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Retaining and Supporting Graduate Racially Minoritized Students: A Critical Analysis

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Retaining and Supporting Graduate Racially Minoritized Students:

A Critical Analysis

by

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A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in School Psychology
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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to critique the racial status quo of a school psychology graduate training program by gaining the perspectives of former and current racially minoritized students from the program. Additionally, this study aimed to utilize this information to provide implications for how to dismantle the racist and oppressive structures within the school psychology program. This study also aimed to analyze the success of research recommendations in helping racially minoritized students defeat the systemic barriers to completing a school psychology program. I conducted one-hour, semi-structured interviews of eight school psychology graduate racially minoritized students from the school psychology program. I used a critical paradigm and critical race theory to understand the student's racialized experiences. I used constant comparison analysis and analytic memos to derive themes. I found the selected school psychology program maintained structural racism through three major themes: 1) maintaining racist hierarchical structures, 2) liberal ideologies that maintain inequities, and 3) research-based interest convergence. The participants in this study also described various forms of emotional distress as their response to the structural racism they experienced. Although the program acted in a number of ways to maintain structural racism, the program did act in anti-racist/anti-oppressive ways through faculty and peer support. Implications for social justice research and practice for school psychology programs are discussed.

CHAPTER ONE:

INTRODUCTION

Background

The core values of American culture are based on Protestantism, capitalism, and

republicanism, which were all brought to America by White colonizers from Europe (Adams,

1988; Higham, 1947; Hollins, 2008; Kaestle; 1982;1983; Tyack & Hansot, 1982). Protestantism

places heavy importance on the bible, individual salvation, and personal morality (Adams, 1988;

Higham, 1947). The ideals of Protestantism are closely related to capitalism, in which success is

rooted in personal industry and savoring private property (Hollins, 2008). This intersection

between religion and economics creates a powerful ideology in which republicanism can thrive

(Hollins, 2008). Specifically, republicanism favors a large national identity, and the "American"

national identity largely developed from Protestant and capitalist ideologies (Adams, 1988). The

notion of the "American" identity was reflected in European settlers' beliefs that people could

only be united into one nation if they shared the same traditions and values (Hollins, 2008). As a

result, the dominant values and traditions that reflect the American identity did not address the

economic, political, or social plight of people of color (Hollins, 2008; Ratner, 1984).

I raise the macro socio-political and historical context above because schools advance the

core values of the society in which they are constructed (Hollins, 2008). Standards for American

schools were first established through the schooling of Native Americans through the

civilization-savagism paradigm (Ackerknecht, 1955; Adams, 1988). This paradigm placed

Natives in the role of savages whose only salvation from extinction could come from

assimilation or Americanization (Ackerknecht, 1955, Hollins, 2008), a socio-political ideal for which schools played a central role. Native Americans, and in some instances "Blacks", were placed into boarding schools where they were taught manual and industrial training skills, Christian values, English and other American values (Adams, 1988). They were explicitly taught that White people were ahead of all other races and Natives were below all other races (Robinson, 1977; Tingey, 1978; Wallace-Adams, 1977). Although not as explicitly as was stated historically, scholars argue that American schools still promote values of Americanism, while punishing students who do not conform to American norms (Boyd & Miller, 2020; Hollins, 2008; Schmidt, 2003).

Today's American education system continues to be dominated by Western values and ideals, and by White people and what they deem as appropriate (Boyd & Miller, 2020; Collins, 1990). In 2018, 79% of teachers were White while only 49% of students in public schools were White (National Center on Educational Statistics, 2020). Currently, over 50% of students in public schools are culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD; McFarland et al., 2017). Despite increased diversity in the student population, CLD students remain overrepresented in special education programs, disciplinary infractions (Alvare, 2018; Bennett, 1982) and underrepresented in gifted and academic honors (Payne, 2010). The overrepresentation and underrepresentation of racially minoritized students in these areas has been found to be a result of professional racial bias as well as other systemic (e.g., poverty, family dynamics, etc.; Bennett, 1982; Harry & Fenton, 2016) and structural (e.g., discipline policies that marginalize racially minoritized students; Lacoe, J., Manley, M., Regional Educational Laboratory Mid-Atlantic [ED], & Mathematica , 2019; Larson, K. E., Bottiani, Pas, Kush, & Bradshaw, 2019; Valencia, 2015) barriers. Thus, racism is still present and powerful in American schools. Because of their training

in understanding student outcomes within the ecology of educational, family, community and other social systems, school psychologists can play a role in identifying and combatting the oppressive structures that maintain these educational inequities.

The Role of School Psychologists

School psychologists are skilled in academics, mental health, behavior, assessment, and intervention. School psychologists traditionally served as gatekeepers for special education and began systematically working in U.S. schools during the racial integration of schools (Fagan, 1985, Newell et al., 2010). School psychologists often utilized "mental tests", which have been found to racially disadvantage racially minoritized students and to disproportionately place minority students into special education (Fagan, 1985, 1986). In sum, the role of school psychologists is rooted in the disadvantage of racially minoritized students.

As their roles in the schools have expanded, school psychologists also have served as consultants to teachers as well as direct and indirect interventionists for students (Allen & Escoffery-Runnels, 2014; Bahr, 2017). School psychologists play a critical role in determining if a student is eligible to receive special education services, should be placed in a more restrictive classroom environment, should receive a change of placement, and/or should be provided the opportunity for gifted education among other important educational decisions. However, they also may and should play a role in collaborating with educators, families, and communities to understand and address student and systemic issues that contribute to students being referred for special education evaluations. Thus, school psychologists serve both a direct and indirect role in the overrepresentation and underrepresentation of CLD students in special and gifted education programs.

Scholars argue that a lack of diversity among school psychologists likely contributes to inequity in decision-making. Historically, school psychologists are White, monolinguistic, women (Curtis, Castillo & Gelley, 2012; Walcott & Hyson 2018). Given the demographics of school psychologists, CLD students are more likely to have a cultural mismatch with their school psychologists. A cultural mismatch between students and the school-based personnel who support them can be detrimental to the progress of diverse students academically and social-emotionally (Bates, & Anderson-Butcher, 2018; Harry & Fenton, 2016). Specifically, a lack of culturally responsive practices can lead to the use of a deficit-based approach when working with diverse students (Williams & Greenleaf, 2012). This lens proves detrimental when school psychologists neglect to consider cultural variables that may affect the student's behavior and performance in school (Erchul & Young, 2014; Lynch & Hanson, 2011; Newell, 2010). Researchers have found that racially diverse students succeed in school settings with school personnel of the same race (Ni & Li, 2013). Accordingly, the National Association of School Psychologist (NASP; 2017) has called for efforts to increase the number of CLD school psychologists to meet the needs of CLD students. Efforts to increase the diversity of school psychologists also have been employed by school districts and graduate programs (Walcott & Hyson, 2018). Although small increases in racial/ethnic minoritized school psychologists have been noted (NASP; 2017), most school psychologists continue to identify as White women.

A lack of diverse practitioners within the field can be detrimental to the student's school psychologists serve. CLD practitioners can relate to a culturally diverse student body and provide culturally inclusive practices. Marginalized students benefit from services that accommodate their culture. For example, bilingual school psychologists can work with Dual Language Learners (DLLs) by speaking with them and their families in their native language and helping to

create relationships between families and schools (Behring, Cabello, Kushida, & Murguia, 2000; Esquivel, 1985; O'Bryon & Rogers, 2016; Ramirez & Smith, 2007). Practitioners of color understand cultural variability and can assist racially minoritized students and their families in navigating the Eurocentric education system (Behring, Cabello, Kushida, & Murguia, 2000; Newell, 2010). Further, it is socially just to have more equitable representation of people of color in an increasingly prominent field like school psychology. Thus, it is imperative that the field of school psychology include practitioners of color.

Statement of Problem

In efforts to recruit practitioners of color, the African American subcommittee within NASP created the Exposure Project, which includes exposing high school and undergraduate students to school psychology through presentations (Barrett, Harper, Hudson, & Malone, 2020). NASP also has published brochures and guidelines for recruiting and retaining practitioners from various backgrounds including Native Americans, African Americans, and bilingual school psychologists. NASP has encouraged school psychology programs to recruit and retain racially minoritized students through efforts that include a) targeting recruitment to institutions that serve racially minoritized students, b) providing flexible admissions criteria, c) offering financial support and d) using various modalities to disseminate information (NASP, 2016). Despite efforts to diversify the field of school psychology, the number of practitioners of color remains disproportionately low (NASP; 2017; Okahana & Zhou, 2018; Walcott & Hyson 2018). Efforts to diversify the field must begin with graduate training because most school psychologists are trained in graduate school psychology programs (NASP, 2010a). Accordingly, efforts must be employed to recruit and retain racially minoritized students in NASP accredited and approved graduate programs that offer Ed.S and Ph.Ds in school psychology (NASP, 2017).

Previous research has explored ways in which school psychology programs can recruit and retain racially minoritized students (Bidell, et al., 2007; Bidell, et al., 2006; Chandler, 2010; Newell et al., 2010). School psychology programs should make intentional efforts to gain perspectives from minoritized community members, and analyze their current program materials (e.g., marketing materials, application documents, and websites) to determine how to communicate the inclusion of students and faculty of color in their programs (Bidell et al., 2007; Bidell, et al., 2006; Rogers, 2006). Program websites are often the first impression a program makes to possible recruits (Bidell et al., 2007). Thus, program websites should include a diversity statement, course titles for multicultural courses, and financial support for racially minoritized students in their application material (Rogers, 2006).

Researchers also have exposed various systemic barriers racially minoritized students face in completing graduate programs such as microaggressions, financial barriers and school climate (Grapin & Pereiras, 2019; Norcross, Kohout, & Wicherski, 2005; Sue, Capodilupo, & Holder, 2008). For example, minoritized students are prone to experience race-related events, such as microaggressions, that can have detrimental effects on their emotional well-being (Clark, Mercer, Hill & Dufrene, 2012). Racially minoritized students in school psychology programs have reported experiencing microaggressions from faculty, students, and internship supervisors (Proctor, Kyle, Lau, Fefer & Fischetti, 2018). Additionally, there is a longstanding wage gap between White people and people of color, which has posed a barrier to people of color completing higher education (Quinton, 2015). Moreover, racially minoritized students who have left school psychology programs before completing their degrees have reported feeling frustrated and disengaged (Proctor & Truscott, 2012).

Increasing diversity in the field cannot simply involve technical efforts to recruit and retain racially minoritized students (e.g., updating recruitment materials). Rather, intentional efforts must be made to identify and dismantle the systemic barriers that racially minoritized students face in school psychology programs. Currently, there is limited information on the applications of critical race theory to the field of school psychology. Researchers have begun to explore social justice, a tenant of critical race theory, and its applications to the field (Fisher, 2020; Malone & Proctor, 2019; Shriberg, 2013; Shriberg, Bonner, Sarr, Walker, Hyland, & Chester, 2008); however, little to no studies have been conducted to dismantle oppressive structures in school psychology graduate programs. There also is little research on how school psychology programs can help students destroy the barriers they face at a systems level. Racially minoritized students deserve an equitable graduate experience, which is not possible given the current status quo of graduate education. School psychology programs must move beyond viewing these problems solely from a cultural diversity or responsiveness lens and incorporate more critical analyses of their systems and how they marginalize or oppress racially minoritized students.

Theoretical Framework

I utilized Critical Race Theory (CRT) as the theoretical framework for this study. CRT emerged in the 1970s as a response to the civil rights struggle and the failure of liberalism within this struggle (Simba, 2019). Critical race theory was a response to the failures of critical legal studies in which people of color were not considered (Brown & Jackson, 2013). CRT also builds upon feminism and political philosophy, in which people of color were excluded (Delgado, 2013). Scholars of color including Derrick Bell, Mari Matsuda, Charles Lawrence, Kimberlé Crenshawm and some White scholars, led the initial movement. These scholars aimed to

evaluate the ways in which race and racism effect people of color through disparities in criminal justice, affirmative action, campus speech codes and racial districting among other issues (McCoy, & Rodricks, 2015). Within the framework of CRT is evaluating the unfair and unjust distribution of power and resources in relation to politics, economics, race, and gender (Gillborn, Ladson-Billings, & Taylor, 2009).

Critical race theory includes the belief that White racism is an aspect of American society that is hegemonic as well as socially and historically constructed (Simba, 2019). Consequently, racism is intertwined within all facets of American life (e.g., popular culture, legal rules, myths). For example, Whiteness in the U.S. includes being middle class, intelligent and achieving in school, whereas Blackness is associated with gang affiliation, government assistance and playing basketball (Ladsons-Billing, 1998). These racial stereotypes are present in current society and support the idea of Whiteness as the "norm" or favorable race and places everyone in ranked and categorized social positions (Ladsons-Billing, 1998).

Critical race theory scholars have utilized this theory to explain the ways in which race and racism plague the U.S. education system. These scholars believe that the traditional aspects and supporting structures of the education system perpetuate racism and support it through all levels of schooling (Dixson & Lynn, 2013; Hollins, 2008; Ladsons-Billing, 1998). For example, in K-12, schools are funded through property taxes (Dixson & Lynn, 2013). This system is inheritably racist because predominately White neighborhoods tend to have higher property taxes than communities of color, resulting in their schools receive more funding and resources (Dixson & Rousseau, 2006). This system creates a nationwide inequity among schools based not only on class, but also color. This funding approach is racist because due to systemic oppression, people

of color are making less money and own less property than White people (Dixson & Rousseau, 2006).

In higher education, where most institutions are predominately White, racially minoritized students are plagued by microaggressions, challenging social transitions, culture shock, and other forms of oppression (Harper, 2009; McCoy, 2014; Solórzano Ceja, & Yosso, 2000). Microaggressions are brief, subtle exchanges (e.g., comments, tones) that can occur daily that send disparaging messages to racially minoritized students because they belong to a minority group (Sue et al., 2007). These subtle forms of racism can be as harmful to racially minoritized students as overt forms of racism (Smith, Allen, & Danley, 2007) and can be detrimental to students or color academically and emotionally. The challenging social transitions associated with graduate school in conjunction with negative race-related experiences result in higher rates of anxiety and depression in graduate racially minoritized students (Graham et al., 2015; Miller & Orsillo, 2020; Proctor, Kyle, Fefer, & Lau, 2017; Torres, Driscoll, & Burrow, 2010). Emotional stress can limit the academic success of racially minoritized students in graduate programs (Booker, 2007; Solorzano, Ceja & Yosso, 2009), which consequently can lead to these students dropping out prematurely; thus, continuing limited diversity in fields such as school psychology.

Critical race theory has seven key tenets that aim to combat racism in education and other social systems. These seven tenets are: 1) the permanence of racism; 2) whiteness as property; 3) counternarratives and counter stories; 4) critiquing of liberalism; 5) interest convergence, 6) intersectionality and 7) commitment to social justice (Capper 2015; McCoy, Rodricks, 2015; Solórzano & Bernal 2001; Solóranzo & Yosso, 2002). The permanence of racism is the idea that racism is socially constructed and engrained into U.S. society (Milner, 2017). Accordingly,

Whiteness as property is the concept that Whiteness includes the ability to own people, property, and ideas (Harris, 1993; Vaught, 2011). Thus, interest convergence is the idea that the interest of people of color are only advanced when they align with concept that benefit White people (Bell, 1980; Milner, 2015). Therefore, counternarratives and counter stories are used in CRT to challenge the racial status quo by utilizing the stories of minoritized people (Delgado, 2013). Similarly, intersectionality is the consideration and understanding of the interactions of gender, class, religion, sexual orientation, and other identities in addition to race (Crenshaw,1991). Additionally, critiquing liberalism includes critiquing concepts such as color blindness and race neutrality in which the existence of racism and oppression are overlooked (DeCuir & Dixson, 2004; Solorzano & Yosso, 2001). A commitment to social justice is advocacy with the goal of eradicating racism and eliminating other forms of subordination based on concepts such as gender, class, ability status and/or sexual orientation (Solorzano & Yosso, 2002). These concepts are explored further in chapter two.

Purpose of Study and Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to expose the systemic barriers that racially minoritized students face in the school psychology graduate program. This study aimed to identify and critique these barriers and explore how students in this program have conquered them in their journey to complete their graduate degrees. Additionally, this study aimed to utilize this information to provide implications for how to dismantle the racist and oppressive structures within the school psychology program. This study also aimed to analyze the success of research recommendations in helping racially minoritized students defeat the systemic barriers to completing a school psychology program. Finally, this study aimed to provide implications for

school psychology training programs regarding how to eliminate racist and oppressive practices to support their racially minoritized students. Specific research questions were:

1) How does the school psychology program and their faculty maintain structural racism in their program?

2) How does this program and their faculty act antiracist/anti oppressive in their responses to structural racism?

3) How do structural racism and anti-racist actions impact racially minoritized students in the school psychology program?

These questions were posed from a critical perspective. With these questions I wanted to expose the power structures within a single school psychology program that served as barriers for racially minoritized students. Critical theorists often aim to expose and dismantle oppressive power structures. Thus, these questions were posed to expose systemic barriers and provide rationales as to why they should be dismantled based on how they negatively affect racially minoritized students.

I also wanted to know if the barriers were program-specific, university-specific or attributed to larger systems of power (e.g., systemic racism). This information helped me to understand the levels at which students were oppressed. For example, a program-specific barrier could be the program requirement to have a car and enough gas money to drive long distances to practicum or research sites. A larger systemic barrier would be the higher education norm/requirement to work a 40-hour a week internship and make an unsustainable salary. This information was helpful in providing implications because some barriers may be more feasible to address than others.

Finally, I also wanted to understand how the school psychology program had acted anti-racist in their efforts to identify and combat racist structures in their program and in the university. Anti-racism was important because anti-racism rejects Whiteness as an ideology (Hanna Buenavista, 2019). In accordance with CRT, anti-racism challenges the racial status quo in which Whiteness is superior. To be "anti" towards a concept requires intentional effort (Bonnett, 2000); thus, I aimed to critique and understand the efforts the program has enacted in hopes of improving their current efforts.

Significance of Study

This study aimed to critique the racial status quo of graduate training within the field of school psychology by gaining the perspectives of former and current school psychology racially minoritized students from one graduate program. Recruiting participants from a single school psychology program that recently has implemented several research recommendations (e.g., multicultural research, recruiting and hiring faculty of color, financial resources for racially minoritized students) allowed this school psychology training program an opportunity to reflect on their implementation of these practices, and to identify and dismantle racist practices or systems that still exist. Through this study, systemic barriers were exposed, with the goal of providing information to dismantle these barriers. Furthermore, other school psychology programs can utilize the results of this study to inform the evaluation of their current practices and systems. Moreover, this qualitative study allowed racially minoritized students to create their own counternarratives and counter stories within the Eurocentric system of higher education. In short, implications from this study can help school psychology training programs move beyond ways to recruit and retain racially minoritized students to also focusing on ways to eliminate structural racial barriers. This aim is important given multiple calls from NASP to increase

diversity in the field and the re-emergence of the Black Lives Matter movement. In the most recent emergence of the Black Lives Matter movement, national and international attention and efforts have been applied to the movement (Pew Research Center, 2020). Consequently, several organizations, including NASP and APA, are dedicating efforts to supporting black practitioners and students. Thus, the results of this study are timely.

CHAPTER TWO:

LITERATURE REVIEW

This literature review is organized into several sections. First, the history of the field of school psychology and school psychology demographics will be reviewed. Next school psychology graduate training, including barriers and facilitators for racially minoritized students, are reviewed. Lastly, critical race theory is described in depth.

History of School Psychology Origins

In 1905, the Stanford-Binet test was used in France to detect students who were perceived to be incapable of learning in mainstream classrooms and thus required special education settings (Guillemard, 2006). By the 1920s this "mental test" was being utilized in the United Kingdom (UK) by Cyril Burt, one the UK's first school psychologists, whose role was to test children to determine their suitability for the mainstream education. Consequently, the profession of school psychology began to develop internationally as more countries adopted the notion of identifying children with special needs (Oakland, 2000).

In the United States, Public Law 94-142 was created in 1975 to ensure Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) for all children with disabilities (Jones & Menchetti, 2001). Under this law, disability in schools was determined through assessing students using a "mental test" in which a student's intelligence quotient (IQ) scores had to be discrepant from their achievement scores to be eligible for special education under the Specific Learning Disabilities category (Jones & Menchetti, 2001). Thus, school psychologists were needed in American schools to

assist with the assessment of students. Concurrently, public schools in the U.S. were becoming racially integrated (Fagan, 1985, Newell et al., 2010). School psychologists used IQ tests, which have been found to be racially skewed, to test racially diverse students and ultimately placed a disproportionate amount of these students in special education (Fagan, 1985, 1986).

Public Law 94-142 has been updated over the years with the most recent update occurring in 2004 (IDEA, 2004). IDEA (2004) includes language that allows school districts to use a process based on how students respond to scientifically based intervention to determine eligibility for special education. Thus, the roles of school psychologist have been expanded to include expertise in assessment, evaluation, and student-centered behavioral and mental health services (Kelly, 2018). Within this role, school psychologists also provide direct interventions and consultation services for students, teachers and families (Allen & Escoffery-Runnels, 2014; Bahr, 2017).

Demographics of Students Served by School Psychologists

In 2018, the United States (U.S) Census Bureau predicted that U.S. would become a "minority white" nation by the year 2045 (Frey, 2018). Similarly, the National Center on Education Statistics (2016) predicted an increase in the percentage of "minority students" (e.g., African American, Non-White Hispanic, and Asian) between 2% and 33% for each "minority" group in public schools by the year 2022. In addition to racial diversity, U.S. public schools have been experiencing a demographic change that includes students who are multilingual and students with various needs (Carroll, 2009).

Despite the presence of minoritized students in schools, minoritized students have significantly disparate educational outcomes in comparison to their White peers in regard to academic achievement scores, high school dropout and decreased pursuit of secondary education

opportunities (Planty et al., 2008; Planty et al., 2009; Thompson, Gorin, Obeidat, & Chen, 2006).

For example, Black students are two times more likely than White students to be retained (Aud,

Fox & KewalRamani, 2010). American Indian/American Native (AIAN) students are less likely

than White students to obtain a high school diploma (AIAN=84%, White= 97%), associate

degree (AIAN= 17%, White= 54%), and bachelor's degree (AIAN=10%, White= 43%; National

Center for Education Statistics, 2016). Latinx children are underrepresented among gifted and

talented program for children (James, Rodriguez, Fong, & Dettlaff, 2015). The achievement gap

between White students and racially minoritized students has existed for decades and continues

to widen (National Center for Education Statistics, 2015, 2016). Adverse academic outcomes,

such as high school dropout, place these students at a higher risk of negative life outcomes (e.g.,

incarceration, low wages, high stress, etc; Horowitz, Rawe, & Whittaker, 2017).

In addition to poor academic outcomes, racially minoritized students are overrepresented

in special education, office referrals, suspensions, and expulsions (Alvare, 2018). Male

identifying students from minoritized backgrounds (e.g., African American, AIAN, Latino,

Native-Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander and multiracial) receive a disproportionate amount of out of

school suspensions (OCR, 2016). Exclusionary discipline practices can increase student's risks

for negative life outcomes, including increased risks of involvement with the juvenile justice

system (Skiba, Arredondo, & Williams, 2014). Punitive disciplinary practices interfere with

potential educational opportunities for minoritized students (Cornell & Mayer, 2010; Osher,

Bear, Sprague, & Doyle, 2010). Thus, this disproportionality in discipline can exacerbate the

already decreased academic outcomes for racially minoritized students.

Demographics of School Psychologists

Schools play a central role in the social-political agenda for students to assimilate to American cultural norms of Protestantism, Republicanism and Capitalism (Ackerknecht, 1955, Hollins, 2008). American schools still are used to promote values of Americanism, while punishing students who do not conform to American culture (Boyd & Miller, 2020; Hollins, 2008; Schmidt, 2003). Teachers in America are predominately White women, while the demographics of students in schools is increasing in cultural and linguistic diverse students (National Center on Educational Statistics, 2020; McFarland et al., 2017). Accordingly, adverse outcomes and disproportionality for racially minoritized students have been associated with cultural mismatch between students and school-based personnel, as well as with other systematic barriers (e.g., poverty, family issues, professional bias, etc.; Bennett, 1982; Harry & Fenton, 2016). This cultural mismatch holds true for school psychologists, given most school psychologists are monolingual, White women (Castillo, Curtis, & Gelley, 2012; Walcott & Hysona, 2018; Walcott, Charvat, McNamara, & Hyson, 2016). The presence of majority White school psychologists has remained relatively unchanged throughout the history of the field despite efforts to recruit school psychology racially minoritized students (Proctor & Truscott, 2012). From 1980-1981, less than 5% of school psychologists identified as persons of color and in 2010, the number of school psychologists of color was still less than 10% (Curtis, Castillo & Gelly, 2012). The number of racially minoritized students in school psychology programs has increased slightly over the years (APA, 2010); however, students and practitioners of color are still underrepresented in the field as well as in research studies (Curtis, Castillo & Gelly, 2012; Walcott & Hyson, 2018; Walcott, Charvat, McNamara, & Hyson, 2016; Thomas, 1998).

Past scholars have found that a significant amount of racially minoritized students leave school psychology programs before obtaining their degree (APA, 2010), which consequently contributes to their lack of representation in the field. In the field, White school psychologists worked in settings with less racially minoritized students than school psychologists from other racialized backgrounds (Castillo, Curtis, & Gelley, 2012). These data suggest that school psychologists tend to work in schools that align with their racial/ethnic identity. These data are concerning given the projected trends for an increase of racially minoritized students and the stagnant number of school psychologists of color. Additionally, ethnic differences between practitioners and the students they serve can limit a school psychologists' ability to relate to their students and provide them with appropriate services (Li & Li, 2015, 2017; Ni & Li, 2013; Thompson & Alexander, 2006; Yeh, Eastman, & Cheung, 1994). Male identifying school psychologists tend to be older, more experienced, White, and work in university settings (Castillo, Curtis, & Gelley, 2012). In sum, school psychology is a predominately White field in which practitioners are majority White women and some of the most experienced professors tend to identify as White males.

School Psychology Graduate Training

Students pursuing a degree in school psychology are given the opportunity to matriculate into programs that are NASP and/or APA accredited or approved. NASP (2010a) and APA (2006) both have guidelines and standards for training of educational specialist (Ed.S) and Doctoral (Ph.D) students. Both organizations offer accreditations and opportunities for licensure upon graduation from accredited programs. In most schools and psychological service settings, licensure, and education from a NASP or APA accredited program is required or preferred.

Overview of Training

NASP (2010a) approval requires a minimum of three years full time or part time of graduate study, including a minimum of 60 credit hours and 54 hours of a supervised internship for students to obtain an Ed.S degree in school psychology. Those pursuing a doctoral degree must complete at least four years of full time or part time graduate study, including a minimum of 90 credit hours, 78 hours of supervised internship and the completion of a dissertation (NASP, 2010a). Doctoral students are also required to obtain one or more in depth competency in school psychology. Students are also required to participate in applied experiences which include school-based practicum in which they work with a practicing school psychologist. Some school psychology programs provide research requirements which include completing a thesis and/or dissertation, participating in school psychology research and attending conferences.

School psychology programs are required to educate their students in courses that reflect the 10 domains across three categories outlined in the *NASP 2020 Professional Standards Adopted*. These standards include 1) Practices That Permeate All Aspects of Service Delivery, including Consultation and Collaboration, 2) Direct and Indirect Services for Students, Families and Schools, including School-Wide Practices to Promote Learning and 3) Foundations of School Psychological Service Delivery, such as Equitable Practices for Diverse Student Populations. Similarly, APA (2006) outlines specific domains and standards that must be reflected in the course work of doctoral level students. These domains include an understanding of ethical, legal, and quality assurances, attitudes for lifelong learning and respect for cultural diversity among other domains.

Barriers to Graduate School Training for Racially Minoritized Students

There are numerous systemic barriers that have blocked racially minoritized students from accessing higher education. Racially minoritized students face several systemic obstacles to education during K-12 education which often continue into higher education. Systemic barriers continue to plague racially minoritized students who can overcome these barriers and get into graduate programs, including school psychology graduate programs. These barriers include academic achievement, admission requirements, financial concerns, and emotional distress due to racial bias (Clark, Mercer, Hill & Dufrene, 2012; Grapin & Pereiras, 2019; Norcross, Kohout, & Wicherski, 2005).

Academic Achievement

Historically, racially minoritized students have been subjected to attending schools with less funding and resources than White students (Baker, 2019; Groulx, 2018; Jankov, & Caref, 2017). Research has shown that public schools in the U.S. are still segregated (Archbald, Hurwitz, & Hurwitz, 2017; Billingham, 2019; Coughlan, 2018). This is maintained through school choice, charter schools and "White Flight." Racially minoritized students tend to attend schools that employ lower preforming or unqualified teachers who teach less advanced material (Farkas, 2003; Hanselman, Fiel, 2017). Racially minoritized students are more likely to suffer punitive consequences (e.g., expulsion, suspension, etc.) than White students (Alvare, 2018; Skiba et al., 2002), which leads to less time in the academic setting. Thus, students or color face several barriers prior to reaching secondary education. Further, racially minoritized students enroll in higher education less frequently than White students (Kim, 2011).

Admissions Requirements

Graduate institutions often conceptualize ideal candidates as students with high standardized test scores, several academic honors, and suitable written materials (Grapin & Pereiras, 2019). Accordingly, factors like the Graduate Record Exam (GRE) scores are given weight in considering students for admission (Cochran, Hodapp, & Brown, 2017; Norcross, Kohout, & Wicherski, 2005). This poses a barrier to racially minoritized students given the GRE has been found to have significant differences in test results between racially minoritized students and White students. Guarino & Hibbert (2004) found significant differences in GRE scores between White and Black students, in which White students scored significantly higher. Accordingly, racially minoritized students have reported the GRE as being their main barrier to applying to graduate school due to the content and cost (Cochran, Hodapp, & Brown, 2017). Previous researchers also have found that the GRE is not a sufficient predictor of graduate student success (e.g., Hall, O'Connell, & Cook, 2017). Although researchers have called for reliance on GRE scores to be reduced in graduate admissions decisions (Callahan et al., 2018; Roberts, & Ostreko, 2018), several graduate programs, including school psychology programs, still require a cut off score for admissions.

Researchers have called for a holistic approach to recruit racially minoritized students (Callahan et al., 2018; Roberts, M. C., & Ostreko, 2018; Rogers & Molina, 2006). This approach includes reliance on recommendation letters, personal statements, and interviews (Rogers & Molina, 2006).

Financial Barriers

There has been a longstanding wage gap between people of color and White people in the U.S. In 2013, the average White family accumulated $134, 230 compared to $13,730 for Latin X

families and $11,030 for Black families (Emmons & Noeth, 2015). In 1963, the average wealth

of White families was $121,000 higher than the wealth of families of color, and by 2016, the

wealth of White families was $700,000 higher than the average wealth of families of color

(McKernan, Quakenbush, Ratcliffe, Kalish, & Steuerle, 2017). These wage gaps lead to White

families having more access to resources (e.g., tutoring, high quality education, etc.) than people

of color. It is important to note that African Americans have the lowest family wealth among all

racial groups in the U.S (Emmons & Noeth, 2015; McKernan, Quakenbush, Ratcliffe, Kalish, &

Steuerle, 2017). Students from low SES families are less likely to be adequately prepared for

higher education and ultimately less likely to succeed (Department of Education, n.d.).

Additionally, African Americans take out loans at a higher rate than White, Latin, and Asian

students, thus stalling their path to financial security even with a degree (Quinton, 2015). In

2013, 42% of African American families had student loan debt in comparison to only 28% of

White families. This also stalls the path of African Americans to financial security.

Emotional Distress

Currently, a majority of NASP accredited programs are offered at predominantly White

institutions (PWI) and only two are offered at Historically Black Colleges and Universities

(HBCUs). Thus, graduate racially minoritized students pursuing a degree in school psychology

are more likely to attend a predominately White institution. Racially minoritized students are

likely to experience race-related events that can negatively impact their emotional well-being

(Clark, Mercer, Hill & Dufrene, 2012). Racially minoritized students may experience feelings of

loneliness, inadequacy, rejection, mental exhaustion, and social isolation (e.g., Clark et al., 2012;

Johnson-Bailey, Valentine, Cervero, & Bowles, 2009). One common race related event

experienced by racially minoritized students is instances of microaggressions (Clark, Mercer, Hill & Dufrene, 2012).

Microaggressions are brief exchanges (e.g., comments, dismissive looks, tones, etc.) that can occur daily that send denigrating messages to racially minoritized students because they belong to a minoritized group (Sue et al., 2007). Microaggressions tend to be unconsciously delivered in subtle ways (Sue et al., 2007). For example, a White peer telling student of color that they are attractive for their race is a microaggression given this comment suggests that most people in this ethnic group are not attractive. Microaggressions can present in three forms: 1) Microinsults, 2) Microinsults and 3) Microinvalidations, all of which can be harmful to persons of color (Sue et al., 2007). Racial microaggressions have been found to affect the stress and psychological adjustment of people of color (Mercer, Zeigler-Hill, Wallace, &Hayes, 2011). Microaggressions can lead racially minoritized students to feel less intelligent than their White peers, inferior to their White peers, criminalized and undermined among other negative feelings (Sue, Nadal et al., 2008). Microaggression can be harmful due to their subtle nature, which can lead those who experience them to be uncertain as to whether they are being hyper vigilant or accurately interpreting how others are interacting with them (Sue, Capodilupo, & Holder, 2008). Further, even subtle microaggressions can be as detrimental to students as overt racism (Smith, Allen, & Danley, 2007). The task of interpreting the intent behind a comment and dealing with microaggressions can add stress to graduate students in an already overwhelming time (Clark, Mercer, Hill & Dufrene, 2012).

The experience of microaggressions also can lead racially minoritized students to feel decreased levels of belongingness and autonomy, which are important factors in educational success (Van Ryzin, Gravely, & Roseth, 2009). Further, female identifying graduate students

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have reported microaggressions to affect their sense of belonging in graduate school more significantly than male identifying students (O'Meara, Griffin, Kuvaeva, Nyunt, & Robinson, 2017). This finding is noteworthy, given most school psychologists and school psychology students identify as female. The experience of microaggressions within the field of school psychology also disproportionally affects specific groups of racially minoritized students (Proctor, Kyle, Lau, Fefer & Fischetti, 2018). In a survey of 228 racial minority school psychology students, Proctor et al. (2018) found that Black students reported the highest frequency of experiencing microaggressions in the university and internship setting. Further, the results indicated that Black students experience an increase in microaggressions as they transition from the university setting to internship.

The negative impact of microaggressions can be compounded by a lack of belongingness among racially minoritized students. A sense of social belongingness is a crucial factor to success in higher education (Walton, & Cohen, 2007). Belongingness can be especially important for racially minoritized students given their underrepresentation in higher education (Clark, Mercer, Hill & Dufrene, 2012). Although the number of racially minoritized students in doctoral programs has increased (de Brey et al., 2019), the number of racially minoritized students in graduate programs is still disproportionately low (Okahana & Zhou, 2018). Miller & Orsillo (2020) found that graduate racially minoritized students who felt a low sense of belongingness in their graduate programs also reported higher rates of stress, anxiety, and depression.

Clark, Mercer, Hill and Dufrene (2012) found that school psychology racially minoritized students reported more negative race related experiences than their majoritized White peers. These race-related experiences were also associated with higher levels of emotional stress.

Graduate racially minoritized students who are exposed to higher rates of microaggressions and other racial stressors in graduate school are at a report higher rate of anxiety, depression, and overall stress (Graham et al., 2015; Miller & Orsillo, 2020; Proctor, Kyle, Fefer, & Lau, 2017; Torres, Driscoll, & Burrow, 2010). Racially minoritized students in predominantly White academic environments have also reported feelings of physiological stress, the need to remain hypervigilant, mental exhaustion and burnout (Smith, Allen, & Danley, 2007).

African American students who have reported leaving school psychology programs before completing their degrees reported feeling frustrated and disengaged during classroom conversations around cultural inequities (Proctor & Truscott, 2012). These students also reported feeling tension between themselves and peers. Additionally, international graduate students frequently report a range of mental health problems (e.g., anxiety, depression, and difficulties with interpersonal relationships; Hyun, Quinn, Madon, & Lustig, 2007; Mori, 2000). Emotional stress can affect a student's mental and physical efforts needed to be academically engaged (Booker, 2007; Solorzano, Ceja & Yosso, 2009). Given that academic engagement is a strong predictor of academic outcomes (Fredricks, Blumenfeld, and Paris, 2004), emotional stress from race-related issues has the potential to decrease the academic success of minority students.

Facilitators of Graduate School Training for Racially Minoritized Students

A thorough investigation of current literature revealed limited research on facilitators of the success of racially minoritized students in graduate programs. Previous scholars have suggested mental health supports and mentorship as potential facilitators of success for racially minoritized students in graduate programs. I will explore these topics within this section.

Mental Health Supports

Racially minoritized students face unique psychosocial and emotional challenges in higher education institutions (Frost et al., 2020). Racially minoritized students may experience increased anxiety, social isolation and/or depression (Ancis, Sedlacek, & Mohr, 2000; Bernard, Lige, Willis, Sosoo, & Neblett, 2017). Given the various barriers and mental health concerns that racially minoritized students face within graduate programs, these students would likely be interested in resources that assist them with coping (Chandler, 2010). School psychology programs should provide targeted supports to students at tier two and three levels (Grapin, Lee, & Jaafar, 2015). Tier two supports can include student interest groups with-in departments (Delgado-Romero & Wu, 2010). Tier three supports can include more individualized supports including individualized counseling (Grapin, et al., 2015) and high-quality advising (Hollingsworth & Fassinger, 2002; Schlosser et al., 2003).

Mentorship

O'Meara, Griffin, Kuvaeva, Nyunt, & Robinson (2017) found student-faculty relationships to be one major indicator of student's perception of belongingness. Racially minoritized students in higher education have reported that peer support and faculty mentorship have provided them with the support they needed despite the barriers they faced (Vasquez et al., 2006). Mentorship alleviates the social pressures associated with higher education, eases the transition into higher education and promotes coping skills and resiliency (Summers & Hrabowski 2006; Mondisa & McComb 2015). Students with mentors have been found to have higher GPAs, retention rates and commitment to their majors than students without mentors (Campbell & Campbell,1997; Holland et al., 2012). For example, African American students who successfully completed social science doctoral programs reported

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accessing more than one mentor in graduate school (Dixon-Reeves, 2003). African American

students in school psychology may need support during coursework and practicum experience

that expose racial biases and inequities in the field (e.g., bias in intellectual testing, etc.; Proctor

& Truscott, 2013). Proctor and Truscott (2013) found that participants emphasized a need for

supportive mentorship beginning in K-12 and continuing into their graduate school endeavors.

The participants suggest that African American graduate students may need to be allotted a space

to process racially charged experiences (Grapin et al., 2015).

Recruitment and Retainment of School Psychology Racially Minoritized Students

A thorough search of school psychology literature revealed limited recommendations for

the recruitment and retainment of racially minoritized students in school psychology programs.

School psychology scholars have provided recommendations; however, there is limited research

on the effectiveness of the recommendations outlined in literature.

Currently, there is limited recruitment and retention of students and faculty of color in the

school psychology field (Newell et al., 2010). This lack of action is predicted to continue if no

intentional efforts are employed to address this issue. Several scholars have noted the recruitment

of persons of color is crucial to the progression of the field of school psychology (Davis,

McIntosh, Phelps, & Kehle, 2004; Fagan, 1988). Previous scholars have noted the lack of

recruitment and retention of school psychologists of color as a barrier to social justice within the

field (Shriberg et al., 2008).

Program websites are often the first impression a program makes to possible recruits.

Bidell et al., 2007 found that school psychology program websites contained the lowest amount

of diversity content compared with clinical and counseling psychology programs. Training

programs in school psychology should include a diversity statement, course titles for

multicultural courses, and financial support for racially minoritized students in their application materials (Rogers, 2006).

Previous scholarship suggests that recruiting school psychologists of color would benefit students who receive services, who are majority racially minoritized students (Chandler, 2011; Proctor & Truscott, 2013). African American school psychologists, who previously worked as teachers, can bridge a gap between White teachers and racially minoritized students (Proctor & Truscott, 2013). Thus, school psychology programs should aim to recruit African American teachers and other educational specialists who are considering leaving the field but are still interested in remaining in the field of education (Proctor & Truscott, 2013).

Programs should proactively begin identifying and documenting the effectiveness of their recruitment and retention strategies. Trainers should determine what populations they are trying to recruit and tailor recruitment/retention strategies to that population (Bidell et al., 2007; Chandler, 2010). For example, key recruitment strategies for Black students include a strong representation of faculty of color, links to HBCUs, limited admission reliance on GREs and targeted financial aid (Rogers, 2006; Rogers & Molina, 2006). Accordingly, a program that is focusing on recruiting Black students would utilize these strategies and record the effectiveness for future use.

Graves and Wright (2009) found that Black participants had the least knowledge of school psychology compared to other disciplines within psychology and were least likely to choose school psychology for their graduate studies. In reference to recruiting Black students, Chandler (2010) identified several key recruitment strategies including providing sufficient financial support, increasing awareness of psychology fields in the Black community, making clear the connections between the field of school psychology and the Black community, and

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recruiting (or exposing school psychology) early at the high school level. For retention of Black students, Chandler (2010) noted providing faculty support, fostering a community atmosphere, creating diverse professional networks, and having a multicultural curricular paradigm as strategies to implement.

Recruitment usually focuses on recruiting racially minoritized students, but efforts need to be placed on recruiting from all underrepresented communities (e.g., ability, linguistic, economic, sexual orientation, etc.; Rogers 2006). It is important to recruit from all underrepresented communities because intersectionality exist among racially minoritized students. Currently, LGBTQ+ and religious minoritized students are underrepresented, but this may be due to under reporting (Newell et al., 2010). Programs should make intentional efforts to gain perspectives from minoritized community members, and analyze current program materials (e.g., marketing materials, application documents, and websites) to determine how effectively they communicate the inclusion of minoritized populations (Bidell, Ragan, Broach, & Carrillo, 2007; Bidell, Turner, & Casas, 2006; Rogers, 2006).

In addition to recruitment strategies, school psychology programs should focus their efforts on faculty recruitment and curriculum development. Faculty need to be trained in multiculturalism so that they can develop and use multicultural curricula effectively (Newell et al., 2010). This training can allow faculty to incorporate multicultural content within the courses. Additionally, the greater the diversity among the faculty, the more likely students from underrepresented groups will be attracted to a program (Hope & Chappell, 2015). Thus, recruiting faculty members of color can help increase enrollment of racially minoritized students.

Theoretical Framework

CRT has been applied in education for scholars to analyze and critique racism as it occurs in schools and through educational policies (Lynn & Dixson 2013; Stovall 2006; Yosso 2006; Ladson-Billings & Tate 1995). For example, CRT has been used to address patterns of systemic racism that are ingrained in academic institutions, organizations, teaching patterns, learning expectations and everyday interactions around race (Connor, Ferri, & Annamma 2016; Gillborn 2008; Vaught 2011). CRT can be useful in exposing the ways that academia is deeply rooted in racism (Amiot, Mayer-Glenn, & Parker, 2020). Exposing deeply rooted racism can help the system finds way to combat racist structures and/or rebuild them.

CRT has seven key tenets that are linked to social justice with a goal of combating racism in education. These six tenets are: 1) the permanence of racism; 2) whiteness as property; 3) counternarratives and counter stories; 4) critiquing of liberalism; 5) interest convergence, 6) intersectionality and 7) commitment to social justice (Capper 2015; Solórzano & Bernal 2001; McCoy & Rodricks, 2015; Solóranzo & Yosso 2002).

Race has been physically, socially, legally, contextually, and historically constructed (Milner, 2017). Racism is persistent and omnipresent in U.S. society, including the education system (Milner, 2008). Consequently, racism is rooted in policies, procedures, practices, and institutions within education (Milner, 2017). Thus, CRT supports the idea that specific educational policies and practices can inhibit the success of racially minoritized students in higher education, more specifically, in school psychology programs. Racism is so deeply rooted in our society, that we sometimes are unsure of when and how it is at work (Lynn & Dixson 2013).

Whiteness as property is the idea that Whiteness includes the ability to own (Harris, 1993). This dehumanizes other races such as Black people and Indigenous people who have been owned in the past. White people have been able to use their Whiteness to own others (e.g., slaves), property and ideas (Vaught, 2011). Whiteness as property also includes exclusivity in what White people own (Harris, 1993). Thus, White people can own things in society (e.g., education, the economy) without an obligation to share with others. In the school setting, White people can determine who is smart. Leonardo and Broderick (2011) explored the idea of "smartness" in education as something that is owned by White people. They discuss how intelligence and need for special education is ultimately determined by racial deficits that are socially constructed. This notion parallels to the field of school psychology in which a deficit-based medical model has traditionally been used to determine a student's need for special education (Williams & Greenleaf, 2012). Moreover, racially minoritized students are overrepresented (Alvare, 2018) in special education, which further supports these findings. Whiteness as property in education is also perpetuated through the focus on White culture in curriculum over the culture and history of African Americans, Latinx groups, Asian-Americans, Pacific Islander and other racially minoritized groups (Lynn & Dixson 2013; Dixson et al., 2018). This lack of focus on racially minoritized groups has ultimately led to the failure of racially minoritized students to be normalized (Wade & Noguera, 2014).

Intersectionality is going beyond binary thinking and seeing people as complex individuals (Ladson-Billings, 2013). Humans are diverse individuals who represent multiple identities. For example, Crenshaw (1991) discussed how women of color also experience gendered and classist oppression in addition to racism. This issue is salient given that most

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school psychologists are women (Castillo & Gelley, 2013), accordingly most of the participants in this study were by women with shared gendered experiences.

CRT emerged in the 1970s as a response to the failure of liberalism to support people of color during the civil rights movement (Simba, 2019). Accordingly, CRT aims to critique liberal concepts including colorblindness, equal opportunity, incremental change, and meritocracy (Bartlett & Brayboy, 2005; DeCuir & Dixson, 2004; Solorzano & Yosso, 2001; Taylor, 1998). These concepts are seen by critical race theorists to protect the interests, power, and privilege of dominant groups (Solorzano & Yosso, 2001). For example, incremental change occurs when minoritized groups are advanced only in instances that are deemed acceptable by those in power (DeCuir & Dixson, 2004). Accordingly, southern schools in the U.S. waited 14 years after the Brown v. Board of Education decision to begin integrating schools (McCoy & Rodricks, 2015).

Interest convergence is the idea that racial equality and equity are only pursued and advanced when it proves beneficial to White people (Bell, 1980; Milner, 2015). Laws and legislation based on civil rights are only modified when they advanced the agenda or interest of White people (Bell, 1980). For example, the Black Lives Matter movement began in the U.S in after the acquittal of George Zimmerman for the murder of a 17-year-old Black boy, Trayvon Martin. Although protest and outrage occurred, the movement recently received the most attention 2020 in which an estimated 26 million people worldwide have participated in the movement (Parker, Menasce Horowitz, & Anderson, 2020). The Pew Research Center (2020) found that most Americans, who are a majority White, were in support of the movement in 2020, compared to 2018 where the movement was receiving negative attention. Many protestors for this movement have been White. Additionally, several corporations have begun initiatives to support the movement. Accordingly, corporations and White people who have supported this

movement have been lauded by the public. Organizations like APA and NASP have released

statements on anti-racism in solidarity with this movement. Universities are also releasing

statements and taking steps to address racism. It is important to note that systemic racism has

always been present in the U.S., however, society is just now responding to these issues given

the popularity of the movement.

Critical race theorists are committed to instituting a U.S. society and education system

that is socially just while incorporating activism into research (Bartlett & Brayboy, 2005). Social

justice in CRT is a process and a goal (Bell, 2013). Critical race scholars aim to exploit racism's

role in education as well as working to exploit and eliminate other forms of oppression. The goal

is to facilitate change geared towards social justice (DeCuir & Dixson, 2004; Solorzano &

Yosso, 2002). In the field of school psychology, there have been calls to utilize a social justice

framework to address the systemic and institutionalized barriers that minoritized students face in

reaching their potential (Malone & Proctor, 2019; Singh, 2010; Shriberg et al., 2008).

CRT aims to challenge the racist status quo and through storytelling. The goal of

storytelling in CRT is to create counternarratives that validate the experiences of people of color

and speak out against racism. Delgado (2013) described the narratives of White people as a

prevailing mindset. White people are the majority and the ingroup whose narratives seem to be

the norm, even when they further reinforce racism. Their narratives become normalized and no

longer appear as oppression. Storytelling of people of color is utilized in CRT to challenge the

status quo with the aim of shattering systems of oppression. CRT explicitly calls out White

privilege and the ways in which society works to advance White people over people of color.

CRT is appropriate for this study because this study focused on race. Thus, the use of

CRT was useful in exposing the systemic structures that limit the success of racially minoritized

students. The use of a critical perspective allowed for me to critique these structures and ask questions that could create a counternarrative for racially minoritized students. Given that school psychology is a predominately White field, these counternarratives are needed to support the experiences of these students.

Asian and Latin Critical Theory

Racial discourse often includes a black/white dichotomy (Lam, 2015), which is harmful given that race is not dichotomous. The dichotomy of race in the U.S. has left racial issues of other populations as secondary and insignificant (Omatsu, 1994). Accordingly, critical race theorists have explored Asian and Latin identities to further explore the racialized experiences of these populations.

The stereotype of Asians a "model minority" is a myth rooted in complimenting Japanese, Chinese, Filipino, and Korean laborers who worked on plantations in the 1950s (Chan, 1991; Takaki, 1989). The term model minority also has been used to label and divide Asians as the "acceptable" race and labeling African Americans as the unacceptable race (Lam, 2015; Omatsu, 1994). Asian Americans have been racially oppressed in the U.S. through immigration laws, naturalization laws and educational policies (Lowe, 1996). Thus, the model minority stereotype disregards the complexities and various experiences of Asian citizens. In higher education, the assumption of Asians as a model minority can cause them to be overlooked as a minority in need of support. Asian Americans experience discrimination daily in the form of microaggression (Sue, 2010).

Latin critical theory (LatCrit) examines the Latinx identity in conjunction with immigration policies, theory, language, and discrimination against Latinx people (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001, p. 6). In higher education, LatCrit focuses on the counternarratives of

undocumented Latinx college students and the ways in which U.S politics and media further

marginalizes this population (Shelton, 2018). In recent years, LatCrit has focused on the

contrasting effects of the Obama Era and the Trump Era on Latinx students (Gidda, 2017;

Shelton, 2018). The Obama Era provided educational protections and work opportunities for

undocumented students through Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA; Gidda, 2017;

Mayorkas, 2012). In contrast, the Trump Era has demonized Latinx immigrants by promoting

negative and often false narratives about the Latinx population and attempting to abolish DACA

(Jacobson, 2015).

CHAPTER THREE:

METHOD

This study was conducted using qualitative methods through a critical paradigm. Qualitative methods allow for researchers to gain an in-depth perspective of their topics through methods such as interviews, focus groups or observations. Thus, using a qualitative approach gave the participants a voice. In contrast, a quantitative approach may have limited my data to numeric values and/or correlations between forced choice answers on a survey. Although I was able to gain an in-depth perspective, qualitative research is not the standard approach to school psychology literature. School psychologists are evidence-based practitioners who find value in data-driven decision making, often confirmed in quantitative research through p-values and other forms of statistical analysis. Nonetheless, I chose a research design that gave a voice to minoritized students. The study aimed to answer the following questions:

1) How does the school psychology program and faculty maintain structural racism?

2) How does this program and faculty act antiracist/anti oppressive in their responses to structural racism?

3) How do structural racism and anti-racist actions impact racially minoritized students in the school psychology program?

Epistemology and Ontology

This study was conducted using critical paradigm while using critical race theory (CRT) as a theoretical framework. Qualitative researchers can adopt a research paradigm in which they are able to examine their data through a specific lens. This allows researchers a choice in how

they want to approach the "truth" in their data. Thus, I was able to select a critical perspective, to analyze the data.

Critical theorists believe there is no neutral or impartial approach to reality or one's perception of the "truth." Therefore, the truth in studies that utilize a critical paradigm is highly subjective in accordance with the truths of the participants. Critical researchers believe that historical and social situations are always influencing the researcher/knower. Thus, critical researchers cannot be completely objective either (Lather, 1986). More explicitly, the use of a critical paradigm is the rejection of objectivity and neutrality (Hall, 1979). Critical researchers aim to understand the truths of historically minoritized and/or oppressed populations who have not previously been given a voice before (Kivunja & Kuyin, 2017).

Critical researchers take an advocacy-based approach to their research. Accordingly, critical researchers adopt a clear political stance and adopt the notion of being "openly ideological" (Lather, 1986). Critical theorists aim to shed light on the ways in which race, gender and class perpetuate, navigate, or resist oppressive factors in society (Hall, 1979; Lather, 2004). Critical researchers seek to address economic, political, and social justice issues (Guba & Lincoln, 1988; Kivunja & Kuyin, 2017; Martens, 2015). Therefore, critical theorists explicitly ask questions about oppressive social processes and how they may continue to promote injustice against marginalized groups. Critical theorists aim to combine scholarship and advocacy to disrupt power imbalances.

In accordance with a critical perspective, I aimed to learn the subjective truths of racially minoritized students in a school psychology graduate program. I understood the influence of history and social situations on my participants as well as on my perspectives of the data. I asked the participants questions that explicitly inquired about processes and power structures that they

saw as oppressive. My goal in conducting this research was to combine scholarship with advocacy to provide implications that can disrupt the power imbalances that negatively affect graduate racially minoritized students. This was not a normal stance to take in the field of school psychology. However, I believe this is work that must be done to best understand the experiences of racially minoritized students.

My goal was to use CRT to accomplish my aims. In research, CRT as a methodology aims to: a) center race in all aspects of research, b) challenge traditional paradigms that have been used to describe the experiences of racially minoritized students, c) provide a liberating response to oppression, d) focus on racially minoritized students and their oppressive experiences (e.g., racism, classism) and e) provide interdisciplinary knowledge (e.g., sociology and women studies) to better understand racially minoritized students experiences in higher education (Bell, 1980; Crenshaw,1991; DeCuir & Dixson, 2004; Ladson-Billings, 2013; Solóranzo & Yosso 2002). School psychology scholars have begun to explore social justice (Malone & Proctor, 2019; Shriberg, 2013, Shriberg et al., 2008; Williams, & Greenleaf, 2012), a tenant of CRT; however, scholars have not fully applied CRT to the field of school psychology or school psychology research.

Reflexivity

For this study I am writing as a Black, queer, female student in a school psychology program at a PWI. As a racially minoritized student in higher education, I understand the systemic barriers that students may face while also having the privilege of overcoming some of these barriers and maintaining success. As a student of color, I care about the experiences of other racially minoritized students in school psychology graduate programs. I care because I know it is important for us to succeed so that we can help disprove stereotypes that exist about

racially minoritized students and their academic achievement. It also is important that racially minoritized students succeed in school psychology because racially minoritized students are disproportionally referred to special education and given disciplinary infractions in public schools (Alvare, 2018; Behring, Cabello, Kushida, & Murguia, 2000; Newell, 2010). I believe the presence of more school psychologists of color can increase instances of culturally responsive practice in schools, which can ultimately decrease the number of racially minoritized students in special education and who receive disciplinary actions. Racially minoritized school psychologists can empathize with students, advocate for them, and help majority race staff better understand them.

Currently, the field of school psychology predominantly is comprised of White, monolinguistic women (Walcott, Hyson, McNarmara, & Charvat, 2018). School psychology programs have struggled to recruit and retain racially minoritized students (Proctor & Truscott, 2012; 2013). I believe the limited number of students and practitioners of color is attributed to systemic barriers based on constructs such as race, class, and gender. With this research I wanted to expose and dismantle these power structures so that more people of color can become school psychologists. I believed this could be done through interviewing racially minoritized students and providing implications for school psychology programs based on their responses.

My status as a student of color helped me in interviewing these students, as they saw that I too am a student of color. My racialized status also helped me to understand and convey the information from these students. For example, a participant may have utilized terms or discussed an experience that was exclusive to their experience as a student of color. In my analysis and write-up, I offered insight based on what my participant said as well as based on shared lived experiences.

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For this study, I worked with my biases in analyzing the data by acknowledging them and including them in my analyses. This action was possible because I understand how higher education can be oppressive and I also understand how to navigate and overcome these barriers to be successful. This allowed me to facilitate open conversations with my participants. I know my own experiences as a graduate student of color; therefore, I was interested in hearing about the experiences and perspectives of other students. I created a space in which each participant could voice their authentic experiences without fear of judgment. Accordingly, this allowed my participants to share their experiences in full detail. For example, participants were able to name specific colleagues and faculty members and express themselves in whatever ways they felt comfortable. This enhanced the credibility and sincerity of the data given the participants did not have to "filter" their responses. Additionally, to ensure that my participants were heard, I allowed them to review my analyses of their data before finalizing and publishing the results of this study. I contacted each participant after their interview to share the quotes that were used in my final write up. This review ensured that their truths were conveyed in the way they intended while maintaining confidentially.

Participants and Sampling

The participants in this study were recruited from a single university in the southeast region of the United States. This university recently implemented actions to recruit and retain racially minoritized students that are in accordance with recommendations from school psychology literature (e.g., research groups with a diversity focus, recruiting faculty of color, offering multicultural content throughout coursework; Chandler, 2011; Newell et al., 2010; Rogers, 2006; Rogers & Molina, 2006). This selected program also maintained a program culture of trust and transparency in which racially minoritized students openly discuss issues that impact

racially minoritized students with faculty and peers. Sampling from this university allowed me to evaluate the complexities of structural racism in a program that perpetuates structural racism, but also took actions to combat it. Additionally, recruiting from this single university allowed me to make connections among and between current and former students regarding overall experiences, as well as to understand their perspectives before and after the recommendations were applied. This school psychology program will utilize the results of this study as a form of anonymous feedback that can assist them in their journey to becoming an anti-racist and anti-oppressive school psychology program.

My goal for this study was to interview racially minoritized students from a single school psychology program. Accordingly, I recruited my participants through convenience and purposive sampling. This approach was done through emailing current and former students about the study. I emailed 13 current and former students a flyer that included a description of the study, participation criteria and how the data would be utilized. I emailed individuals I knew personally who identified as racially minoritized, as well as individuals recommended to me from current and former students and faculty. To participate in the study, participants had to meet the following criteria a) currently or formerly enrolled at the university in the school psychology program, b) identify as a person of color (e.g, Black, Latinx, Asian, biracial) and c) matriculated at least one full year in the program to ensure exposure to a range of activities in the program (e.g., practicum, completing multiple courses, participating in research). The experiences of racially minoritized students were considered counternarratives in relation to the narratives of White students. Given that counternarratives come from minoritized individuals or underrepresented groups, who are often not given a voice, counternarratives are rare. Three of the former students I emailed did not respond to my recruitment emails. One former student

expressed interest in participation but was unable to participate due to competing demands and COVID-19 related variables. One current student participated in a preliminary interview and then declined to participate due to confidentiality concerns. Ultimately, I obtained eight participants, who were a combination of current and former students, to interview for this study. Given the scarcity of racially minoritized students in school psychology programs and within the field (APA, 2010; Castillo et al., 2013), this number was appropriate given I recruited participants from a single program. One participant identified as Asian, one identified as Black and Latinx, and six participants identified as Black or African American. I reached data saturation after interviewing Participant 8 (i.e., the information collected in this interview was consistent with the first seven participants). To maintain the anonymity of my participants, I only provided the racial identity of participants in my analysis.

Interviews and Document Analysis

Data primarily were collected using interviews. In qualitative research, interviews are considered a feasible way to obtain useful information from participants (Kvale,1996). The interviews were conducted from a romantic conceptualization (Alvesson, 2003). Romantic interviews include developing rapport and developing a detailed understanding of the interviewee's perspective of the research topic (Roulston, 2010). One 30- to 60-minute, semi-structured, interview was conducted with each participant. Due to the unforeseen circumstances of COVID-19, interviews were conducted virtually using video and audio recording software. The semi-structured interview included eight open-ended questions about each student's overall experience in the program, perspectives regarding barriers and facilitators to their success, and the sources of these barriers and facilitators (e.g., systemic, personal, program-specific). The interview was semi-structured to allow me to provide follow-up questions and to allow for

interviewees to fully express themselves and provide examples. The interviews were audio and/or video recorded and manually transcribed verbatim. The interview protocol can be found in Appendix A.

In addition to interviews, I included university and program documents (e.g., Handbook, syllabi, recruitment materials) as part of the interviews or to help interpret the information received from the interviewees. These documents were used to provide context for the program and institution during the times the participants were enrolled. After each interview, I reviewed relevant university and program documents to scrutinize the alignment with my participant's experiences. The use of documents shed light on the ways in which the school psychology program had or had not addressed race and racism through policies, procedures, and coursework.

Throughout the interview and data analysis process, I engaged in journaling for reflection and to keep track of data collection and analysis decisions. Journaling was not used as a data collection mechanism. Journaling was used to check and set aside my personal biases during the interviewing and analysis processes to ensure that my personal opinions did not skew the data.

Data Analysis

The transcripts were be analyzed through coding. The interviews were coded deductively and inductively. I began with deductive coding with a list of a priori codes based on the seven tenets of CRT (Capper 2015; Solórzano & Bernal 2001; McCoy & Rodricks, 2015; Solóranzo & Yosso 2002). Although I reviewed Asian and Latinx critical literature, I did not utilize these frameworks as my participants did not describe instances that aligned with either framework. All participants, including those who identified as Asian and Latinx, described instances that best aligned with CRT. Deductive coding also was applied in instances where participants described a barrier or facilitator to their success that aligned with previous school psychology or graduate

student literature. The use of deductive codes was appropriate given my critical perspective in which history cannot be removed from the truths of the researcher or the subject. The use of past and current literature allowed for historic and social processes to be acknowledged through the initial codes (e.g., microaggressions have historically served as a barrier to the success of racially minoritized students and can be used as a code). Deductive coding also was useful given my critical approach allowed me to analyze the data with specific oppressive structures (i.e., race, gender, and class) in mind. Inductive coding occurred for any other information collected that shed light on the barriers and facilitators to the success of racially minoritized students. I anticipated using an equal amount of race-based school psychology literature, social justice, and critical theory literature in conjunction with the transcripts to form these codes.

The data were coded as they were collected. I also used a constant comparison analysis throughout the data collection and analysis process to group and compare the data (Glaser & Strauss, 1965; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). The codebook was developed throughout the data analysis process. I began with deductive codes from the seven tenets of critical race theory, as well as a few codes from the literature on barriers (e.g., financial, microaggression, etc.) and facilitators (e.g., mentorship, financial resources) for racially minoritized students in graduate programs. I added and modified codes as needed. After all the data were collected, I aggregated the codes into themes with possible subthemes within them. Additionally, I used analytic memos throughout the coding process to make connections among codes and the data.

Quality Criteria

Several steps were employed to ensure the creditability and quality of this research. I thoroughly reviewed the literature base on barriers and facilitators to the retainment and attrition of graduate racially minoritized students, including school psychology and CRT literature, when

developing my deductive codes. In using a critical paradigm, I ensured my participants were able to have a voice by allowing them to review my findings and overall analysis of their interviews before publishing my work. Additionally, I maintained an audit trail to track key research activities for accountability and accuracy. As a critical researcher, I did this to ensure the subjective truths of my participants were conveyed over my knowledge and biases.

I also consulted Tracy (2010) when evaluating the quality of my study. Tracy (2010) outlined components of quality qualitative research. Three of these components include (1) a worthy topic, (2) sincerity and (3) meaningful coherence. Structural racism in school psychology programs is a worthy topic because the recruitment and retainment of school psychology students and practitioners of color has been expressed as a concern in literature as well as by the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP, 2020). For example, there currently is a NASP initiative to recruit racially minoritized students from high schools and HBCUs. The implications from this study can help school psychology training programs move beyond ways to recruit racially minoritized students and to focus on ways to eliminate structural racial barriers, which will assist in retention. Sincerity refers to being transparent about one's biases in research. I have demonstrated sincerity thus far through describing my critical research paradigm and through my reflexivity statement. I did so during my data analysis through journaling. Through journal I was able to identify my own racial biases and set them aside for interviewing and data analysis. Meaningful coherence involves using literature to support research. This was accomplished through my deductive codes that are based on CRT, social justice, and school psychology literature, as well as my inductive codes in which I used school psychology and other social justice literature to support.

Ethical Considerations

Designing and conducting research in an ethical manner falls under Contributing to the School Psychology Knowledge Base in NASP's (2020) Principles for Professional Ethics Standards. Ethics also are included in one of the criteria of "excellent" qualitative research (Tracy, 2010). Moreover, conducting research in an ethical manner is outlined as a requirement for students and practitioners by NASP.

I addressed confidentiality ethics by de-identifying all transcripts as well as omitting any identifying information that came up in the interviews. This action included omitting any quotes that may have revealed a student's identity. I also omitted names, places, and other information (e.g., year in the program) from the transcripts prior to analysis. Participants in this study may have experienced negative emotions when recalling their experiences; thus, I provided all participants with mental health and wellness resources following the interview. I acted in accordance with my university's institutional review board (IRB). I also maintained an audit trail of recording, transcripts, and analyses.

Participants were notified that their participation was voluntary, and that they could withdraw from participation at any point in the study. I shared an overview of my analysis with my participants and gave them the opportunity to modify their answers, my analysis or choose to withdraw their information from my final write-up. Benefits from participating also were considered. Discussing negative emotions and experiences with others can reduce stress and increase physical health functioning (Pennebaker, Kiecolt-Glaser, & Glaser, 1988). Therefore, the participants in this study may have benefited from the opportunity to have their experiences heard.

CHAPTER FOUR:

FINDINGS

I will share the results in correspondence with each research question for the study. The data were analyzed through a critical paradigm; thus, the findings represent the subjective "truths" of my participants. In line with critical theorist's advocacy-based approach, the data are presented through direct quotes from the participants. The codebook can be found in *Appendix B*. **Question One: How Does the School Psychology Program and Faculty Maintain Structural Racism?**

To answer this question, I used deductive codes based on concepts within the seven tenets of CRT and analyzed the ways in which the participants described their racialized experiences in the school psychology program. I then aggregated these codes into larger themes that aligned with the tenants of Critical Race Theory. Based on the participants' responses, three themes emerged: 1) the permanence of racism/ maintaining racist hierarchical structures, 2) liberal ideologies that maintain inequities, and 3) research-based interest convergence.

The Permanence of Racism/ Maintaining Racist Hierarchical Structures

CRT includes the belief that racism is a permanent structure that is physically, socially, legally, contextually, and historically constructed within American society (Milner, 2017). Racism in the U.S is maintained through racists hierarchal structures like the education system (Ackerknecht, 1955; Adams, 1988; Milner, 2008; 2017). Accordingly, this theme includes instances when participants described concepts that contribute to maintaining racist hierarchal structures and the permanence of racism within the school psychology program. The most common codes were microaggressions and white privilege.

Microaggressions. Microaggressions are unconscious, brief, daily exchanges that send disparaging messages to minorities (Sue et al., 2007; Sue, 2010). This code was used when participants described conversations, comments, looks and/or acts perpetrated by faculty and/or White colleagues in which the participant felt they were being subtlety discriminated against based on their race. Some participants described instances of microaggressions as "slick comments" or "disrespect." Participant two stated "I feel like [White professors] have very slick mouths and they make comments that are very inappropriate." Participants four also described instances of microaggression as "[White professors] just being very disrespectful." Participant eight described experiencing microaggressions, however, they were unable to "process" and remember specific instances: "I think it's also my coping mechanism- like I repress [racist] things or my brain automatically like filters that out."

In line with Participant two, Participant seven noted "[White faculty] can be a little slick when they want things to be done." When asked about specific instances of microaggressions, Participant seven said there were "too many things I can recall." Participant seven also described microaggressions as a demeaning tone of voice used by White professors:

Like your tone matters when you say something, people can say something to you and make you feel real, small, or silly like you don't know what you're doing, and I think they do that to people like they will say things in a tone.

Some participants gave various examples of microaggressions they experienced from their White colleagues. For example, Participant one described their most experienced microaggression: "I guess the most popular microaggression in my book is your English is very good. Where did you learn English?" This participant heard this often from their White

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colleagues who often "forgot" that this participant was "not White" and had a different upbringing which afforded them less privileges.

Participants four, five and eight, who all identified as African American, described instances of having their hair commented on, or touched by White colleagues. These participants were often frustrated by these comments because of the unnecessary attention it brought to them. This is important to note because historically, Black people have been used as forms of entertainment for White people (Abate, 2019; Kambhampaty, 2019; Marovich, 2020; Recchio, 2011). Participant four described some faculty members commenting every time a Black student changed their hairstyle: "You know it's like 'Oh my gosh, you know [Black student] or [Black student] or whoever-look at your new hairstyle."

Participant five discussed experiencing less comments in their prior undergraduate institution, which also was a PWI:

> I've gotten used to the comments about my hair. It is what it is. At this point, your hair is so cool. I'm like ladies, we've been here for [a few] years now. Get used to it like my hair is my hair. I promise you. I went to a PWI undergrad too and I didn't experience half of the comments about my hair.

It is important to note that graduate programs have less students than undergraduate programs, thus the settings are more intimate. This is a harmful behavior that could be translated into their careers as school psychologists.

Participants also described instances of microaggressions beyond their appearance. Participant four described being subjected to microaggressions towards the Black Lives Matter movement during the reemergence of the movement following the murders of Breonna Taylor, Auhmad Aubrey and George Floyd:

You know my colleagues letting the person say like, 'oh all lives matter', and the
professor is completely mute. You're a social justice researcher now, but OK if you want
to get paid, you have to sit there and maintain this relationship. You know that type of
that, that situation that happened.

Participant four noted experiencing these microaggressions was "making the climate so
unbearable for like racially minoritized students," especially during a time when race-related
murders were occurring.

Participant five described experiencing microaggressions through facial expressions from
faculty in class. This participant noted the discrepancy in how they were looked at in comparison
to their White colleagues: "Some facial expressions you would like, I would receive if I said a
comment, but I feel as though with my White colleagues were to say the same thing. That facial
expression would not be present."

Participant five also described experiencing microaggressions from faculty through
examples used in their courses:

I think also making that assumption, and so me, [Black student] and [Black student] are
like the stars of that presentation… Why pick on us? Like I know some of my White
colleagues that went through some things that I didn't go through that can be considered
trauma. Trauma manifests itself in different ways. My trauma is not their trauma.

During a presentation on trauma, participant five and other Black students were asked to give
examples of their traumatic experiences. This serves as a microaggression because Participant
five noted no White students were asked about their traumas.

Participant eight described witnessing their Black colleagues getting picked on by other
White students in a way that felt like a microaggression:

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"It's kind of like specifically they target her sometimes. One time in class my [Black

Colleague] wasn't doing anything and a [White Colleague] called her out in front of

everyone."

When asked why they did not get targeted by their colleagues Participant eight explained:

"I feel like [White colleagues] did target me sometimes, but I would just fire right back at

them and they would tone it down."

White Privilege. White privilege is a controversial term with various meanings

(McIntosh, 2012). For this study, White privilege refers to instances where White people are

unaware of their privilege or are proud of it. Participant one discussed race and privilege issues

in their majority White cohort: "I think that sometimes maybe professors will forget that I'm not

White. They forget that I don't have certain privileges." Participant one's colleagues and

professors spoke to them and held expectations based on the privileges they held as White

people. Similarly, Participant four discussed how unaware their White colleagues were: "Maybe

races are not understanding their privilege like mentalities."

Participant five described multiple experiences with a professor who was aware of their

White privilege but spoke about it in a way that offended racially minoritized students: "[White

faculty] never lets us forget about [their] White privilege. [They] will say it out of [their] mouth.

I'm White privileged [person], I don't. I don't have to go through that." Participant five stated that

this professor's acknowledgment of their privilege did more harm than good because it seemed

as if this professor was bragging about their privilege.

Participant eight described White privilege as White faculty not understanding the issues

they faced as a person of color:

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I feel like it would be a whole lot of other questions, a lot other alleyways of like

them, not necessarily trying to degrade me, but it would still be. Why are we

doing this? Or don't shake the table.

In this example, White faculty members are privileged in not having to understand or experience

negative experiences racially minoritized students face in higher education. Participant eight has

been told "don't shake the table" by faculty, as a way for White faculty to silence the issues

racially minoritized students face and remain in their White comfort.

Liberal Ideologies that Maintain Inequities

CRT resulted from the failure of liberalism to meet the needs of people of color (Simba,

2019). Thus, this theme emerged from instances where liberal concepts failed to produce change

and/or maintained structural inequities in the school psychology program. The most common

codes that emerged in descriptions of liberalism in the program were 1) incremental change, 2)

meritocracy and 3) political correctness/avoidance.

Incremental Change. Incremental change occurs when marginalized communities are

slowly advanced in a manner that is feasible for those in power (DeCuir & Dixson, 2004). After

the murder of George Floyd, the Black Lives Matter movement remerged nationwide (Parker,

Menasce Horowitz, & Anderson, 2020). Accordingly, this school psychology program made

small changes in helping their Black students during this time. My review of program documents

from 2016 to 2020, which included multiple syllabi and student handbooks, is consistent with the

idea of incremental change. Prior to the events that occurred in the summer of 2020, syllabi and

student handbooks included small, generic statements about diversity and inclusion which were

copied from APA and NASP. For example, I reviewed syllabi from 2016 for several school

psychology courses and found the word "diversity" to be included in the syllabi between one to

four times. The word was often listed under ethics or within a list of course objectives. I also found that each syllabus had only one multicultural reading assigned for the entire course. This is important to note because each course required two to four readings per class meeting. Thus, of all readings assigned in a semester, only one reading on multicultural competence was required. This consistent with APA and NASP standards, that require a vague inclusion of cultural material in courses (APA, 2006; NASP, 2010a). Accordingly, Participant five referred to the incremental changes as "seasonal".

> They've been supportive in those ways, but like I said, it seems kind of seasonal. It's like I gotta call you out or something has to happen in the community for me to know that you support me as a Black person in this program. I don't think that was already on their agenda. They had their own agenda and kind of had to squeeze that on their real quick. To like to meet our needs.

Participant five stated that the program faculty sent out emails and held townhall meetings to give students a space to process their feelings, however; once the fall semester began: "I said where's the support? Where's the help? I said this was seasonal."

Participant four agreed that there was minimal change prior to George Floyd's murder "We've made a little change, but like really before, most of my experience has been before this past summer." Participant four felt that changes were only occurring in the program because the reemergence of the Black Lives Matter movement was being supported by mainstream society.

Meritocracy. Meritocracy is the idea of granting people awards, privileges, etc. based on merit or a system where it is earned. This liberal idea is fundamentally flawed because people of color are often negatively affected by these systems (Bartlett & Brayboy, 2005; DeCuir & Dixson, 2004; Solorzano & Yosso, 2001; Taylor, 1998). Participants' experiences demonstrated

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the problem with notions of meritocracy in the school psychology program. Participant two and seven discussed how racially minoritized students were only selected for diversity awards:

> And not only nominating them for the Diversity award because they think they are the most likely to win. It's like, OK, I know you're great. So we're going to be diversity awards because we don't want to put you somewhere else 'cause you just might not get that. (2)

> Even thinking about going beyond that, like rewards and being nominated for things I don't know, I was never nominated for anything, but I don't know that a lot of us were, you know, like [Black colleague] wasn't nominated for something until I don't know when, 4th year. (7)

Participant seven discusses how racially minoritized students deserve to be nominated for awards beyond diversity. "I just feel like we could have been nominated for something. Why we gotta wait somewhere like always or almost to the end for you?"

Another award that negatively affects racially minoritized students are university fellowships. Participant four discussed the inequities that come with this award, which is often reserved for racially minoritized students:

> And that was a source of stress because you come in, you think it's an award which it is and you kind of come in and you realize you get paid less than everybody else and you know the message that sends is not good. When you're one of the few Black people you realize. Oh wow, get paid less than everybody else, you know so.

Although fellowships are given to students who meet specific standards, these awards pay less and do not include health insurance. Participant four had to seek extra funding sources to have funding comparable to their White peers.

Political Correctness/Avoidance. Political correctness is often used to decrease language that offends people of color. However, political correctness can also be used by White people to avoid uncomfortable topics such as race. Accordingly, participants discussed instances where they White colleagues did not discuss race, which placed the burden on racially minoritized students in the classroom. For example, Participant one discussed these situations and the discomfort that accompanied them:

> It does put a little bit pressure on me when we're talking about cultural considerations in class. You can feel like all eyes on you like, "oh, this is a topic for the minority people to voice their concern". I don't know why people wouldn't feel comfortable speaking as they would feel like it's not their place, or you know, this is like whatever. Obviously, some are more conscious than the others about this kind of burden they put on the minority students.

Participant two was in a cohort where their colleagues avoided these topics: "They don't really bring up anything racial. They stay away from those topics." Participant six described a similar experience: "I felt like the professors didn't really know how to speak to it appropriately. What language to use, necessarily? Um, which just ended up resulting in silence rather than trying to muddle through the conversation with everybody." Participant six also went on to discuss the negative implications of this for the field of school psychology.

> So we're doing a disservice to our field by limiting the research areas that we can address with our thesis and dissertation or even our project, because our faculty members don't feel comfortable advising us in those areas because they don't have that background.

Research-Based Interest Convergence

Interest convergence refers to White people being interested in topics of racial equality and equity being pursued only when it benefits White people (Bell, 1980; Milner, 2015). In references to the program, interest convergence occurred relative to the issue of exploring diversity in research topics. The most common codes were 1) support for diverse topics and 2) lack of support for diverse topics.

Diverse Research Topics. For this study, diverse research topics include research that focuses on minoritized peoples. The focus, or lack of focus, includes race/ethnicity, sexuality, sexual orientation, and disproportionality in education among other topics.

Support. Support for diverse research topics occurred when the faculty benefited from researching these topics. Participant two discussed this and the "White savior complex" that comes with White faculty researching diverse populations:

> Trying to talk about diversity and wanting to do these projects just to produce a good outcome, but not genuinely caring. I think it really plays in the role of the White Savior Complex where they want to target these vulnerable populations for them to look good, and they can have grants and writings and presentations on their CV. But then again, when they go in the classroom, very ignorant.

Participant two went on to talk about the lack of translation of this research to course content:

> I feel like if that's your passion like I would see it integrated and the lectures that you're doing in class and you would bring up these topics. But it's like you're just doing it for a paper. I don't. I don't really vibe with that and because I don't vibe with that, it's like I don't respect you really as a person, so that's going to influence how I interact with different faculty members.

It is important to note that Participant two noted they did not respect faculty members who did not translate their research to practice. Participant two stated that they limited their interactions with faculty members who did this.

Similarly, Participant six felt that social justice topics were mentioned, but never incorporated.

I do remember feeling like really disappointed at the end of the course. I think it was the first [Course] that we had with [White professor] because on syllabus day [they] did like say that we were gonna like to incorporate the multi-cultural aspects throughout that course and given that it was a [course] I was excited about that because we know, uh, how discipline practices disproportionately affect racially minoritized students, um, but we just we never got there. It never really got interwoven.

Participant three also discussed how the diverse research was not incorporated in courses and the program was "not as woke as it appeared to be":

Like they put on the front that we are all encompassing which they are. But when you really kind of get into those fine details of what that looks like, we're not researching some of the populations that I think are the most underrepresented.

Participant three discussed how their definition of diversity and the faculty's definition of diversity often differed. Participant three wanted to study racially and ethnically minoritized groups, while faculty studied populations that were considered minoritized, but often included majority White participants.

Participant four noted that discussions about social justice tended to be "just for key words you know and not really a value to people." Thus, mirroring participants two and three, who did not feel the faculty had genuine interests for minoritized populations.

Lack of Support. Two students who did not graduate within the typical graduation timeline both discussed research as their largest barrier. In relation to the code above, faculty stated they supported diverse research and published research within their interest, but students who diverse research fell outside of their comfort zone were often ignored. Participant three, who wanted to focus on the achievement of Black students, was rejected by several professors for their dissertation.

> It just was a barrier with finding an actual school psychology faculty mentor that was also willing to work with me too because I also got rejected from, you know, working with [White professor] for my dissertation. [They] told me "No, I will not."

Participant three did not feel supported when trying to find a faculty member to help with their dissertation.

> I didn't think the faculty did enough to maybe put me in contact with some of the people that I probably needed. So, like obviously, if they're, you know, not focused in on what I'm interested in, it was kind of like what I had to figure it out.

Participant six also was not supported in their diverse research topic.

> My thesis isn't focused on social justice issues as it relates to race, but as it relates to the LGBTQ plus community. There is-there was no one from within our department that could advise me. It was my responsibility to go out and find people and convince them to work with me.

> Both participants, who wanted to research minoritized groups described feeling left to their own devices to complete thesis and dissertation work. As racially minoritized students in higher education, both participants described feeling lost and unsure of how to complete the program requirements. It is important to note that a thesis and dissertation are required for

graduating from the program. Participant six also discussed the negative implications of this requirement for the field:

> Yeah, it's hard because if we have to work our thesis or even the dissertation within an area of research that fits with what 5-6 faculty members. That means that there's really only five or six areas that your thesis or dissertation can address, and there are more than five or six areas related to the field of school psychology. There are more than five or six ways to address the whole child, so. These topics that our faculty in particular are not researching still affect our students and I see that even more so like now that I'm working in the schools.

2) How Does this Program and Faculty Act Antiracist/Anti Oppressive in Their Responses to Structural Racism?

To answer this question, I used inductive coding and examined the ways in which the participants described their graduate school throughout their interviews. I referenced literature on the facilitators of success for graduate racially minoritized students as I developed my codes. Two themes emerged that facilitated racially minoritized student's success in the program: 1) mentorship/faculty support and 2) peer support.

Mentorship/Faculty Support

Racially Minoritized Professors. The program hired racially minoritized within recent years. Participants five and eight were the only participants to have multiple courses and opportunities to interact with these members of the faculty. Participant five discussed the way a Black faculty member gave them encouragement.

> [Black professor] did call me out on that and she was like girl. You better talk. [They were] like your papers are amazing. The work that you're producing is amazing. Like

when you present it's amazing. Do that talking in class. Have those conversations,

challenge your peers. It doesn't matter what you have to say is just as important or might

be more important than the person next to you and you never know who you might be

helping.

Participant five also discussed how personable another racially minoritized faculty member was:

"I love me some [Black Faculty] [they are] real too. I'm real too. [They] give me hundreds I give

[them] hundreds- like we just be chilling." This also noted a difference in how faculty treated

Black students during the second wave of the Black Lives Matter movement after George

Floyd's murder. "[Black professors] reached out White Professors did not." Accordingly,

Participant eight gave an example of the actions Black faculty took to support them during this

time:

Also, for me during the summer with the killing of George Floyd and Brianna Taylor,

Ahmad Aubrey. Um, I wanted to do something, and [Black professor] was the first

person I thought about reaching out to because [they] had always been there. [They]

knew what we were going through. So [they] backed me on creating resources.

Allyship from White Professors. Several participants described positive relationships

they had with White faculty members whom they considered allies. Participant two found their

major professor to be the most supportive: "I would say because I work with my major professor,

the most, I feel like me and [we] have a good relationship and [they are] very supportive."

Similarly, Participant six discussed a White professor who they could go to for anything: "[They

weren't] going to think less of me because I had to get real with [them] for a second." Participant

seven described a faculty member who was warm and supportive: "I feel like [White faculty]

kinda has a [parental] nature about [them] to where [they try] to be helpful when [they] can, I

guess. You know?"

Participant eight mentioned a White faculty member who assisted them in creating

resources for racially minoritized students: "[They] offered resources with the resources that I

did over the summer and [they] offered resources to reach out to [their] colleagues and have

[their] colleagues reach out to me." Participant eight also noted the recent efforts of faculty to be

anti-racist as being helpful:

Having more even last semester having more of a social justice lens of being heard, being

seen. Although I will say like we're still in like problem admiration and we're not really

doing anything. Um, I will say just being able to have those conversations is very helpful.

Accordingly, the program has updated their syllabi and student handbook to include anti-racist

language and explicit support for Black Lives Matter. In the program's most recent syllabi and

program handbook, Black Lives Matter and the words anti-racist are used. For example, one

faculty member updated their syllabus expectations to include: "We will directly confront

structures that oppress marginalized groups, which involve explicit anti-racism and anti-

oppression conversations and actions." This statement is in accordance with participant eight

who stated conversations around social justice have occurred. However, this participant also

noted that the program is "not really doing anything." This statement within the syllabi may be

the beginning of anti-racist and anti-oppressive conversations and actions as a norm in the

program.

Peer Support

Colleagues of Color. Several students described having colleagues of color as a crucial

piece of their success and retainment in the program. When Participant two was asked how they

would feel without a Black colleague they replied: "I do not even want to think of that. I do not. I'm really don't think the program-like my cohort specifically, I don't think it would have been good if I didn't have [Black colleague] in my cohort." Participant two also noted they were friends, not just colleagues, with racially minoritized students in other cohorts. Similarly, Participant six stated they "felt lucky" to have peers of color to support them. Participant seven talked about the importance of having a peer of color in their cohort:

> I think just having [Black colleague] was good because I'm not alone as the only black person and I feel like when you have someone of color you can relate to each other a little differently then you relate to other people and that's important. So, having [them] was really big for me. I would say I don't know. I don't know how I would get through without [Black colleague], truthfully."

Both participants described the program as nearly impossible without the presence of another racial minority colleague. It may be noteworthy that both participants who discussed having a colleague of color are of the same race.

Participant five discussed the way their colleagues of color supported them throughout the week: "We set up meetings, it could be a phone call team soon, a quick little email [they] check in on me a lot. [They] understands me." Participant five referred to all their cohort in a sibling-like manner but noted a special bond and friendship with their cohort members of color. Participant eight went beyond a special bond to describe having colleagues of color as an "overwhelming sense of protection." They discussed how they stood up for one another in class.

> Like if [a White colleague] says anything like usually somebody [of color] will say, 'hey, I think that's a little that's a little off' and like the other students would

like correct themselves, but it hasn't gotten to the point where it's like

overwhelmingly US versus them.

Participant eight noted, however, that the White students in their cohort were receptive to

feedback from racially minoritized students and often corrected themselves when confronted.

Allyship from White Colleagues. The participants in this study were able to identify

several White colleagues who they viewed as allies. In addition to colleagues of color,

Participant six found their White colleagues to be a guiding force in their success in the program:

"Like if I didn't have [White colleagues] I think it would have been really isolating and I don't

know how I would have been able to do it." Participant six had several White colleagues with

whom they worked on assignments and built genuine friendships.

Participant five talked about their colleague who was so supportive, they lost touch with

their conservative family members:

But there are some individuals in my cohort that are still going hard, like a Black Lives

matter, like no, losing their family members like! Yeah, that's about [White colleague].

Like [their] mom and [their] dad completely cut [them] off. Like 'do not come to [home].

Don't come here for us', that's a huge sacrifice to make.

This White colleague began to speak out against racism during the reemergence of the Black

Lives Matter movement in support of their Black colleagues. Although this White colleague's

family disowned them for speaking out, this student still supported Black Lives Matter and told

Participant five and other Black students that they would continue to advocate for Black people.

Participant eight also had White colleagues who actively advocated for Black students:

"Um, my cohort [family is] very understanding, and they like they want to know

more. So, it's like anything happens in the Black community. They will ask me

though reaching out. Are you OK? Like how I can help?"

3) How do Structural Racism and Anti-Racist Actions Impact Racially Minoritized

Students in the School Psychology Program?

To answer this question, I referred to the third tenant of CRT, counternarratives and

counter stories. Counternarratives are the accounts and experiences of people of color, which are

often overshadowed by the narratives of White people (Delgado, 2013). As a critical researcher,

it was important for me to use the accounts of my participants to create the codes and themes for

this question. Accordingly, the themes that emerged are based on what the participants described.

Five themes emerged that describe impacts on racially minoritized students in the school

psychology program: 1) reinforcing negative stereotypes, 2) fighting to be equal, 3) us vs. them,

4) self-doubt and 5) discomfort.

Reinforcing Negative Stereotypes

Some participants discussed the ways in which the program reinforced negative race-

based stereotypes. Participant one had been told from a young age that they were a "second-class

citizen" due to their race and ethnicity. When discussing their experiences in the program this

participant discussed this stereotype that played out for them during the program: "My mother is

very paranoia, but there's one thing that she got right. If anything, else is that wherever I go, I am

second class citizen." Participant one felt this way due to being in a majority White cohort where

their colleagues held more privileges. Participant one was often reminded of their "second class"

status when they had to remind their colleagues that they did not have the same privileges as

White students.

Participant five described themselves as talkative and outgoing; however, they noted they did not try to be talkative around people in the program: "I don't try to project my voice too much 'cause I'm already looked at as ghetto." This participant felt they were looked at as "ghetto" due to the verbal and non-verbal microaggressions they received from White faculty and their White colleagues. Participant five described doing this to protect themselves and stay in the program: "I'm protecting myself in everything that I say in everything that I do because I feel like in any moment everything can be snatched away."

Fighting to be Equal

Some participants were aware that they were not seen as equal in comparison to their White peers. Participant three stated "I just really had to fight.", when asked about getting through the program. Participant three felt that they had to fight to feel supported in their diverse research. Participant one discussed the uphill battle of trying to prove their worth as a student of color:

> I have to work even harder and then to go somewhere else. Just continue to better yourself and still feel that same way. Yeah, but I feel like I always will feel that way like I will always feel as something to prove. I will always feel like I have to do better than everyone else to prove my worth.

Participant five talked about how exhausting it is to fight to be equal:

> I feel like it's been exhausting and when I say exhausting, I mean I feel like I have to work 3 times, 5 times, 10 times harder than my non-black peers in order to prove that I belong here just like everyone else does.

It is important to note that these participants discussed fighting to be equal as a theme that followed them throughout all their schooling. For example, Participant two recounted a situation from their childhood that they felt was reinforced by their White colleagues:

> I actually had a counselor tell me that my attitude is not going to get me far in life if I don't change it. To this day, it still sticks with me. But you know, I'm here now and my personality has not changed that much.

This participant went on to describe an issue they had where their White colleagues saw them as "aggressive" in the same way their school counselor from elementary school did.

> I remember I had a [White] cohort member who I did not get along with in the beginning. Some of my cohort members say I bullied the girl. They said that I made them uncomfortable because of my interactions with the girl and that in that has influenced how I interact with them. I'm not that close with them after that.

Participant two felt frustrated and labeled as a "bully" by White colleagues who also did not get along with this colleague. Participant two felt this to be unfair given their White colleagues had expressed disliking this colleague, but when participant two discussed disliking this colleague they were labeled as a bully.

Us vs. Them

Participant two talked about how their behavior and demeanor changed around their White peers and faculty. "I don't seem that personable. But they made me to be like this, so that's how I'm going to be" (Participant two). This participant felt the faculty made them less personable based on the negative experiences they had within the program around race. Participant two noted they are very "calculated" in who they interact with in the program. They described their White colleagues as "colleagues, not friends." Participant two further explained that their

demeanor has contributed to their success: "I think that being professional and not telling these white folks too much." Similarly, Participant six presented differently around faculty "Like with other faculty members, I always had to have this like layer of professionalism." Participant seven noted that they were not close to any members of faculty and did not go to them for any "real concerns."

Self-doubt

Some participants described doubting themselves and their position in the program based on their race-based treatment. Participant two described an instance where a negative encounter with a White professor, which included microaggression and meritocracy, made them question their position in the program. Participant two asked a White professor why they were not nominated for an award based on their accomplishments in specific research areas which exceeded that of their White colleagues. The White professor told Participant two "everyone in this program works hard," which Participant two found to be dismissive and disregarded their success. Participant two described several research and clinical accomplishments they gained beyond what their White colleagues had achieved. This participant felt that their progress in the program was being ignored and they felt they may have only been selected to fit a "diversity quota":

> And then it makes me also think like my place in the program. Did you want me in the program because you really thought that I had skills and that I had strengths? Or did you just need some diversity here in the program?

Participant six had a similar experience that left them wondering about their place in the program and how faculty perceived them. Participant six shared a practicum accomplishment, that other White students also shared, in which their practicum supervisor allowed them to more

independence in working with students. A White faculty member responded to this with shock and questioned their capabilities in completing the tasks their supervisor assigned. This led Participant six to feel doubt about how faculty viewed them as a competent student: "like what did I do in the program that made you think that I was incapable of something like that? Like I've had practice doing things like this, you know?"

Discomfort

All participants described discomfort as their main reaction to structural racism in the program. Participant five discussed feeling unsafe in being their self:

> I feel like the major barrier which I don't even know if I would consider a barrier, is. Feeling safe to be myself? Um, just being me. I feel like a lot of the time I had to like to conform to white norms, or like change the way that I talk, change the way that I wear my hair. Code switching basically.

Participant eight also mentioned discomfort in the academic setting "like it's already hard enough to try to like fit into this space that wasn't made for you." Participant eight also described discomfort in addressing racism:

> Could this be racist? I feel like it could, but I was like OK, maybe I shouldn't like over assume. Because then that leads to other issues of like. Now I have to go in like how this conversation with you and now this is messed up like our relationship is gonna miss. My grade is going to mess with. In my future in this program, 'cause if I pointed out to you and I'm the only one that's pointing out to you, how are you going to take it.

Participant four also felt uncomfortable telling other faculty of color about their experiences "Maybe races are not understanding their privilege like mentalities like. I can't even put that on you or put that on like another professor of color".

CHAPTER FIVE:

DISCUSSION

Summary of Findings

The purpose of this study was to expose the systemic barriers that racially minoritized students face in a single school psychology program. The study aimed to identify and critique barriers, while also exploring how racially minoritized students in the program defeated these barriers in order to complete their graduate degrees. The participants in this study described three major themes of how the program maintained structural racism: 1) the permanence of racism/ maintaining racist hierarchical structures, 2) liberal ideologies that maintain inequities, and 3) research-based interest convergence. In regard to how the program acted anti-racist/anti-oppressive, the participants in this study discussed faculty and peer support. The participants also described various forms of emotional distress as their response to the structural racism in the program.

Explanation of Findings

How Does the School Psychology Program and Their Faculty Maintain Structural Racism in Their Program?

The results of this study support the findings of previous scholars who have found institutions of higher education to maintain racism through systemic barriers (Amiot, Mayer-Glenn, & Parker, 2020; Clark, Mercer, Hill & Dufrene, 2012; Grapin & Pereiras, 2019; Norcross, Kohout, & Wicherski, 2005). For example, past scholars have found that racially minoritized students experience microaggressions from university faculty and peers in higher

education, including school psychology programs (Clark, Mercer, Hill & Dufrene, 2012; Proctor & Truscott, 2012). Accordingly, the participants in this study reported microaggressions as the most experienced form of racism. Participants reported verbal and non-verbal forms of microaggressions, including comments on their hair and facial expressions from White faculty and students. Participants also reported negative thoughts about themselves and their standing within the program due to the microaggressions they experienced. This is in line with multiple studies in which racially minoritized students were at an increased risk for stress and negative emotions due to experiencing racial microaggressions (Graham et al., 2015; Miller & Orsillo, 2020; Proctor, Kyle, Fefer, & Lau, 2017; Torres, Driscoll, & Burrow, 2010). For example, Participants two and six discussed feelings of self-doubt based on microaggressions from the school psychology faculty. Participant five stated they felt they were looked at as "ghetto" based on the microaggressions they experienced from White faculty and students.

CRT emerged as a critique of liberalism in the 1970s (Simba, 2019). Liberalism is still alive and well today. Suitably, the participants in this study identified multiple critiques of liberalism as ways in which the program maintains structural racism. Incremental change, meritocracy and political correctness were the most common liberal ideals that contributed to the oppression of racially minoritized students. These findings further support CRT theorists who have found liberalism to be a way to support and protect the interest of those in power (Bartlett & Brayboy, 2005; DeCuir & Dixson, 2004; Solorzano & Yosso, 2001; Taylor, 1998). For example, participants noted meritocracy was used in diversity awards and fellowship funding. These awards were "earned" by racially minoritized students, but deprived them of equal pay, health insurance and opportunities to earn other awards. Thus, meritocracy allowed the program to look diverse and inclusive while continuing to oppress racially minoritized students.

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Interest convergence was most mentioned regarding student and faculty research. Faculty supported specific diverse topics when it benefitted their person research agendas, but often failed to integrate multicultural and social justice topics in their coursework and overall approach to students. This is in line with past literature in which CRT theorists have found White people to only be interested in diversity when it benefits them (Bell, 1980; Milner, 2015). Participants discussed how their personal diverse research interests often were unsupported when their topics did not align with or benefit their professors. For example, Participants three and six noted that faculty members refused to support them in their research on diverse populations, which ultimately led them both to graduate late. This finding further supports CRT in which those in power will seek opportunities that benefit them at the detriment of people of color (DeCuir & Dixson, 2004; Solorzano & Yosso, 2001).

How Does this Program and Their Faculty Act Antiracist/Anti Oppressive in Their Responses to Structural Racism?

Consistent with past studies, the participants in this program benefited from mentorship, faculty, and peer support. Past studies found that students with access to mentors reported high academic achievement, retention, and program completion in higher education (Campbell & Campbell,1997; Dixon-Reeves, 2003; Holland et al., 2012). Accordingly, several participants reported mentorship from faculty members as a facilitator of their success in navigating the program. Participants two, six, seven and eight described White faculty members who they felt offered them support and mentorship in their personal and academic lives. Mentorship in higher education promotes resiliency and provides students with coping skills to navigate academia (Mondisa & McComb 2015; Summers & Hrabowski 2006). Participants five and eight also provided several examples of Black faculty mentors who provided them words of encouragement

and coping skills. Both participants described this mentorship as an integral part of their success and retainment in the school psychology program.

Several participants described how support from their peers also provided them with the support they needed during their time in the school psychology program. Participants two, five, six, seven and eight discussed the importance of having peers of color while in graduate school. For example, Participant two did not want to think of what their program experience may have been without a colleague of color in their cohort. The participants also described White peers who went above and beyond to support them. Participant five described a White colleague who lost support from their family for supporting Black Lives Matter and continued to support the movement and racially minoritized students even after their family cut them off. Peer support is beneficial to racially minoritized students who often suffer from social isolation and feelings of loneliness in higher education (Ancis, Sedlacek, & Mohr, 2000; Bernard, Lige, Willis, Sosoo, & Neblett, 2017).

How do Structural Racism and Anti-Racist Actions Impact Racially Minoritized Students in the School Psychology Program?

In line with previous studies, the participants in this study identified facing psychosocial and emotional distress as their response to structural racism within the school psychology program (Frost et al., 2020). In higher education programs, racially minoritized students may experience increased anxiety, social isolation and/or depression (Ancis, Sedlacek, & Mohr, 2000; Bernard, Lige, Willis, Sosoo, & Neblett, 2017). Participants one and two described their experiences in the program as reinforcing stereotypes that positioned them at "aggressive" and "second-class citizens." Participants one, four and five used words like "fight" and "exhausting" to describe their emotional and psychosocial distress. Researchers have found racially

minoritized students who experience forms of systemic racism (e.g., microaggressions) have decreased sense of belonging in higher education programs (Van Ryzin, Gravely, & Roseth, 2009). Accordingly, Participant five, who experienced verbal and non-verbal microaggressions, felt they could not be themselves and had to work harder than their White peers to succeed. Consistent with the accounts of the participants, experiencing microaggressions can lead to feelings of inadequacy (Clark et al., 2012; Johnson-Bailey, Valentine, Cervero, & Bowles, 2009). This can lead racially minoritized students to feel a decreased sense of social belonging, which is determinantal to their success is graduate school (Walton, & Cohen, 2007). Thus, experiencing microaggression and the negative emotions they cause can ultimately lead racially minoritized students to drop out of graduate programs prematurely (Proctor & Truscott, 2012).

Limitations and Future Research

The findings from this study should be considered within the context their limitations. The data in the study are limited to the experiences of racially minoritized students within a single school psychology program in the Southeast region of the U.S. Given schooling experiences may vary based on regions and states, the data could be enhanced through interviewing racially minoritized students from school psychology programs throughout the U.S. to provide racially minoritized students in school psychology programs voices that produce additional narratives to inform anti-racist efforts. This school psychology program was positioned within a PWI, the data could be enhanced through interviewing racially minoritized students from an HBCU and comparing the experiences of students. Students from HBCUs may be able to share unique experiences due to the majority of racial minoritized students and faculty in their programs.

A second limitation involves the fact that the data from this study are limited to racialized experiences of the participants. Given that intersectionality exists and serves as a tenant of CRT (Capper 2015; Solórzano & Bernal 2001; McCoy & Rodricks, 2015), future research should go beyond binary thinking and explore racially minoritized students and their complexities (Ladson-Billings, 2013). Future research should examine the ways in which race intersects with class, gender, sexuality and/or ability status among other minoritized identities. Research that includes a focus on intersectionality would allow for exploration of and stories regarding the complexities of oppression faced by minoritized students.

Although interviewing is viewed as a sufficient means of qualitative data collection (Kvale, 1996), the use of focus groups, case studies and observations could offer more insight into students' experiences. Gaining the perspectives of school psychology faculty, both faculty of color and White faculty, may enhance the data as well by allowing readers to understand how faculty conceptualize their anti-racist efforts. Future research should explore varying means of data collections and integrate the perspectives of faculty.

Given the longstanding shortage of racially minoritized students and practitioners within the field of school psychology (Curtis, Castillo & Gelley, 2012; NASP, 2017; Walcott & Hyson 2018), future research should focus on ways to recruit and retain racially minoritized students. NASP and other school psychology scholars have published research and recommendations on this topic, yet the shortage remains (Barrett, Harper, Hudson, & Malone, 2020; Bidell, et al., 2007; Bidell, et al., 2006; Chandler, 2010; NASP, 2016; Newell et al., 2010). Researchers should utilize a critical approach to understanding the systemic inequities that maintain the shortages of racially minoritized school psychologists.

Implications for Practice

For the selected school psychology program, structural racism was maintained through how the faculty and White students treated racially minoritized students to maintain the status quo. Several participants in this study discussed experiencing microaggression from the school psychology program. Past studies, as well as the participants in this study, have reported experiencing microaggressions as a source of emotional distress for graduate students (Graham et al., 2015; Miller & Orsillo, 2020; Proctor, Kyle, Fefer, & Lau, 2017; Torres, Driscoll, & Burrow, 2010). To decrease these instances, school psychology faculty members and students should review literature on racial microaggressions to better understand the negative effects microaggressions have on racially minoritized students (Proctor et al., 2015). School psychology faculty members can include readings and resources on racial microaggressions in their courses (Proctor et al., 2016; 2018). The inclusion of these readings and resources can educate faculty and White students on microaggressions and their detrimental effects on racially minoritized students. This learning can also lead to open discussions about microaggressions, and behavior change to decrease them. School psychology faculty members and students can also use resources, such as the Implicit Association Test (IAT; https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/selectatest.html) to identify their racial and ethnic biases that may lead to microaggression against racially minoritized students (Proctor et al., 2016). For example, several participants discussed microaggressions in the forms of comments about their hair, which were perceived as negative attention. Participant five noted that comments from faculty made them feel they were perceived as "ghetto". School psychology faculty members and students should limit the comments made about the physical appearance of racially minoritized students and consider the racial biases these comments may imply. School psychology faculty

and students can utilize their knowledge of their own biases to modify how they speak with and interact with racially minoritized students. School psychology faculty can also work to create spaces for open discussions on the intersections of physical appearance, "professionalism" and racially minoritized students. These discussions may lead to inclusive changes (e.g., inclusion of all hairstyles) in dress code policies around professionalism within school psychology programs.

Several participants also experienced the unfavorable effects of incremental change and interest convergence as people of color. These concepts serve White people and often leave people of color at a disadvantage (Solorzano & Yosso, 2001). For example, Participants five discussed "seasonal" changes that occurred during the reemergence of the Black Lives Matter movement. Other participants also stated they did not see salient changes within the program until the murder of George Floyd. These changes gave racially minoritized students hope for change, but they were left without support once the semester began. School psychology programs and faculty should work to actively support racially minoritized students beyond times when racial injustice is omnipresent within the media. This can be accomplished through establishing student-led committees focused on diversity issues in which racially minoritized students are given a voice to discuss issues and recommend changes. School psychology faculty should work with their students to find ways to incorporate student recommended changes into their programs. For example, school psychology programs should incorporate student liaisons who act as the voice for student concerns within faculty leadership meetings. School psychology faculty also can join diversity committees within their universities to support and advocate for racially minoritized students at the university level. Leon and Williams (2016) suggest diversity committees include a definition of diversity, committee roles and responsibilities, strategy focused tasks, implementation focused tasks, committee scope, membership and permanence of

the group. Participating in a diversity committee can help faculty members to have a continued focus on diversity through the committee's initiatives. Diversity committees and student liaisons ensure that topics around diversity are regularly addressed by faculty.

Participants three and six expected the faculty to be more open to diverse research topics and were delayed in their program completion because White faculty members refused to support diverse research outside of their typical research interest. School psychology faculty members should find ways to support students in researching marginalized populations, such as working with them to find relevant literature on their topics of interest. When school psychology faculty members lack knowledge on specific research topics, faculty members should consider connecting their students to other faculty members within their universities or through other professional networks. School psychology faculty should also consider the ways in which research focused on marginalized groups can positively affect the field of school psychology by adding to the literature base on marginalized populations. For example, Participant six discussed the importance of researching the LGBTQ+ community to address the "whole child" when working with LGBTQ+ students in schools. Participant six noted they saw first-hand that the lack of research on this community was detrimental to the students they worked with in the schools. Faculty members also should provide students with resources (e.g., articles, other school psychology faculty) that will assist them in their research endeavors. School psychology programs should recruit and hire faculty members who conduct research with diverse populations and are open to expanding their research agendas (Muñoz-Dunbar & Stanton 1999; Ponterotto et al. 1995).

Participant three, noted the lack of support for their diverse research which ultimately delayed their dissertation completion and overall graduation. Participant three also noted their

disappointment when the school psychology program was "not as woke as it appeared to be" with research. School psychology faculty members should also ensure that their research statements on diversity are in line with the research on marginalized groups that is offered in the program. When these do not align, school psychology faculty should be opened to expanding their research agendas to include more research topics to promote and include diversity in research. Participant three described an experience where a faculty member was unwilling to support their diverse research topic and ultimately refused to work with them. Participant three believed this was a result of the faculty member's biases towards research with specific minoritized populations. School psychology faculty who are hesitant to support students with research focused on minoritized populations should consider what barriers and biases impact their resistance and develop strategies to overcome these biases and barriers. School psychology faculty can work with other faculty members and attend professional development trainings to assist them in this process (Miranda, 2002).

It is important to ensure that school psychology programs do not further the oppression of racially minoritized students in other ways as well. For example, Participant four described the ways in which funding for racially minoritized students is inequitable. Some University fellowships, particularly those specifically for racially minoritized students, pay students less money than assistantships and do not include health insurance. This inequity furthers the oppressive narrative for racially minoritized students, who often make less money, have more debt, and have worse health outcomes, than their White counterparts (Baker, 2019; Groulx, 2018; Jankov, & Caref, 2017). School psychology programs should strive to ensure that racially minoritized students are funded equally with White students and are connected to financial resources to help them succeed. This is crucial given the racial wealth gap between White people

and people from minoritized backgrounds that has continued to increase overtime (McKernan, Quakenbush, Ratcliffe, Kalish, & Steuerle, 2017). In order to assist in dismantling the racial wealth gap, school psychology programs should also consider racial wealth discrepancies when funding students.

In terms of practices that could promote success, several participants discussed support from faculty and peers as a crucial part of their success in the program. For example, participants three, five, seven and eight stated they would not have been able to get through the program without another student of color in their cohort. To ensure that racially minoritized students have support from other racially minoritized students, school psychology programs should work to recruit multiple racially minoritized students per cohort. This practice is supported by calls from NASP to recruit racially minoritized students to have more diverse practitioners in the field (NASP, 2010a; 2016; 2017). Participants five and eight talked in detail about the support they received from their faculty members of color as well. To ensure that racially minoritized students have this support from faculty, school psychology programs should work to hire faculty from racially minoritized backgrounds. This is in line with research recommendations and calls from NASP to recruit more racially minoritized faculty (NASP, 2010a; 2016; 2017). Participants also discussed the importance of the support they received from their White peers and White faculty members. School psychology programs and White school psychology graduate students should work to educate themselves on ways to serve as allies to racially minoritized students to create safer learning environments for all students (Gusa, 2010; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005).

Conclusions

This study aimed to critique the racial status quo of a school psychology graduate training program by gaining the perspectives of former and current school psychology racially

minoritized students from the program. The selected school psychology program maintained structural racism through three major themes: 1) the permanence of racism/ maintaining racist hierarchical structures, 2) liberal ideologies that maintain inequities, and 3) research-based interest convergence. The participants in this study described various forms of emotional distress as their response to the structural racism they experienced. In contrast, the program acted anti-racist/anti-oppressive, through faculty and peer support.

Future research is needed to explore the experiences of minoritized school psychology students beyond racial identity. More research is needed to examine the perspectives of minoritized school psychology students and school psychology faculty from a critical perspective. Additionally, research efforts should be employed towards using various qualitative methods (e.g., case studies, focus groups, mixed methods, etc.) to collect data on the minoritized experiences of school psychology students. In the meantime, there is clearly a need for school psychology programs to change their behavior towards racially minoritized students.

School psychology programs should move away from the racial status quo of higher education and move towards anti-racism/oppressive actions. This anti-racism movement can be accomplished through self-awareness of one's biases and engaging in anti-oppressive literature to decrease instances of subtle forms of racism such as microaggressions (Proctor et al., 2016; 2018). School psychology programs should work to make changes for racially minoritized students through supporting them with research focused on marginalized groups and providing them with financial resources. School psychology programs should strive to recruit faculty and racially minoritized students and encourage White students and faculty to be allies to racially minoritized students. School psychology programs should move beyond considering the

recommendations from this study and act on them to recognize the anti-racist statements released

by several school psychology programs following the murder or George Floyd.

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APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Former Students

The purpose of this study is to critique the racial status quo of your school psychology program by gaining the perspectives of former and current school psychology racially minoritized students. You were recruited for this study because you are a person of color who graduated from the program. Are you comfortable sharing, in as little or as much detail as you'd like, your experiences in relation to race while a graduate student at this institution?

1. Why did you decide to pursue a career in school psychology?
    a. Did your status as a racial minority influence this decision?

2. Why did you select this institution?

3. What, in your opinion, what were any barriers you faced in completing the program in [3 or 5] years from:

    a. Faculty
    b. Program/University requirements
    c. Colleagues
    d. Practicum/Internship
    e. Personal factors (e.g., family)
    f. Society
    g. N/A

prompt for race-related if not mentioned

4. What, in your opinion, were any barriers you faced that affected your social/emotional well-being?

prompt for race-related if not mentioned

5. Can you give me an example of a time when you experienced any instances of microaggressions or other subtle forms of racism? Overt racism?

6. In what ways did the program faculty facilitate your success?

    a. Probe: Were there any specific faculty members who helped you? If so, what did they do that was Helpful?

7. In what ways did your colleagues facilitate your success?
    a. Probe: Were there any specific colleagues who helped you? What did they do that was helpful?

8. In what ways did your university facilitate your success?
   a. Probe: Were there any specific resources that helped you?

Current Students

The purpose of this study is to critique the racial status quo of your school psychology program by gaining the perspectives of former and current school psychology racially minoritized students. You were recruited for this study because you are a person of color who is currently a student in the program. Are you comfortable sharing, in as little or as much detail as you'd like, your experiences in relation to race while a graduate student at this institution?

1.   Why did you decide to pursue a career in school psychology?
   a. Did your status as a racial minority influence this decision?

2.   Why did you select this institution?

3.   What, in your opinion, what were any barriers you have faced in completing the program in [3 or 5] years from:
   a. Faculty
   b. Program/University requirements
   c. Colleagues
   d. Practicum/Internship
   e. Personal factors (e.g., family)
   f. Society
   g. N/A
   prompt for race-related if not mentioned

4.   What, in your opinion, what were any barriers you faced that have affected your social/emotional well-being?
   prompt for race-related if not mentioned

5.   Can you give me an example of a time when you experienced any instances of microaggressions or other subtle forms of racism? Overt racism?

6.   In what ways did the program faculty facilitate your success?
   a. Probe: Were there any specific faculty members who helped you? If so, what did they do that was Helpful?

7.   In what ways did your colleagues facilitate your success?
   a. Probe: Were there any specific colleagues who helped you? What did they do that was helpful?

8.   In what ways did your university facilitate your success?
   a. Probe: Were there any specific resources that helped you?

APPENDIX B: CODEBOOK

The Permanence of Racism
1. Racist hierarchical structures

a. System of Power	- Social, political, and economic systems that contribute to disparities - Societal Norms - Top-down control
b. White Privilege	- Unearned advantages based on race - Alternative explanation for disparities (ex: SES, not race) - Disidentification with whiteness
c. History of racism	- Eurocentric telling of U.S. History - Civil rights movement
d. Subtleness of racism	- The belief that racism has been fixed, only exists when explicit - Othering of people of color - Generalizations of the "other" group - Stereotype threat - Deculturalization - Assimilation - Microaggressions

Interest Convergence Theory

a. Interest Convergence	"Alignment, not altruism" - The interest of people of color of achieving racial equality only advances when these interests "converge" with those of the people in power

Experiential Knowledge & Counter-Storytelling

a. Experiential Knowledge	- People of color's lived experiences - Daily experiences with racism - Storytelling - Family histories
b. Counterstories	Stories that counter master narratives of majoritarian story

Intersectionality
    1.   Intersects with other subordinated identities: gender, class, religion, ability/disability, sexual orientation, etc.

a. People of color's lived experience	Based on not only one's racial identity but also their class position, gender, etc.
b. U.S. society organized along binaries	Intersectionality is more complex than binaries, individuals represent multiple identities

"Whiteness as Property"

a. Valuable assets White people seek to protect	- Assumptions - Privileges - benefits

b. Property	- Possession - Use transfer - Disposition - And exclusion - Ex: Higher education admissions policies

Critique of Liberalism
    1.   Critique of race-neutral dominant ideologies

a. Critique of race-neutral dominant ideologies (ex. Colorblindness, meritocracy, objectivity, race neutrality, equal opportunity, incremental change, etc.)	- Acknowledgement that these ideologies ignore inequity, inopportunity, and oppression - Acknowledgement that these ideologies align with White self-interest - Acknowledgment that these ideologies have contributed to deficit thinking about people of color - Political correctness - Incremental change

Commitment to Social Justice
    1.   Commitment to a just U.S. society and education system

a. Overall goal: eradication of all forms of subordination in society	- Understanding racism's role in society and working towards elimination of said oppression - Recognizing other forms of oppression (discrimination based on gender, class, sexual orientation, and religious affiliation) and actively resisting all forms of inequality. - Vision of society in which the distribution of resources is equitable for all
b. Actively challenge racism	- Stand up to injustices - Openly confront racism

c. Empowerment of oppressed and Marginalized groups	● celebrate/affirm diverse cultures
d. Racial consciousness	● Cultural sensitivity ● Understanding of own identity & biases

Barriers to success

a. Emotional Distress	● Microaggressions ● Overt Racism ● Reinforces negative stereotypes ● Fighting to be equal ● Us vs. Them ● Self-doubt
b. Lack of support	● Faculty ● Colleagues ● University/Program policies
c. Financial Barriers	● Tuition ● Availability of assistantships
d. Academic Achievement	● Grades ● Program expectations

Facilitators of success

a. Faculty Support/Mentorship	● Supporting research ● Linking students to research ● Listening to student concerns ● Expressing empathy and support
b. Peer/Colleague Support	● Same race peers ● Support from white peers