalidation* subscale (β = -0.546, $p <$ .000). For

those who identified as BIPOC/LGBQ, there were significant positive relationships

across the full RMAS scale (β = .479, $p <$ .000) and each of the subscales: *foreign/not*

belonging (β =.449, $p <$ .000)*, criminality* (β =.381, $p <$ .000)*, sexualization* (β = .221 , p

= .002)*, low achieving/undesirable culture* (β = .374, $p <$ .000)*, invisibility* (β = .377, $p <$

.000), and *environmental invalidations* (β =.490, $p <$ .000). Finally, those who identified

as BIPOC/Marginalized Gender/LGBQ did not have a significant relationship with the

sexualization subscale (β = -0.005, p = .956); however, they did have a negative

relationship with frequency of occurrence of microaggressions at the full RMAS scale (β

= -.321, $p <$ .000) and all other subscales: *foreign/not belonging* (β = -.171, p = .029)*,*

criminality (β = -.260, p = .001)*, low achieving/undesirable culture* (β = -.343, $p <$ .000)*,*

invisibility (β = -.240, p = .001), and *environmental invalidations* (β -.312, $p <$ .000).

When intersecting oppressed identities was regressed on employee engagement, a

significant relationship was found for some combined identities and not others. For those

who identified as BIPOC/Marginalized Gender, there were significant positive

relationships across the full PEM scale (β = .069, p = .046) and the *availability* subscale

(β =.159, p = .009); however, did not have a significant relationship with the

meaningfulness (β =.026, *p* = .661) and *safety* (β = -.031, *p* = .607) subscales. For those who identified as BIPOC/LGBQ, there were significant negative relationships across the full PEM scale (β = -.118, *p* = .009) and the *safety* subscale (β = -.167, *p* = .023); however, did not have a significant relationship with the *meaningfulness* (β = -.091, *p* = .193) and *availability* (β = -.014, *p* = .849) subscales. Last, those who identified as BIPOC/Marginalized Gender/LGBQ had a significant positive relationship on the *availability* subscale (β =.210, *p* = .015); however, they did not have a significant relationship on the full PEM scale (β = -.058, *p* = .494) and the *meaningfulness* (β =.002, *p* = .979) and *safety* (β = .084, *p* = .333) subscales. While there was no indication of significance in the relationship between possessing two or more intersecting oppressed identities among BIPOC employees and employee engagement at the *meaningfulness* subscale, significance was indicated at the full scale and the *safety* and *availability* subscales for at least one combined oppressed identity.

In summary, possessing two or more intersecting oppressed identities among BIPOC employees was found to impact frequency of occurrence of racial and ethnic microaggressions and employee engagement, respectively. This hypothesis can be accepted at the aforementioned dependent variables.

Table 10

Linear Regression Models Examining the Effects of Intersectionality on Frequency of Occurrence of Microaggressions

Outcome variables

Predictor variables	RAMS		RAMS - Foreign/ Not Belonging		RAMS - Criminality		RAMS - Sexualization		RAMS - Low Achieving/ Undesirable Culture		RAMS - Invisibility		RAMS - Environmental Invalidation	
	β	p	β	p	β	p	β	p	β	p	β	p	β	p
Supervisor (yes)	0.008	.806	0.107	.006	-0.049	.217	0.010	.813	0.002	.960	-0.031	.373	0.044	.169
Classification (staff)	-0.030	.373	-0.131	.001	-0.003	.940	-0.061	.133	0.007	.857	-0.030	.383	-0.014	.655
Length of Employment (1-4 years)	0.062	.241	0.061	.308	0.074	.229	0.054	.395	0.062	.309	0.071	.195	-0.007	.896
Length of Employment (5-9 years)	0.051	.286	0.048	.974	0.085	.123	0.010	.855	0.039	.472	0.071	.147	-0.004	.925
Length of Employment (10-14 years)	0.059	.185	0.041	.419	0.084	.104	0.057	.282	0.056	.270	0.103	.026	-0.049	.245
Length of Employment (15-24 years)	0.072	.110	0.045	.379	0.103	.046	0.037	.492	0.086	.094	0.078	.090	-0.014	.741
Length of Employment (25 years or more)	0.051	.207	-0.029	.534	0.050	.280	-0.039	.417	0.088	.056	0.079	.059	-0.017	.651
BIPOC + Marginalized Gender	0.496	.000	0.172	.002	0.314	.000	0.172	.003	0.413	.000	0.482	.000	-0.546	.000
BIPOC + LGBQ	0.479	.000	0.449	.000	0.381	.000	0.221	.002	0.374	.000	0.377	.000	0.490	.000
BIPOC + Marginalized Gender + LGBQ	-0.321	.000	-0.171	.029	-0.260	.001	-0.005	.956	-0.343	.000	-0.240	.001	-0.312	.000
Model fit	F = 38.885		F = 16.644		F = 14.149		F = 9.588		F = 15.605		F = 33.264		F = 52.687	
	(p < .000)		(p < .000)		(p < .000)		(p < .000)		(p < .000)		(p < .000)		(p < .000)	
	$R^2 = .374$		$R^2 = .180$		$R^2 = .170$		$R^2 = .119$		$R^2 = .192$		$R^2 = .327$		$R^2 = .449$	

Notes: BIPOC = Black, Indigenous, and People of Color; Marginalized Gender = woman or non-binary/gender fluid; and LGBQ = lesbian, gay, bisexual, or queer; and RMAS = Racial Microaggressions Scale.

Table 11

Linear Regression Models Examining the Effects of Intersectionality on Employee Engagement

	Outcome variables							
	Employee Engagement		Employee Engagement: Meaningfulness		Employee Engagement: Safety		Employee Engagement: Availability	
Predictor variables	β	p	β	p	β	p	β	p
Supervisor (yes)	0.117	.005	0.138	.001	0.072	.094	0.031	.476
Classification (staff)	-0.095	.022	-0.201	.000	0.025	.549	0.020	.631
Length of Employment (1-4 years)	-0.155	.017	-0.094	.139	-0.203	.002	-0.068	.302
Length of Employment (5-9 years)	-0.052	.372	-0.030	.601	-0.106	.075	0.005	.932
Length of Employment (10-14 years)	-0.076	.165	0.003	.954	-0.168	.003	-0.040	.477
Length of Employment (15-24 years)	0.013	.815	0.047	.382	-0.129	.021	0.078	.162
Length of Employment (25 years or more)	0.002	.973	0.020	.682	-0.061	.227	0.023	.645
BIPOC + Marginalized Gender	0.069	.046	0.026	.661	-0.031	.607	0.159	.009
BIPOC + LGBQ	-0.118	.009	-0.091	.193	-0.167	.023	-0.014	.849
BIPOC + Marginalized Gender + LGBQ	-0.058	.494	-0.002	.979	0.084	.333	-0.210	.015
Model fit	F = 5.633		F = 8.083		F = 2.609		F = 2.815	
	(p < .000)		(p < .000)		(p = .004)		(p = .002)	
	R^2 = .016		R^2 = -.004		R^2 = -.015		R^2 = .020	

Notes: BIPOC = Black, Indigenous, and People of Color; Marginalized Gender = woman or non-binary/gender fluid; and LGBQ = lesbian, gay, bisexual, or queer.

Hypothesis 5. This hypothesis investigated whether coping style acts as a mediator or moderator in the relationship between frequency of occurrence of microaggressions and employee engagement. The Coping with Discrimination Scale includes five dimensions of coping style: *education/advocacy* (addressing discriminatory actions through individual and systematic education), *internalization* (associating discrimination with internalized inferiority of oneself), *drug and alcohol use* (use of drug and alcohol use to cope with discrimination), *resistance* (confronting or challenging individuals for discriminatory actions), and *detachment* (distancing self from social supports and not knowing how to respond to discriminatory actions). It is predicted that the *education/advocacy* dimension of coping style will have a positive mediating or moderating effect (hypothesis 5a) on the relationship between frequency of microaggressions and employee engagement. Conversely, it is predicted that the *internalization* (hypothesis 5b), *drug and alcohol use* (hypothesis 5c), *resistance* (hypothesis 5d), and *detachment* (hypothesis 5e) dimensions of coping style will have a negative mediating or moderating effect on the relationship between frequency of microaggressions and employee engagement.

In accordance with Baron and Kenny's (1986) *causal steps approach*, a hierarchical linear regression model (Table 12) was created to explore the mediating effects of coping style on the relationship between the frequency of occurrence of racial and ethnic microaggressions and employee engagement when controlling for employment factors (supervisory duties, classification, and length of employment), gender identity, and race/ethnicity. While, Hayes (2009) suggests the use of structural

equation modeling to explore the mediating and moderating effects of variables, the *causal steps approach* will be utilized due to its wide-use and understanding among researchers. The following variables were excluded and served as a reference covariate: those who do not supervise others, faculty, those employed less than one year, those who identify as men, and those who identify as White.

In Step 1 of the model, employee engagement was regressed on the control variables in Block 1 and the frequency of occurrence of racial and ethnic microaggression in Block 2. In Step 2, each presumed mediator (*education/advocacy, internalization, drug and alcohol use, resistance,* and *detachment*) was added to Block 3. To explore the role of moderation, a fourth step was added to the model, which utilized a dummy variable created to capture the interaction of each coping style and the full microaggressions scale. In this step, the coping styles were removed from Block 3 and added to Block 2, then the interaction variables were added to Block 3 of the model.

Hypothesis 5a. This hypothesis explored whether the *education/advocacy* dimension of coping style had a positive mediating or moderating effect on the relationship between frequency of occurrence of microaggressions and employee engagement. After controlling for classification, years of employment, supervisory role, gender identity, and race/ethnicity, it was found that *education/advocacy* as a coping style did not moderate the relationship between frequency of racial and ethnic microaggressions on employee engagement ($\beta = -0.114$, $p = .271$); however, *education/advocacy* as a coping style was found to significantly lessen the association of frequency of microaggressions and employee engagement ($\beta = 0.180$, $p < .000$).

Hypothesis 5b. This hypothesis explored whether the *internalization* dimension of coping style had a negative mediating or moderating effect on the relationship between frequency of microaggressions and employee engagement. After controlling for classification, years of employment, supervisory role, gender identity, and race/ethnicity, it was found that *internalization* as a coping style did not moderate the relationship between frequency of racial and ethnic microaggressions on employee engagement (β = 0.060, p = .474). However, *internalization* as a coping style was found to significantly negatively affect the relationship of frequency of microaggressions and employee engagement (β = -0.104, p = .008).

Hypothesis 5c. This hypothesis explored if the *drug and alcohol use* dimension of coping style had a negative mediating or moderating effect on the relationship between frequency of microaggressions and employee engagement. After controlling for classification, years of employment, supervisory role, gender identity, and race/ethnicity, it was found that *drug and alcohol use* as a coping style did not moderate the relationship between frequency of racial and ethnic microaggressions on employee engagement (β = 0.056, p = .474). However, *drug and alcohol use* as a coping style was found to significantly negatively impact the relationship of frequency of microaggressions and employee engagement (β = -0.087, p = .026).

Hypothesis 5d. This hypothesis explored whether the *resistance* dimension of coping style had a negative mediating or moderating effect on the relationship between frequency of microaggressions and employee engagement. After controlling for classification, years of employment, supervisory role, gender identity, and race/ethnicity, it was found that *resistance* did not indicate a mediating (β =-.050, p = .189) or

moderating (β = 050, *p* = .611) effect in the association of frequency of microaggressions and employee engagement.

Hypothesis 5e. This hypothesis explored whether the *detachment* dimension of coping style had a negative mediating or moderating effect on the relationship between frequency of microaggressions and employee engagement. After controlling for classification, years of employment, supervisory role, gender identity, and race/ethnicity, it was found that *detachment* as a coping style did not moderate the relationship between frequency of racial and ethnic microaggressions on employee engagement (β = .088, *p* = .300). However, *detachment* as a coping style significantly negatively increased the association of frequency of microaggressions and employee engagement (β =-.222, p < .000).

In summary, four of the five coping styles were found to be significant in partially mediating the relationship between frequency of occurrence of microaggressions and employee engagement (see Table 12). Despite the significant mediating effect of coping style on the relationship between frequency of occurrence of microaggressions and employee engagement, frequency of occurrence of microaggressions remained significant (p = .002). However, when comparing Beta without coping style to Beta with coping style, it was found to have decreased from β = -0.228 to β = -0.154, indicating that coping style is a partial mediator of the impact of frequency of microaggressions and employee engagement. While *education/advocacy* as a coping style was found to partially lessen the impact of frequency of occurrence of microaggressions and employee engagement, the coping styles of *internalization, drug and alcohol use,* and *detachment* were found to partially exacerbate it. The coping style of *resistance* was not found to significantly

impact the relationship between frequency of occurrence of microaggressions and employee engagement. There was no indication that the dimensions of coping style (*education/advocacy, internalization, drug and alcohol use, resistance,* and *detachment*) have a moderating effect on the relationship between the frequency of occurrence of microaggressions and employee engagement. Therefore, the hypothesis is supported, the *education/advocacy, internalization, drug and alcohol use, resistance,* and *detachment* coping styles acts as a partial mediator in the relationship between frequency of occurrence of microaggressions and employee engagement.

Table 12

Hierarchical Linear Regression Model Addressing the Mediating or Moderating Effects of Coping Style on the Relationship Between Frequency of Occurrence of Microaggressions on Employee Engagement

| Predictor variables | Outcome variables | | | | | |
| | Employee engagement (without coping style) | | Employee engagement (with coping style) | | Employee engagement (with interaction terms) | |
	β	p	β	p	β	p
Supervisor (yes)	0.115	.006	0.100	.010	0.103	.008
Classification (staff)	-0.113	.006	-0.115	.003	-0.115	.003
Length of Employment (1-4 years)	-0.138	.031	-0.181	.003	-0.183	.003
Length of Employment (5-9 years)	-0.038	.502	-0.07	.195	-0.068	.209
Length of Employment (10-14 years)	-0.057	.286	-0.09	.077	-0.094	.068
Length of Employment (15-24 years)	0.05	.351	0.003	.954	0.001	.992
Length of Employment (25 years or more)	0.023	.641	-0.012	.787	-0.015	.741
Women	-0.013	.733	-0.039	.294	-0.040	.281
Non-Binary/Gender Fluid	0.033	.393	0.048	.191	0.051	.165
BIPOC	0.086	.091	0.033	.505	0.038	.450
RMAS score	-0.228	.000	-0.154	.002	-0.243	.080
Education/advocacy	NA		0.180	.000	0.229	.000
Internalization	NA		-0.104	.008	-0.136	.018
Drug and alcohol use	NA		-0.087	.026	-0.109	.046
Resistance	NA		-0.050	.189	-0.070	.210
Detachment	NA		-0.222	.000	-0.272	.000
Education/advocacy x RMAS	NA		NA		-0.114	.271
Internalization x RMAS	NA		NA		0.060	.474
Drug and alcohol use x RMAS	NA		NA		0.056	.477
Resistance x RMAS	NA		NA		0.050	.611
Detachment x RMAS	NA		NA		0.088	.300
Model fit	F = 6.579		F = 6.606		F = 8.733	
	(p < .000)		(p < .000)		(p < .000)	
	R^2 = .030		R^2 = .120		R^2 = .006	

Notes: BIPOC = Black, Indigenous, and People of Color; RMAS = Racial Microaggressions Scale; and NA = not applicable.

Hypothesis 6. This hypothesis investigated the relationship between frequency of occurrence of racial and ethnic microaggressions and employee engagement among BIPOCs, and whether this relationship is influenced by high stress levels (Table 13). A hierarchical linear regression model was created, controlling for employment factors (supervisory duties, classification, and length of employment), gender identity, and race/ethnicity. This model excluded the following variables as reference covariates: those who do not supervise others, faculty, those employed less than one year, those who identify as men, and those who identify as White. Step 1 of the hierarchical linear regression model included using employee engagement as the outcome variable, with the control variables in Block 1 and frequency of occurrence of racial and ethnic microaggressions as an independent variable in Block 2. In Step 2, perceived stress level was added to Block 3 to examine the role of perceived high levels of stress on the relationship of frequency of occurrence of microaggressions and employee engagement.

It was found that perceived high levels of stress significantly impacted the relationship between frequency of occurrence of racial and ethnic microaggressions and employee engagement ($\beta = -0.322$, $p < .000$). Thus, it can be concluded that perceived high levels of stress negatively impact the relationship between frequency of occurrence of racial and ethnic microaggressions and employee engagement, resulting in lower employee engagement among employees with perceived high levels of stress when experiencing racial and ethnic microaggressions. Similar to hypothesis 5, despite the significant mediating effect of perceived high levels of stress on the relationship between frequency of occurrence of microaggressions and employee engagement, frequency of occurrence of microaggressions remained significant ($p = .001$). However, Beta

decreased from β = -0.228, without perceived stress level, to β = -0.156, with perceived

stress level, indicating that perceived stress level is a partial mediator of the impact of

frequency of microaggressions and employee engagement. This indicates that perceived

high stress levels partially worsen the relationship between frequency of occurrence of

racial and ethnic microaggressions and employee engagement. Therefore, hypothesis 6

was supported, with perceived stress level as a partial mediator in the relationship

between frequency of occurrence of microaggressions and employee engagement.

Table 13
Hierarchical Linear Regression Models Addressing the Impact of Stress Level on the Relationship Between Frequency of Occurrence of Microaggressions and Employee Engagement

Predictor variables	Outcome variables			
	Employee engagement (without stress level)		Employee engagement (with Stress Level)	
	β	p	β	p
Supervisor (yes)	0.115	0.006	0.091	0.020
Classification (staff)	0.113	0.006	-0.101	0.009
Length of Employment (1-4 years)	-0.138	0.031	-0.093	0.129
Length of Employment (5-9 years)	-0.038	0.502	-0.004	0.936
Length of Employment (10-14 years)	-0.057	0.286	-0.017	0.747
Length of Employment (15-24 years)	0.050	0.351	0.069	0.177
Length of Employment (25 years or more)	0.023	0.641	0.034	0.461
Women	-0.013	0.733	0.052	0.176
Non-Binary/Gender Fluid	0.033	0.393	0.041	0.258
BIPOC	0.086	0.091	0.039	0.420
RMAS score	-0.228	0.000	-0.156	0.001
Stress Level	NA		-0.322	0.000
Model fit	F = 6.579		F = 12.769	
	($p < .000$)		($p < .000$)	
	R^2 = .030		R^2 = .094	

Notes: BIPOC = Black, Indigenous, and People of Color; RMAS = Racial Microaggressions Scale; and NA = not applicable.

Discussion of Findings

This study utilized an interdisciplinary approach to examine how the psychological components of employee engagement are impacted by the occurrence of racial and ethnic microaggressions, and the effect of coping style and perceived stress levels in attenuating or exacerbating the impact of microaggressions on employee engagement. Additionally, the role of intersecting oppressed identities was explored as they relate to the occurrence of racial and ethnic microaggressions and employee engagement, respectively.

Employee Engagement. The dependent variable of employee engagement was measured using the full-scale and the three sub-scales of *psychological meaningfulness*, *psychological safety*, and *psychological availability*. BIPOC employees were found to be less engaged at work, experienced less psychological meaningfulness in their work, and felt less psychologically available to engage at work when compared to White employees. According to Cox and Nkomo (1991), the negative treatment and discrimination experienced by BIPOC employees, results in lower job satisfaction, as cited in DeCuir-Gunby (2016).

Furthermore, Black employees found their work less psychologically meaningful than White employees. Hancock, Manyika, Williams, and Yee (2021) analyzed data from the US Bureau of Labor Statistics, the US Census Bureau, and the US Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and found that Black employees are overrepresented in frontline positions and underrepresented in management positions, have a significant lack of trust in their employer, feel less able to be their authentic selves at work, and are two times more likely than other BIPOC employees to perceive their race as a barrier to

achieve their work goals. In the current study, employees who identified as Black were less likely to hold faculty positions and less likely to supervise others when compared to Asian and White employees.

These findings were consistent with Brief, Butz, and Deitch (2005), who assert that Black employees experience less welcoming work environments as compared to their White peers, demonstrated through daily denigrating exclusions and exchanges (Roberson, et al., 2003; Essed, 1991), increased supervision, and decreased autonomy (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999), also resulting in isolation in the form of fewer opportunities for mentorship and informal networks (Reskin, 2000). In summation, BIPOC employees, specifically Black employees, were found to have lower levels of engagement when compared with White peers, which is consistent with prior empirical studies from various academic disciplines. As such, the hypothesis that BIPOC employees have lower engagement at work compared to their White counterparts was partially supported.

Employment Factors. The study also explored the impact of employment factors, such as employee classification, years of service, and supervisory role on employee engagement. Employee classification was found to be a significant indicator for employee engagement in this study. Staff were found to be less engaged overall when compared to faculty. Additionally, staff found their work less psychologically meaningful than faculty. This aligns with Young, Anderson, and Steward's (2015) declaration that employee identity is connected to the institutional value of employees' roles, as well as well-documented studies on the perceived value of faculty over staff in higher education (Allen Collinson, 2006; Kuh & Banta, 2000; Streit, 1993; Szekeres, 2004, cited in Syno, McBrayer, and Calhoun, 2019). Additionally, Young, Anderson, and Stewart's research

on microaggressions in higher education indicated that faculty-to-staff microaggressions were commonplace, as staff were seen as "less capable because they were assumed to have less education" (2015, p. 2).

The current study found that those employed for 1-4 years were less engaged and found their work less meaningful, felt less psychologically safe at work, and had less psychological availability at work compared to those employed for 15-24 years. This aligns with Sorenson and Garman's (2013) findings that, after the first six months of employment, engagement decreases significantly for workers under the ten-year employment mark. However, they also assert that after ten years, engagement remains flat for the duration of the employee's tenure, which does not align with the findings of this study. Ryba (2020) found that, similar to the current study, employee engagement is highest among new employees and decreases after year one; however, they posit that engagement begins to rebound and steadily increase after year five and for the duration of employment. They add, "long-term employees are more likely to hold higher positions of formal or informal influence within the organization, which further strengthens their desire to support, protect, and guide the organization" (Ryba, 2020, para. 19).

Additionally, the results from the current study indicated that those who supervise others are more engaged than those who do not supervise, and those who supervise others find their work to be more psychologically meaningful. Consistent with Robie and colleagues (1998), the current study found that those who supervise others have higher levels of job autonomy, resulting in greater job satisfaction.

In summary, the findings indicate less overall engagement and less psychological meaningfulness of work among staff compared to faculty; less overall engagement,

psychological meaningfulness, psychological safety, and psychological availability among those employed for 1-4 compared to those employed for 15-24 years; and less overall engagement and psychological meaningfulness among those who do not supervise others compared to those who do supervise others. This supports the hypothesis that employment factors, such as employee classification, years of service, and supervision of others, impact employee engagement.

Microaggressions and Employee Engagement. Results indicated that race/ethnicity was a significant factor in the relationship between frequency of occurrences of racial and ethnic microaggressions and employee engagement, specifically as it relates to the dimension of *psychological safety* of the employee. This result supports the hypothesis based on literature that acknowledges that the workplace microaggressions experienced by BIPOC employees impact work outcomes (Root, 2003; Hinton, 2004; Sue, et al., 2009; Sue, 2010). Furthermore, Sue (2010) adds that the constant distraction of experiencing microaggressions competes with employees' psychological availability. While results did not fully support third hypothesis, partially support was found in the dimension of *psychological safety.*

Intersectionality. This study also explored the impact of possessing two or more intersecting oppressed identities on frequency of occurrence of racial and ethnic microaggressions, as well as the impact of possessing two or more intersecting oppressed identities on employee engagement. It was demonstrated that the presence of intersecting oppressed identities among BIPOC employees had a significant impact on the frequency of occurrence of microaggressions. Given that limited quantitative studies have explored the impact of two or more oppressed identities on the frequency of racial and ethnic

microaggressions experienced in the workplace, these findings provide meaningful

contributions to scholarly research on both intersectionality and microaggressions.

Participants with the dual identities of BIPOC/marginalized gender and BIPOC/LGBQ

experienced significantly more occurrences of microaggressions across the full RMAS

scale and the f*oreign/not belonging*, *criminality, sexualization, low achieving/undesirable

culture, and invisibility* subscales. Additionally, those with the joint identity of

BIPOC/LGBQ experienced significantly more occurrences of microaggressions on the

environmental invalidations subscale. Those with the combined identity of

BIPOC/Marginalized Gender/LGBQ experienced significantly less occurrences of

microaggressions across the full RMAS scale, and the *foreign/not belonging, criminality,

low achieving/undesirable culture, invisibility*, and *environmental invalidations*

subscales.

Similarly, the impact of intersectionality on employee engagement was

significant, and addressed a void in the study of employee engagement. The researcher

was unable to identify any prior studies that explored the combination of intersectionality

and employee engagement. Therefore, it is suggested that additional research be

conducted on the relationship between intersectionality and employee engagement. The

current study's findings indicated that those with the dual identities of

BIPOC/Marginalized Gender experienced statistically significantly higher overall

engagement and had higher psychologically availability at work, yet statistically

significantly experienced higher frequency of exposure to racial and ethnic

microaggressions in general and related to *foreign/not belonging, criminality,

sexualization, low achieving/undesirable culture, and invisibility*; however, they

statistically significantly experienced lower frequency of exposure to racial and ethnic microaggressions focused on *environmental invalidations.* While those who identified as BIPOC/LGBQ statistically significantly experienced less overall engagement and less psychologically safe at work, while also experiencing statistically significantly higher frequency of exposure to racial and ethnic microaggressions in general and related to *foreign/not belonging, criminality, sexualization, low achieving/undesirable culture, invisibility*, and *environmental invalidations.* Last, those who identified as BIPOC/Marginalized Gender/LGBQ experienced statistically significantly less psychologically availability at work. Yet, experienced statistically significantly higher overall engagement, had higher psychologically availability at work, while experiencing statistically significantly lower overall frequency of exposure to racial and ethnic microaggressions in general and related to *foreign/not belonging, criminality, low achieving/undesirable culture, invisibility*, and *environmental invalidations,* and no statistically significantly result pertaining to *sexualization* microaggressions.

With a dearth of studies examining the impact of intersectionality on frequency of occurrence of microaggressions and employee engagement, respectively, these findings are extremely important and add to this area of inquiry by providing meaningful contributions to scholarly research on intersectionality, microaggressions, and employee engagement. While these findings support the hypothesis and provide quantitative evidence to support that intersectionality impacts the frequency of microaggressions experienced in the workplace and employee engagement, respectively, further research is needed to fully understand the impact of intersectionality on the impacts of frequency of microaggressions experienced in the workplace and employee engagement.

Coping style as mediators and moderators. While coping style, microaggressions, and employee engagement have all been studied separately, there is a lack of quantitative studies that examine the combination of coping styles, frequency of microaggressions, and employee engagement to explore the mediating and/or moderating effect of coping style. This study indicated that *education/advocacy* as a coping style was found to partially attenuate the effect of frequency of occurrence of microaggressions and employee engagement, while *internalization, drug and alcohol use*, and *detachment* were found to partially exacerbate the impact of frequency of occurrence of microaggressions and employee engagement. Resistance as a coping style did not mediate or moderate the relationship between frequency of occurrence of racial and ethnic microaggressions and employee engagement. This partial mediation finding is important, because it does not center the responsibility of the impact of microaggressions on those being microaggressed. Therefore, while this study recognizes that coping style can partially moderate the impact of frequency of microaggressions on employee engagement, coping style is not the only intervention strategy that should be utilized by employers.

Mellor (2004) suggests that positive coping with racism requires confronting the racism experienced. Additionally, in Decuir-Gunby and Gunby's (2016) study on coping style, microaggressions and job satisfaction of Black educators (K-12 and higher education), they found that detachment coping was strongly associated with lower job satisfaction; however, they were unable to identify significant relationships between the *education/advocacy, internalization, drug and alcohol use,* and *resistance* coping styles on job satisfaction. Torres, Driscoll, and Burrow's (2010) study on the impact of racial microaggressions on Black doctoral and graduate students' mental health found "active

coping served to ameliorate the experience of having one's personal ability underestimated or ignored" (p. 1095). The current study's results indicating a significant positive partial mediating effect of the active coping style of *education/advocacy*, and a significant negative partial mediating effect of *internalization, drug and alcohol use,* and *detachment* between occurrence of microaggressions and employee engagement, partially supports the fifth hypothesis. Given the limited number of quantitative studies exploring the mediating impact of coping style, this additional study result provides meaningful contributions to scholarly research on the combination of coping style, frequency of microaggressions, and employee engagement.

Perceived Stress. Finally, this study investigated the relationship between frequency of occurrence of racial and ethnic microaggressions and employee engagement among BIPOCs, and whether this relationship is influenced by high stress levels. The results identified lower employee engagement among employees with perceived high levels of stress when experiencing racial and ethnic microaggressions. This is partially consistent with Sellers and colleagues (2003), who postulate that perceived stress is a mediator between racial discrimination and psychological distress. Additionally, Torres-Harding, Torres, and Yeo (2020) found that in college students of Color, there was a mediating relationship between perceived stress level and *criminality, invisibility,* and *low-achieving* microaggressions. Thus, the results of this study supported the sixth and final hypothesis.

Working Model. A working model was developed to hypothesize the effects of microaggressions and employee engagement and the mediating and moderating effects of coping styles and the moderating effect of perceived stress levels. Hypotheses 3, 4, 5, and

6 were utilized to test the model. With hypotheses 3, 4, 5a, 5b, 5c, 5e, and 6 supported, the model was adjusted to reflect the results of the study. The moderating effect of coping style was not supported and was removed from the model. Additionally, the coping style of resistance was removed from the model, since it was not supported as a mediator or a moderator.
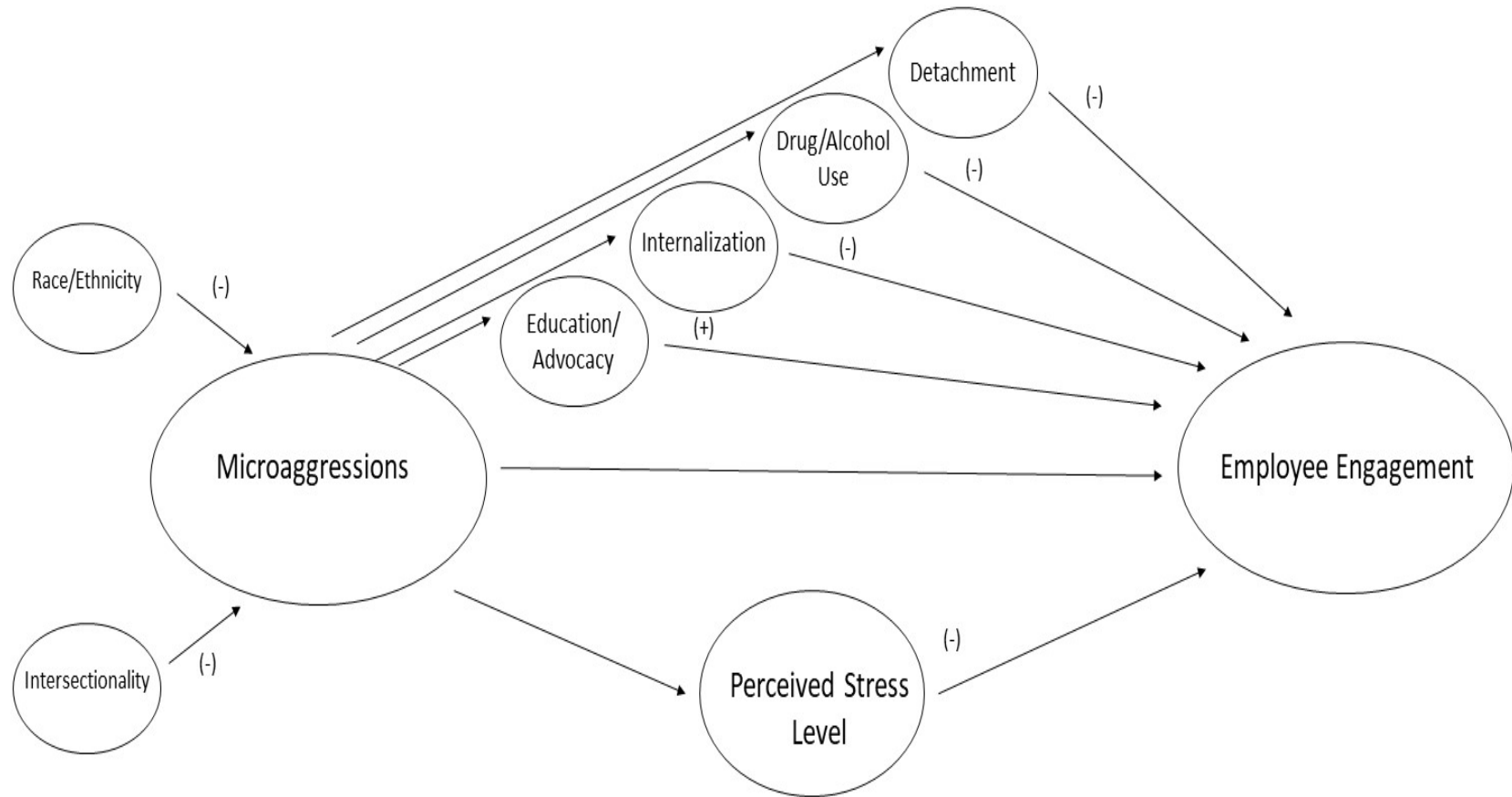
Figure 2. Reduced Model: The impact of race/ethnicity and intersectionality on the effects of microaggressions (microinsults and microinvalidations) on employee engagement (psychological meaningfulness, psychological safety & psychological availability) with coping style and perceived stress level as mediators, as supported by the study.

Limitations

The findings of the current study contribute to addressing the lack of empirical research examining how the psychological components of employee engagement are impacted by the frequency of occurrence of racial and ethnic microaggressions, and the effect of coping style and perceived stress levels in attenuating or exacerbating the impact of microaggressions on employee engagement. However, the current study is not void of limitations. These limitations include the nature of the scales which required participants to provide their perceptions on occurrences of microaggressions and stress level. Because the results were self-reported, participants could over- or under-report their experiences. Torres and Ong (2010) found that Latinx adults with higher ethnic identity development were more susceptible to microaggressions. It is possible to conclude that lower levels of racial and ethnic identity development could result in the under-reporting of the frequency of occurrence of microaggressions. Likewise, higher levels of racial and ethnic identity development could contribute to the over-reporting of frequency of occurrence of microaggressions. Additionally, based on their study of the impact of racial and ethnic microaggressions on graduate students of Color, Lilly and colleagues (2018) assert, "it is possible that individuals who are depressed may be more sensitive to microaggressions and therefore perceive that they are exposed to them more frequently and/or they evoke more distress" (p. 101). Therefore, it may be important to account for the stages of racial/ethnic identity and mental health of those participating in future studies. Also, given the cross-sectional nature of this study, it is difficult to establish the causal relationship between employee engagement and frequency of occurrence of microaggressions.

The original data collection procedure involved a sequential mixed-mode design, including the issuing of an in-person paper survey to account for varying levels of computer literacy and familiarity, and an interviewer-administered option to accommodate for varying literacy levels among study participants. Unfortunately, the COVID-19 pandemic and the University of Maryland, Baltimore's restriction of in-person work for non-essential employees caused the elimination of the paper survey portion of the collection procedure. It is possible that this form of sampling bias adversely contributed to lower participation rates among employees who do not have direct and daily access to emails and/or computers which many impact the generalizability of this study.

Brief, Butz, and Deitch (2005) found that Black employees are over-represented in support and low-skill roles, representing some of the same groups in which McMaster and colleagues (2017) observed increased sample representativeness when issued a paper survey. The shift to electronic-only administered surveys is viewed as a limitation for this study, as participation by those without consistent access to email and/or computers and those with lower literacy levels may have been negatively impacted when the sequential mixed-mode which included issuing a paper survey was eliminated from the study.

Additionally, since the survey tool was initiated during a peak impact time for COVID-19 in the United States of America, it is possible that stress levels were elevated in response to the pandemic. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the University of Maryland, Baltimore shifted to a telework environment for the majority of employees. This may have changed the way microaggressions affected work environment because many study participants were interacting through virtual platforms, rather than typical in-

person interaction. Finally, the survey was 149 questions, which may have contributed to partially completed responses and missing data.

Last, the increase of employee engagement and higher psychologically availability at work, while experiencing less frequency of exposure to racial and ethnic microaggressions among BIPOC/Marginalized Gender/LGBQ participants was unexpected and inexplicable. The results may have been impacted by the limited statistical power due to the modest sample size power resulting from the combination of oppressed identities (BIPOC/Marginalized Gender = 253, BIPOC/LGBQ = 47, and BIPOC/Marginalized Gender/LGBQ = 34). Perhaps with larger sample size of intersecting oppressed identities, the results for BIPOC/Marginalized Gender/LGBQ participants would differ.

Implications for Practice

BIPOC and other marginalized employees "continue to describe their work climates as hostile, invalidating, and insulting because of the many microaggressions that assail their race, gender, or sexual orientation identities, deplete their psychic energies, restrict their work options, lower their work productivity, generate suppressed rage and anger, stereotype them as less worthy workers, and detrimentally impact their recruitment, retention, and promotion in organizations" (Sue, 2010, p. 213). Exhaustive empirical and theoretical literature asserts that employee engagement is linked to retention. Schwartz and Porath's (2014) study indicated that those who found significance in their work were three times as likely to be retained by their organization. However, Schwartz and Porath did not consider the impact of microaggressions and/or exposure to negative organizational climates on retention and employee engagement.

This study revealed that BIPOC employees are less engaged than their White counterparts, and literature supports that this could lead to attrition. Brief, Butz, Deitch (2005) postulate that once hired, Black employees experience "lower income, prestige, opportunity and increased performance pressure" (p. 123). Therefore, organizational strategies that primarily seek to approach diversity management through the recruitment of BIPOC employees will not fully realize their diversity retention and organizational culture goals. DeCuir-Gunby and Gunby (2016) posit that increased racial diversity in the workplace may contribute to increased frequency of occurrence of microaggressions, which negatively impacts job satisfaction. While they do not suggest that organizations halt recruiting BIPOC employees, they do call for a focus on retention. They add that McKay and Avery (2005) suggest that organizations need to invest in efforts that address organizational climate -- "changing organizations to be more welcoming to diverse perspectives, approaches, and cultures is necessary to effectively recruiting and retaining a diverse workforce" (DeCuir-Gunby & Gunby, 2016, p. 408).

Hurtado and colleagues (1999) provide twelve research-based principles to address organizational climate shift, three of which have direct implications for this study. Organizations can improve climate through supporting racial and ethnic diversity as an organizational priority; systematically assessing the organization's historical legacy of inclusion and exclusion, compositional diversity, psychological climate, and social interactions to understand the experiences across social identity; and increasing training and professional development opportunities.

In relation to the current study, training and development opportunities should be offered by organizations to address general concepts of diversity, the impacts of

microaggressions and other acts of discrimination, and initiatives that encourage

employee engagement. Similarly, to the findings of Roberson, Kulik, and Tan (2013),

these types of trainings in the workplace could focus on personal attitudes, values and

beliefs related to cultural competence, skill development for historically marginalized

populations, and bias awareness. Williams (2020) suggests "empirically supported

interventions…designed to reduce the commission of microaggressions through

education, discussion, and experiential intergroup contact exercises" (p. 20). Similar

interventions have been found to positively increase racial identity in BIPOC populations

(Williams, et al., 2012, cited in Williams, 2020), while decreases in bias and

microaggressive behaviors have been observed among White participants (Kanter et al.,

2018, cited in Williams, 2020).

Employee engagement interventions have reported positive results as well.

Sorenson and Garman (2013) concluded through their longitudinal study of 515

organizations that intentional engagement initiatives positively contribute to increased

employee engagement. Additionally, Gallup concludes that employee engagement and

profitability are correlated, with 22 percent higher profitability among organizations in

the top employee engagement quartile compared to organizations in the bottom quartile,

which supports what is often referred to as the business case for diversity based on

profitability.

Based on the findings of the current study, there may be cause to explore trainings

on coping style in order to equip BIPOCs with active coping skills to minimize the

impact of racial and ethnic microaggressions. The researcher would like to caution

against interventions that center the responsibility of impact of microaggressions on

victims. Instead, organizational efforts should focus on educational experiences that help employees identify microaggressions and provide evidence-based practices to address bias and lessen the occurrence of microaggressions in the workplace. If organizations wish to offer educational sessions on coping styles, this may be most impactful if facilitated by employee resource groups, also known as employee affinity groups. Bethea (2020) notes that while organizations cannot solely rely on employee resource groups to impact recruitment, retention, and education goals, when responding to daily trauma, external distress, and underrepresentation in predominantly White workplaces, employee resource groups can provide a "space for [BIPOC] employees to be connected and supported, and to process and discuss these experiences (para. 14). Sue and colleagues (2019) suggest further study to determine the ability of microintervention trainings to have positive outcomes on self-esteem, mental well-being, and efficacy of those being microaggressed. They offer strategies for those being microaggressed, bystanders and White allies. Additionally, Sue et al. warn against the inactions that "support and proliferate biased perpetrator behaviors which occur at individual, institutional and societal levels" (p. 128). Furthermore, interventions that address microaggressions and employee engagement could have positive outcomes for organizations; however, more research is necessary to ensure that these interventions are empirically supported. This will be discussed briefly in the next section.

Future Directions for Research

As mentioned above, future studies should explore interventions that address the relationship between exposure to microaggressions and employee engagement. Additional studies could further examine the model supported by the results of this study.

Wyatt-Nichol, Brown, and Haynes (2017) note that the field of public administration often examines social equity through the lens of race and gender while overlooking the impact of socioeconomic status and social class. Similarly, a greater understanding of the mediating effects of coping style on the relationship between the occurrence of microaggressions and employee engagement would add value to various academic disciplines. Adjusting the model to explore the impact of microaggressions across other social identities, including gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, age, socio-economic status, ability, etc., could be valuable in understanding the ways that microaggressions are experienced across identities, as well as how possessing multiple intersecting oppressed identities impacts employee engagement. Since this study found significant differences in the types of microaggressions experienced based on participants' combined oppressed identities, future studies should further investigate the phenomenon.

Future studies could also explore the source of microaggressions to determine if where the most often occur: namely, whether they are peer to peer, supervisor to supervisee, supervisee to supervisor, etc., and whether the microaggressive source impacts employee engagement. Additionally, future investigations could incorporate the role of national social justice movements on stress levels and coping style into the existing model. A future longitudinal study could build on the existing model and the research of Torres and Ong (2010) to examine the effects of racial and ethnic identity development over time on the relationship between frequency of occurrence of racial and ethnic microaggressions and coping style. All future studies on racial and ethnic microaggressions should have an intentional focus on the experiences of people who

identify as Southwest Asia and North Africa (SWANA). While SWANA individuals are often included under the White racial group, much like the ethnicity of Latinx, those who identify as SWANA represent an ethnicity that is often racialized, and therefore their experiences do not mirror those of their White counterparts of European descent and ancestry. Intentional research is needed to fully understand the ways in which SWANA populations, and other marginalized ethnic groups, are impacted by microaggressions.

Last, Hayes (2009) note that while the use of a hierarchical linear regression model suggested by Baron and Kenny (1986) is "the most widely-used method is the causal steps approach," (p. 410) there are more sophisticated mechanisms to explore the effects of a variable on an outcome. Therefore, it is suggested that future studies exploring the mediating effects of coping style on the relationship between frequency of occurrence of microaggressions and employee engagement should explore the use of structural equation modeling to analyze the mediating variable effects.

Conclusion

The findings of the current study illustrate that employee engagement is impacted by the occurrence of microaggressions. It is imperative for employers to establish educational and training opportunities that address microaggressions and other acts of discrimination. It is not sufficient for an employer to focus their diversity management initiatives on retention and recruitment. Instead, employers must work to develop environments where employees can thrive across social identities. This study indicates that BIPOC employees, and specifically Black employees, are experiencing the University of Maryland, Baltimore in ways that are statistically significantly different from their White counterparts. Last, while this study added to the body of empirical

evidence and addressed the gaps in the interdisciplinary topics of employee engagement

and microaggressions, additional research is needed to better understand the ways that

microaggressions and other discriminatory practices and policies create barriers to

achieving psychological meaningfulness, psychological safety, and psychological

availability for BIPOC employees.

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APPENDIX A

Taxonomy of Microaggressions

Theme	Form	Examples	Implications
Alien in own land	Microinvalidation	Complimenting someone born and/or raised in the U.S. for having impeccable English language skills. Repeatedly asking someone where they are from implying that people who look are sound like them cannot be from the U.S.	The recipient is perpetual foreigner regardless of citizenship of country of origin.
Ascription of intelligence	Microinsult	Implying that someone is intelligent despite being a member of a particular population. Having low expectations of someone based on group membership.	The recipient's group membership makes them less intelligent.
Color blindness	Microinvalidation	Dismissing the relevance or importance of race and/or ethnicity. Ascribing values based on White, heterosexual norms.	The recipient's group membership is not as important as assimilation.
Criminality/ Assumption of criminal status	Microinsult	Assuming criminal intent based on group membership. Applying heavier scrutiny or supervision based on group membership.	The recipient cannot be trusted and must be closely monitored.
Denial of individual racism/sexism/ heterosexism	Microinvalidation	Dismissing racism, sexism, heterosexism, or prejudice based on friendships or associations with people who represent different races, genders, and/or sexual orientations.	The recipient is imagining the issue and the perpetrator cannot be racist, sexist, or homophobic because they have relationships with people of different races, genders, and/or sexual orientations.

		Equating racism, sexism, or heterosexism to other forms of oppression for the purpose of dismissal.	
Myth of meritocracy	Microinvalidation	Implying that members of historically marginalized groups have not/do not work hard for privileges, instead privileges are given to them. Suggesting that barriers to the success of members of historically marginalized groups are imagined or invented.	Unfair and unearned benefits are given to members of historically marginalized groups.
Pathologizing cultural values/communication styles	Microinsult	The expectation of assimilation to a dominant, White, heterosexual culture. Expecting individuals to suppress aspects of their identity in order to preserve a dominant, White, heterosexual culture.	The recipient should assimilate and/or present an assimilated version of themselves.
Second-class citizen	Microinsult	Being mistaken for a service worker or support staff because of group membership. Being overlooked for opportunities because of group membership.	The recipient does not deserve priority treatment and/or will always be of service to others.
Environmental microaggressions	Microinsult or Microinvalidation	Images of organizational executives that are all White and/or heterosexual. Lack of representation in workforce, media, educations, government, etc.	The recipient receives messages that they do not belong and/or people like them do not need to be represented in the workforce, media, educations, government, etc.

APPENDIX B

Email Invitation to Participate

Subject line: Participate in Research about Microaggressions and Engagement

Received by 6,890 employees

Hello,

Please complete a survey about microaggressions and employee engagement. Your voice matters. By sharing your experience, we can better understand the impact of the perceptions and experiences of microaggressions, employee engagement, stress, and intersecting identities. The survey should take approximately 20 minutes to complete.

This survey is being conducted by Courtney J. Jones Carney in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Public Administration. Completion of the survey is considered participation in research and is completely voluntary.

▤ Instructions

No identifying information will be collected about you in the survey, and no one, including campus administration, department staff, supervisors, or the research team will know about your participation. To maximize privacy, I encourage you to complete the survey in a private location. All data will be maintained in secure settings only accessible by the research team.

After completing the survey, you may choose to provide your email address for one of two prize options. The first 50 people to complete the survey and the prize drawing will receive a $5 gift card to Starbucks. Additionally, by completing the survey and the prize drawing, you will be entered into a drawing to win a pair of Apple AirPods. Please note the drawing is separate from the survey, and your email address cannot be connected to the information you provided in the survey. Winners will be notified by email and depending on developments related to COVID-19 they may be asked to provide a postal mailing address to receive their prize.

Please contact the researchers if you have any questions or would like additional information about this study:

Principal Investigator: Flavius Lilly, PhD, MA, MPH
Email: flilly@umaryland.edu

Student Researcher: Courtney J. Jones Carney
Email: courtney.carney@umaryland.edu

APPENDIX C

First Email Reminder to Participate

Subject line: Reminder to Participate in Research about Microaggressions and Engagement

Received by 6,6442 employees

Hello,

A week ago, I sent a link to a survey about racial and ethnic microaggressions and employee engagement. Your voice matters. By sharing your experience, we can better understand the impact of the perceptions and experiences of racial and ethnic microaggressions, employee engagement, stress, and intersecting identities. The survey should take approximately 20 minutes to complete.

This survey is being conducted by Courtney J. Jones Carney in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Public Administration. Completion of the survey is considered participation in research and is completely voluntary.

▤ Instructions

No identifying information will be collected about you in the survey, and no one, including campus administration, department staff, supervisors, or the research team will know about your participation. To maximize privacy, I encourage you to complete the survey in a private location. All data will be maintained in secure settings only accessible by the research team.

After completing the survey, you may choose to provide your email address to be entered into a drawing to win a pair of Apple AirPods. Please note the drawing is separate from the survey, and your email address cannot be connected to the information you provided in the survey. Winners will be notified by email and depending on developments related to COVID-19 they may be asked to provide a postal mailing address to receive their prize.

The content of this email message has been approved by University of Maryland, Baltimore's Institutional Review Board (IRB). IRBs are charged with protecting the rights and welfare of people who take part in research studies. Please contact the researchers if you have any questions or would like additional information about this study:

Principal Investigator: Flavius Lilly, PhD, MA, MPH
Email: flilly@umaryland.edu

Student Researcher: Courtney J. Jones Carney
Email: courtney.carney@umaryland.edu

APPENDIX D

Final Email Reminder to Participate

Subject line: Last Chance to Participate in Research about Microaggressions and Engagement

Received by 6,078 recipients

Hello,

This is your last chance to participate in a survey about racial and ethnic microaggressions and employee engagement. Your voice matters. By sharing your experience, we can better understand the impact of the perceptions and experiences of racial and ethnic microaggressions, employee engagement, stress, and intersecting identities. The survey should take approximately 20 minutes to complete. Please complete the survey by 11:59 pm on Friday, August 14, 2020.

This survey is being conducted by Courtney J. Jones Carney in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Public Administration. Completion of the survey is considered participation in research and is completely voluntary.

≣ Instructions

No identifying information will be collected about you in the survey, and no one, including campus administration, department staff, supervisors, or the research team will know about your participation. To maximize privacy, I encourage you to complete the survey in a private location. All data will be maintained in secure settings only accessible by the research team.

After completing the survey, you may choose to provide your email address to be entered into a drawing to win a pair of Apple AirPods. Please note the drawing is separate from the survey, and your email address cannot be connected to the information you provided in the survey. Winners will be notified by email and depending on developments related to COVID-19 they may be asked to provide a postal mailing address to receive their prize.

The content of this email message has been approved by University of Maryland, Baltimore's Institutional Review Board (IRB). IRBs are charged with protecting the rights and welfare of people who take part in research studies. Please contact the researchers if you have any questions or would like additional information about this study:

Principal Investigator: Flavius Lilly, PhD, MA, MPH
Email: flilly@umaryland.edu

Student Researcher: Courtney J. Jones Carney
Email: courtney.carney@umaryland.edu

APPENDIX E

Survey Introductory Text

This survey is being conducted by Courtney J. Jones Carney under the supervision of Dr. Flavius Lilly in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Public Administration. The goal of this study is to gain a better understanding of perceptions and experiences of microaggressions, employee engagement, stress, and intersecting identities. The survey should take approximately 20 minutes to complete.

After completing the survey, you may choose to provide your email address for one of two prize options. **The first 50 people to complete the survey and the prize drawing will receive a $5 gift card to Starbucks. Additionally, by completing the survey and the prize drawing, you will be entered into a drawing to win a pair of Apple AirPods**. Please note the drawing is separate from the survey, and your email address cannot be connected to the information you provided in the survey. Winners will be notified by email and depending on developments related to COVID-19 they may be asked to provide a postal mailing address to receive their prize.

Completion of the survey is considered participation in research and is completely voluntary. Refusal to participate or to discontinue participation in the survey will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled,

There are no experimental procedures in this study and there are no foreseeable risks associated with your participation in this research.

No identifying information will be collected about you in the survey, and no one, including campus administration, department staff, supervisors, or the research team will know about your participation. To maximize privacy, I encourage you to complete the survey in a private location. All data will be maintained in secure settings only accessible by the research team.

As a subject in a research study you have certain rights. Should you have questions about this research and your rights as a subject please contact the HRPO office at 410-760-5037 or by email at hrpo@umaryland.edu.

Please contact the researchers if you have any questions or would like additional information about this study:

Principal Investigator: Flavius Lilly, PhD, MA, MPH
Email: flilly@umaryland.edu

Student Researcher: Courtney J. Jones Carney
Email: courtney.carney@umaryland.edu

1. Do you consent to participate in this survey?
   Yes
   No

APPENDIX F

Psychological Engagement Measure

Question	Factor	Coding
The work I do on this job is very important to me.	Meaningfulness	1 = Strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neither disagree or agree, 4 = agree, and 5 = strongly agree
My job activities are personally meaningful to me.	Meaningfulness	1 = Strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neither disagree or agree, 4 = agree, and 5 = strongly agree
The work I do on this job is worthwhile	Meaningfulness	1 = Strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neither disagree or agree, 4 = agree, and 5 = strongly agree
My job activities are significant to me.	Meaningfulness	1 = Strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neither disagree or agree, 4 = agree, and 5 = strongly agree
The work I do on this job is meaningful to me.	Meaningfulness	1 = Strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neither disagree or agree, 4 = agree, and 5 = strongly agree
I feel that the work I do on my job is valuable.	Meaningfulness	1 = Strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neither disagree or agree, 4 = agree, and 5 = strongly agree
I'm not afraid to be myself at work.	Safety	1 = Strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neither disagree or agree, 4 = agree, and 5 = strongly agree
I am afraid to express my opinions at work.	Safety	5 = Strongly disagree, 4 = disagree, 3 = neither disagree or agree, 2 = agree, and 1 = strongly agree * Reverse coded
There is a threatening environment at work.	Safety	5 = Strongly disagree, 4 = disagree, 3 = neither disagree or agree, 2 = agree, and 1 = strongly agree * Reverse coded
I am confident in my ability to handle competing demands at work.	Availability	1 = Strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neither disagree or agree, 4 = agree, and 5 = strongly agree

I am confident in my ability to deal with problems that come up at work.	Availability	1 = Strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neither disagree or agree, 4 = agree, and 5 = strongly agree
I am confident in my ability to think clearly at work.	Availability	1 = Strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neither disagree or agree, 4 = agree, and 5 = strongly agree
I am confident in my ability to display the appropriate emotions at work.	Availability	1 = Strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neither disagree or agree, 4 = agree, and 5 = strongly agree
I am confident that I can handle the physical demands at work.	Availability	1 = Strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neither disagree or agree, 4 = agree, and 5 = strongly agree

Instructions:

APPENDIX G

Racial Microaggressions Scale

Question	Factor	Sub-scale	Coding
Because of my race and/or ethnicity, other people assume that I am a foreigner.	Foreign/Not Belonging	Frequency	(0 = not at all, 1 = a little, 2 = moderate level, and 3 = high level)
Because of my race and/or ethnicity, people suggest that I am not a "true" American.	Foreign/Not Belonging	Frequency	(0 = not at all, 1 = a little, 2 = moderate level, and 3 = high level)
Other people ask me where I am from, suggesting that I don't belong.	Foreign/Not Belonging	Frequency	(0 = not at all, 1 = a little, 2 = moderate level, and 3 = high level)
Other people treat me like a criminal because of my race and/or ethnicity.	Criminality	Frequency	(0 = not at all, 1 = a little, 2 = moderate level, and 3 = high level)
People act like they are scared of me because of my race and/or ethnicity.	Criminality	Frequency	(0 = not at all, 1 = a little, 2 = moderate level, and 3 = high level)
Others assume that I will behave aggressively because of my race and/or ethnicity.	Criminality	Frequency	(0 = not at all, 1 = a little, 2 = moderate level, and 3 = high level)
I am singled out by police or security people because of my race and/or ethnicity.	Criminality	Frequency	(0 = not at all, 1 = a little, 2 = moderate level, and 3 = high level)
People suggest that I am "exotic" in a sexual way	Sexualization	Frequency	(0 = not at all, 1 = a little, 2 = moderate level, and 3 = high level)

because of my race and/or ethnicity			
Other people view me in an overly sexual way because of my race and/or ethnicity.	Sexualization	Frequency	(0 = not at all, 1 = a little, 2 = moderate level, and 3 = high level)
Other people hold sexual stereotypes about me because of my racial and/or ethnic background.	Sexualization	Frequency	(0 = not at all, 1 = a little, 2 = moderate level, and 3 = high level)
Other people act as if the can fully understand my racial and/or ethnic identity, even though they are not of my racial and/or ethnic background.	Low Achieving/Undesirable Culture	Frequency	(0 = not at all, 1 = a little, 2 = moderate level, and 3 = high level)
Others act as if all of the people of my race and/or ethnicity are alike.	Low Achieving/Undesirable Culture	Frequency	(0 = not at all, 1 = a little, 2 = moderate level, and 3 = high level)
Others suggest that people of my racial and/or ethnic background get unfair benefits.	Low Achieving/Undesirable Culture	Frequency	(0 = not at all, 1 = a little, 2 = moderate level, and 3 = high level)
Others assume that people of my racial and/or ethnic background would succeed in life if they simply worked harder.	Low Achieving/Undesirable Culture	Frequency	(0 = not at all, 1 = a little, 2 = moderate level, and 3 = high level)
Other people deny that people of my race and/or ethnicity face extra obstacles when compared to Whites.	Low Achieving/Undesirable Culture	Frequency	(0 = not at all, 1 = a little, 2 = moderate level, and 3 = high level)

Other people assume that I am successful because of affirmative action, not because I earned my accomplishments.	Low Achieving/Undesirable Culture	Frequency	(0 = not at all, 1 = a little, 2 = moderate level, and 3 = high level)
Others hint that I should work hard to prove that I am not like other people of my race and/or ethnicity.	Low Achieving/Undesirable Culture	Frequency	(0 = not at all, 1 = a little, 2 = moderate level, and 3 = high level)
Others suggest that my racial and/or ethnic heritage is dysfunctional or undesirable.	Low Achieving/Undesirable Culture	Frequency	(0 = not at all, 1 = a little, 2 = moderate level, and 3 = high level)
Others focus only on negative aspects of my racial and/or ethnic background.	Low Achieving/Undesirable Culture	Frequency	(0 = not at all, 1 = a little, 2 = moderate level, and 3 = high level)
Others prefer that I assimilate to the White culture and downplay my racial and/or ethnic background.	Invisibility	Frequency	(0 = not at all, 1 = a little, 2 = moderate level, and 3 = high level)
I am mistaken for being a service worker or lower-status worker simply because of my race and/or ethnicity.	Invisibility	Frequency	(0 = not at all, 1 = a little, 2 = moderate level, and 3 = high level)
I am treated like a second-class citizen because of my race and/or ethnicity.	Invisibility	Frequency	(0 = not at all, 1 = a little, 2 = moderate level, and 3 = high level)
I receive poorer treatment in restaurants and stores because of my race and/or ethnicity.	Invisibility	Frequency	(0 = not at all, 1 = a little, 2 = moderate level, and 3 = high level)
Sometimes I feel as if people look past me or don't see me as	Invisibility	Frequency	(0 = not at all, 1 = a little, 2 = moderate level, and 3 = high level)

a real person because of my race and/or ethnicity.			
I feel invisible because of my race and/or ethnicity.	Invisibility	Frequency	(0 = not at all, 1 = a little, 2 = moderate level, and 3 = high level)
I am ignored in school or work environments because of my race and/or ethnicity.	Invisibility	Frequency	(0 = not at all, 1 = a little, 2 = moderate level, and 3 = high level)
My contributions are dismissed or devalued because of my racial and/or ethnic background.	Invisibility	Frequency	(0 = not at all, 1 = a little, 2 = moderate level, and 3 = high level)
When I interact with authority figures, they are usually of a different racial and/or ethnic background.	Environmental Invalidations	Frequency	(0 = not at all, 1 = a little, 2 = moderate level, and 3 = high level)
I notice that there are few role models of my racial and/or ethnic background in my chosen career.	Environmental Invalidations	Frequency	(0 = not at all, 1 = a little, 2 = moderate level, and 3 = high level)
Sometimes I am the only person of my racial and/or ethnic background in my class or workplace.	Environmental Invalidations	Frequency	(0 = not at all, 1 = a little, 2 = moderate level, and 3 = high level)
Where I work or go to school, I see few people of my racial and/or ethnic background.	Environmental Invalidations	Frequency	(0 = not at all, 1 = a little, 2 = moderate level, and 3 = high level)
I notice that there are few people of my racial and/or ethnic background on the TV, books, and magazines.	Environmental Invalidations	Frequency	(0 = not at all, 1 = a little, 2 = moderate level, and 3 = high level)

THE IMPACT OF MICROAGGRESSIONS ON EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

Instructions: Consider your experiences at work and your daily life over the **last month**. Indicate how often you have had this experience because of your RACE and/or ETHNICITY. Although you may have experienced some of these experiences for various reasons, it is important to answer these questions based on RACE and/or ETHNICITY.

It is not possible to know another person's intentions. Therefore, your answers are based on YOUR beliefs about these experiences.

APPENDIX H

Perceived Stress Scale

Question	Coding
In the last month, how often have you been upset because of something that happened unexpectedly?	0 = never, 1 = almost never, 2 = sometimes, 3 = fairly often, and 4 = very often
In the last month, how often have you felt that you were unable to control the important things in your life?	0 = never, 1 = almost never, 2 = sometimes, 3 = fairly often, and 4 = very often
In the last month, how often have you felt nervous and "stressed"?	0 = never, 1 = almost never, 2 = sometimes, 3 = fairly often, and 4 = very often
In the last month, how often have you felt confident about your ability to handle your personal problems?	4 = never, 3 = almost never, 2 = sometimes, 1 = fairly often, and 0 = very often * Reverse coded
In the last month, how often have you felt that things were going your way?	4 = never, 3 = almost never, 2 = sometimes, 1 = fairly often, and 0 = very often * Reverse coded
In the last month, how often have you found that you could not cope with all the things you had to do?	0 = never, 1 = almost never, 2 = sometimes, 3 = fairly often, and 4 = very often
In the last month, how often have you been able to control irritations in your life?	0 = never, 1 = almost never, 2 = sometimes, 3 = fairly often, and 4 = very often
In the last month, how often have you felt that you were on top of things?	0 = never, 1 = almost never, 2 = sometimes, 3 = fairly often, and 4 = very often
In the last month, how often have you been angered because of things that were outside of your control?	0 = never, 1 = almost never, 2 = sometimes, 3 = fairly often, and 4 = very often
In the last month, how often have you felt difficulties were piling up so high that you could not overcome them?	0 = never, 1 = almost never, 2 = sometimes, 3 = fairly often, and 4 = very often

Instructions: The questions in this scale ask about your feelings and thoughts during the **last month**. In each case, you will be asked to indicate how often you felt or thought a certain way. Although some of the questions are similar, there are differences between them and you should treat each one as a separate question.

APPENDIX I

Coping with Racial Discrimination

Question	Factor	Coding
I do not talk with others about my feelings.	Detachment	1 = never like me, 2 = a little like me, 3 = sometimes like me, 4 = often like me, 5 = usually like me, and 6 = always like me
I've stopped trying to do anything.	Detachment	1 = never like me, 2 = a little like me, 3 = sometimes like me, 4 = often like me, 5 = usually like me, and 6 = always like me
It's hard for me to seek emotional support from other people.	Detachment	1 = never like me, 2 = a little like me, 3 = sometimes like me, 4 = often like me, 5 = usually like me, and 6 = always like me
I do not have anyone to turn to for support.	Detachment	1 = never like me, 2 = a little like me, 3 = sometimes like me, 4 = often like me, 5 = usually like me, and 6 = always like me
I have no idea what to do.	Detachment	1 = never like me, 2 = a little like me, 3 = sometimes like me, 4 = often like me, 5 = usually like me, and 6 = always like me
I try to stop thinking about it by taking alcohol or drugs.	Drug and Alcohol Use	1 = never like me, 2 = a little like me, 3 = sometimes like me, 4 = often like me, 5 = usually like me, and 6 = always like me
I use drugs or alcohol to take my mind off things.	Drug and Alcohol Use	1 = never like me, 2 = a little like me, 3 = sometimes like me, 4 = often like me, 5 = usually like me, and 6 = always like me
I do not use drugs or alcohol to help me forget about discrimination.	Drug and Alcohol Use	1 = never like me, 2 = a little like me, 3 = sometimes like me, 4 = often like me, 5 = usually like me, and 6 = always like me * Reverse coded
I do not use alcohol or drugs to help me deal with it.	Drug and Alcohol Use	1 = never like me, 2 = a little like me, 3 = sometimes like me, 4 = often like me, 5 = usually like me, and 6 = always like me * Reverse coded
I use drugs or alcohol to numb my feelings.	Drug and Alcohol Use	1 = never like me, 2 = a little like me, 3 = sometimes like me, 4 = often like me, 5 = usually like me, and 6 = always like me

I try to educate people so that they are aware of discrimination.	Education/Advocacy	1 = never like me, 2 = a little like me, 3 = sometimes like me, 4 = often like me, 5 = usually like me, and 6 = always like me
I educate myself to be better prepared to deal with discrimination.	Education/Advocacy	1 = never like me, 2 = a little like me, 3 = sometimes like me, 4 = often like me, 5 = usually like me, and 6 = always like me
I try to stop discrimination at the societal level.	Education/Advocacy	1 = never like me, 2 = a little like me, 3 = sometimes like me, 4 = often like me, 5 = usually like me, and 6 = always like me
I help people to be better prepared to deal with discrimination.	Education/Advocacy	1 = never like me, 2 = a little like me, 3 = sometimes like me, 4 = often like me, 5 = usually like me, and 6 = always like me
I educate others about the negative impact of discrimination.	Education/Advocacy	1 = never like me, 2 = a little like me, 3 = sometimes like me, 4 = often like me, 5 = usually like me, and 6 = always like me
I wonder if I did something to provoke this incident.	Internalization	1 = never like me, 2 = a little like me, 3 = sometimes like me, 4 = often like me, 5 = usually like me, and 6 = always like me
I wonder if I did something to offend others.	Internalization	1 = never like me, 2 = a little like me, 3 = sometimes like me, 4 = often like me, 5 = usually like me, and 6 = always like me
I wonder if I did something wrong.	Internalization	1 = never like me, 2 = a little like me, 3 = sometimes like me, 4 = often like me, 5 = usually like me, and 6 = always like me
I believe I may have triggered the incident.	Internalization	1 = never like me, 2 = a little like me, 3 = sometimes like me, 4 = often like me, 5 = usually like me, and 6 = always like me
I do not think that I caused this event to happen.	Internalization	1 = never like me, 2 = a little like me, 3 = sometimes like me, 4 = often like me, 5 = usually like me, and 6 = always like me * Reverse coded
I respond by attacking others' ignorant beliefs.	Resistance	1 = never like me, 2 = a little like me, 3 = sometimes like me, 4 = often like me, 5 = usually like me, and 6 = always like me
I get into an argument with the person.	Resistance	1 = never like me, 2 = a little like me, 3 = sometimes like me, 4 = often like me, 5 = usually like me, and 6 = always like me
I do not directly challenge the person.	Resistance	1 = never like me, 2 = a little like me, 3 = sometimes like me, 4 = often like me, 5 = usually like me, and 6 = always like me * Reverse coded

I try not to fight with the person who offended me.	Resistance	1 = never like me, 2 = a little like me, 3 = sometimes like me, 4 = often like me, 5 = usually like me, and 6 = always like me * Reverse coded
I directly challenge the person who offended me.	Resistance	1 = never like me, 2 = a little like me, 3 = sometimes like me, 4 = often like me, 5 = usually like me, and 6 = always like me

Instructions: This is a list of strategies that some people use to deal with their experiences of discrimination. Please respond to the following items as honestly as possible to reflect how much each strategy best describes the ways you cope with discrimination. There are no right or wrong answers.

APPENDIX J

Socio-Demographic Questionnaire

Question	Instrument	Theme	Coding
Are you of Hispanic, Latino/a/x, or Spanish origin?	Sociodemographic	Ethnicity	0 = No, not of Hispanic, Latino/a/x, or Spanish Origin, 1 = Yes, Mexican, Mexican American, or Chicano/a/x, 2 = Yes, Puerto Rican, 3 = Yes, Cuban, and 4 = Yes, another Hispanic, Latino/a/x, or Spanish Origin - write in, for example: Salvadoran, Dominican, Colombian, Guatemalan, Spaniard, Ecuadorian, etc.
What best describes your race? (Select all that apply).	Sociodemographic	Race	0 = White, 1 = African American/ Black (includes those of African and Caribbean/West Indian descent), 2 = American Indian/Alaska Native, 3 = Asian American/ Asian Descent, 4 = Middle Eastern American/ Middle Eastern Descent, 5 = Native Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander, 6 = Race not listed- write in:
What is your gender/gender identity?	Sociodemographic	Gender Identity	1 = woman, 2 = man, 3 = non-binary/gender fluid, 4 = gender not listed – write in
What best describes your sexual orientation?	Sociodemographic	Sexual Orientation	1 = Asexual, 2 = Bisexual, 3 = Gay, 4 = Heterosexual, 5 = Lesbian, 6 = Pansexual, 7 = Queer, 8 = Questioning or Unsure, 9 = Same-gender loving or attracted, and 10 = Sexual orientation not listed – write in:
Were you born in the U.S.?	Sociodemographic	Immigration Status	0 = No, 1 = Yes, 3 = Unsure
Were both of your parents born in the U.S.?	Sociodemographic	Immigration Status	0 = No, 1 = Yes, 3 = Unsure
What is your age?	Sociodemographic	Age	Write in
Are you currently enrolled in an academic program?	Sociodemographic	Education	0 = No and 1 = Yes

What best describes your current academic program?	Sociodemographic	Education	1 = High School or equivalent, 2 = Associate's degree, 2-year college, or trades school, 3 = bachelor's degree, 4 = master's degree, 5 = Professional degree (JD, MD), 6 = Doctoral degree (PhD, EdD, PsyD, etc.), and 7 = Other academic program – write in:
What is your highest level of school completed?	Sociodemographic	Education	1 = Completed high school or equivalent, 2 = Completed associate's degree, 2-year college, or trades school, 3 = Completed bachelor's degree, 4 = Completed master's degree, 5 = Completed professional degree (JD, MD), 6 = Completed doctoral degree (PhD, EdD, PsyD, etc.), and 7 = Completed other academic program – write in:
What is the best estimate of your household's yearly income before taxes?	Sociodemographic	Socio-economic Status	1 = Less than \$20,000, 2 = \$20,000 - \$29,999, 3 = \$30,000 - \$39,999, 4 = \$40,000 - \$49,999, 5 = \$50,000 - \$59,999, 6 = \$60,000 = \$74,999, 7 = \$75,000 - \$89,999, 8 = \$90,000 - \$104,999, 9 = \$105,000 - \$129,999, 10 = \$130,000 - \$154,999, 11 = \$155,000 - \$179,000, 12 = \$180,000 - \$204,999, 13 = \$205,000 - \$249,999, 14 = \$250,000 - \$299,999, and 15 = Over \$300,000
What is your primary employee classification?	Sociodemographic	Employee Classification	1 = staff and 2 = faculty
In your primary position do you work full-time or part-time?	Sociodemographic	Employee Classification	1 = full-time and 2 = part-time
In your primary position are you exempt or non-exempt?	Sociodemographic	Employee Classification	1 = exempt and 2 = non-exempt
What best describes your faculty class?	Sociodemographic	Employee Classification	1 = Adjunct, 2 = Non-tenured, 3 = Tenured track, 4 = Tenure, and 5 = Emeritus
UMB Affiliation	Sociodemographic	Employee Classification	1 = Academic Affairs, 2 = Accountability and Compliance, 3 = Campus Life Services, 4 = Center for Information and Technology Services, 5 = Communications and Public Affairs, 6 = Development and Alumni Relations, 7 = Faculty Physicians Inc., 8 = Francis King Carey School of Law, 9 = Global Health Initiatives, 10 = Government and Community Affairs, 11 = Graduate School, 12 = Health and Human Services Library, 13 = Homeland Security, 14 = Human Resource Services, 15 =

			President's Office, 16 = Research and Development, 17 = School of Dentistry, 18 = School of Medicine, 19 = School of Nursing, 20 = School of Pharmacy, 21 = School of Social Work, 22 = UM BioPark, 23 = UMMC, 24 = University Council, 25 = Other
In your primary position are you required to provide direct supervision to others?	Sociodemographic	Supervisory Status	0 = No, 1 = Yes, 3 = Unsure
How many people do you supervise?	Sociodemographic	Supervisory Status	Write in:
How would you classify those that you supervise? (Select all that apply.)	Sociodemographic	Supervisory Status	1 = Student, 2 = Staff, 3 = Faculty, 4 = Intern, 5 = Post-doc Fellow, 6 = Other – write in:
How long have you worked at the University of Maryland, Baltimore?	Sociodemographic	Length of Employment	0 = less than 1 year, 1 = 1- 4 years, 2 = 5 -9 years, 3 = 10 – 14 years, 4 = 15 – 24 years, 5 = 25 years or more
What best describes your current academic program? *Only displayed if participant indicated they are enrolled in an academic program.	Sociodemographic	Education	1 = High School or equivalent, 2 = Associate's degree, 2-year college, or trade school, 3 = Bachelor's degree, 4 = Master's degree, 5 = Professional degree (JD, MD, etc.), 6 = Doctoral degree (PhD, EdD, PsycD, etc.), 7 = Other academic program
What best describes your faculty status? *Only displayed if faculty selected as primary classification.	Sociodemographic	Employee Classification	1 = Adjunct, 2 = Non-tenured, 3 = Tenure track, 4 = Tenure, 5 = Emeritus, 6 = Other
What is the employee category of your staff position? *Only displayed if staff selected as primary classification.	Sociodemographic	Employee Classification	1 = Exempt, 2 – Non-exempt, 3 = Contingent I, 4 = Contingent II, 5 = Other

How many people do you supervise? *Only displayed if supervise others was selected.	Sociodemographic	Supervisory Status	Write in:
How would you classify those that you supervise? (Select all that apply.) *Only displayed if supervise others was selected.	Sociodemographic	Supervisory Status	1 = Student, 2 = Staff, 3 = Faculty, 4 = Intern, 5 = Post-doc Fellow. 6 = Other
How would you rate your level of personal stress as a result of COVID-19?	Sociodemographic	COVID-19	0 = No stress, 1 = Small level, 2 = Moderate level, 4 = High level
How would you rate your frequency of exposure to racial/ethnic microaggressions at work as a result of COVID-19?	Sociodemographic	COVID-19	0 = No change in racial/ethnic microaggressions, 1 = Less racial/ethnic microaggressions, 2 = More racial/ethnic microaggressions
How did the COVID-19 pandemic impact your ability to do the following: Find meaningfulness in your work	Sociodemographic	COVID-19	1 = Significantly decreased, 2 = Decreased. 3 = Neither decreased or increased, 4 = Increased, 5 = Significantly increased
How did the COVID-19 pandemic impact your ability to do the following: See the significance of your work.	Sociodemographic	COVID-19	1 = Significantly decreased, 2 = Decreased. 3 = Neither decreased or increased, 4 = Increased, 5 = Significantly increased
How did the COVID-19 pandemic impact your ability to do the following: Find value in your work.	Sociodemographic	COVID-19	1 = Significantly decreased, 2 = Decreased. 3 = Neither decreased or increased, 4 = Increased, 5 = Significantly increased
How did the COVID-19 pandemic impact your ability to do the following: Deal with problems at work.	Sociodemographic	COVID-19	1 = Significantly decreased, 2 = Decreased. 3 = Neither decreased or increased, 4 = Increased, 5 = Significantly increased

How did the COVID-19 pandemic impact your ability to do the following: Think clearly at work.	Sociodemographic	COVID-19	1 = Significantly decreased, 2 = Decreased. 3 = Neither decreased or increased, 4 = Increased, 5 = Significantly increased
How did the COVID-19 pandemic impact your ability to do the following: Display appropriate emotions at work.	Sociodemographic	COVID-19	1 = Significantly decreased, 2 = Decreased. 3 = Neither decreased or increased, 4 = Increased, 5 = Significantly increased
How did the COVID-19 pandemic impact your ability to do the following: Handle competing demands at work.	Sociodemographic	COVID-19	1 = Significantly decreased, 2 = Decreased. 3 = Neither decreased or increased, 4 = Increased, 5 = Significantly increased
How did the COVID-19 pandemic impact your ability to do the following: Be yourself at work.	Sociodemographic	COVID-19	1 = Significantly decreased, 2 = Decreased. 3 = Neither decreased or increased, 4 = Increased, 5 = Significantly increased
How did the COVID-19 pandemic impact your ability to do the following: Express your opinion at work.	Sociodemographic	COVID-19	1 = Significantly decreased, 2 = Decreased. 3 = Neither decreased or increased, 4 = Increased, 5 = Significantly increased

APPENDIX K

Exploratory Factor Analysis

Exploratory Factor Analysis of Study Scales

Psychological Engagement Measure (PEM). Once two of the 14 questions of the PEM were reverse coded, an EFA was conducted. PEM had a Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure (KMO) of .91, suggesting marvelous sampling adequacy. Additionally, Bartlett's test of sphericity demonstrated sufficiently large correlations between items, $\chi2(91) = 5,453$, $p < .001$. This revealed good reliability with the following Cronbach's α for two of the three scales, Meaningfulness ($\alpha = .95$) and Availability ($\alpha = .83$). Safety; however, has fair reliability with a Cronbach's α of .62. Upon reviewing the matrix, removal of any questions from the scale would only result in a lower sub-scale score. An overall Cronbach's α of .86 was achieved for the PEM scale. Since the PEM scale and each of its subscales all have an acceptable level of reliability or better, they are accepted into this study as dependent variables.

Racial Microaggressions Scale (RMAS). An EFA was run on the 32-question RMAS frequency of occurrence scale and its subscales, and the 32-question RMAS distress scale and its subscales. Since the RMAS measures frequency of occurrence and distress, factor analysis was conducted on both sets of questions. The KMO value can be considered marvelous for sampling adequacy at .95. A Bartlett's test of sphericity, $\chi2(496) = 16,421$, $p < .001$, demonstrated sufficiently large correlations between items.

The RMAS frequency of occurrence scale had a Cronbach's α of .96, while each of the

RMAS frequency of occurrence subscales had a Cronbach's α ranging from .86 - .96

(*foreign/not belonging*, α = .89; *criminality*, α = .86; *sexualization*, α = .89; *low*

achieving/undesirable culture, α = .91; *low achieving/undesirable culture*, α = .94; and

environmental invalidation, α =.90). The RMAS distress Cronbach's α was .17. This can

be attributed to the large amount of missing data associated with this scale due to answers

only being provided if participants indicated experiences a microaggression in the RMAS

frequency of occurrence scale items. However, the RMAS distress subscales indicated a

Cronbach's α between .89 - .96 for the (*foreign/not belonging*, α = .90; *criminality*, α =

.86; *sexualization,* α = .93; *low achieving/undesirable culture*, α = .95; *invisibility*, α =

.96; and *environmental invalidation*, α =.93). Based on the EFA results of very good

level of reliability, the RMAS frequency of occurrence scale and subscales have been

accepted into this study as independent variables. The RMAS distress scale is not needed

to examine any of the hypotheses, and therefore was not included in this study.

  Perceived Stress Scale (PSS). Prior to running the EFA, two of the 10 questions

in the PSS were reverse coded. PSS had a marvelous KMO value of .90, while

sufficiently large correlations between items were detected through Bartlett's test of

sphericity, $\chi 2(45) = 2,687$, $p < .001$. The PSS had a Cronbach's α of .88, indicating a

very good level of reliability. Thus, the PSS was accepted as a variable for this study.

  Coping with Discrimination Scale (CDS). Last, an EFA was conducted on the

CDS and its five subscales after reverse coding five of its 25 questions. The EFA

revealed a meritorious KMO value of .81 and a significant Bartlett's test of sphericity, $\chi2(300) = 7,521$, $p < .001$. The Cronbach's α for the CDS scale was .81, while the Cronbach's α for the five subscales ranged from .66 - .92 for Education/Advocacy ($\alpha = .80$), Internalization ($\alpha = .70$), Drug and Alcohol Use ($\alpha = .92$), Resistance ($\alpha = .87$), and Detachment ($\alpha = .66$). With the scale and each of the subscales demonstrating an acceptable level of reliability or better, the CDS scale and all five of the CDS subscales are accepted in this study as variables.