



The Rage of a Professional Class: Racial Battle Fatigue Experienced by Black Educators in Higher Education during the post-George Floyd Era

Sharisse Turner
Dean Emeritus, Tallahassee State College

Macklin Gipson
Mississippi Valley State University

Abstract

The murder of George Floyd in 2020 caused the country to do some introspection regarding matters of race and justice. Higher education institutions responded by issuing statements of support for equity and diversity. Nonetheless, two years later, states such as Florida and Texas began implementing anti-diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) legislation. Therefore, this phenomenological study explored the experiences of Black professionals in higher education who have navigated through a polarizing period of racial backlash (Beatty et al., 2020; Briscoe, 2021; Flaherty, 2020; Knox, 2023). Using the conceptual framework of racial battle fatigue (Smith, 2004), the study examined the psychological, physiological, and behavioral responses to the chronic microaggressions experienced by Black educators at predominantly White institutions in higher education post the George Floyd era of racial awakening and enlightenment. The findings reveal the coping strategies Black educators have used to mitigate their racial trauma. Moreover, the findings identify strategies that predominantly White higher education institutions can employ to support racially minoritized educators on their campuses who experience racial battle fatigue.

Keywords: Black educators, higher education, racial battle fatigue, microaggressions, racial realism, George Floyd, diversity, equity, inclusion

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Introduction and Overview

In 2020, the United States was roiled by two major events that became inflection points in its history. One of those events was the global COVID-19 (Coronavirus Disease 2019) pandemic, which resulted in thousands of deaths and a complete shutdown of the country (Jones, 2022). The other was the murder of George Floyd, a Black man who was illegally restrained by a rogue police officer (Lane et al., 2020). Shouts of “Black Lives Matter” rang throughout the country, and non-Black citizens, horrified by the video of Floyd’s gruesome death, joined in protesting the visible injustices in policing (Ghandoosh & Berry, 2023; Hinton et al., 2018). Higher education institutions responded quickly by issuing statements supporting equity and diversity (Martin, 2022b). Some colleges and universities even created programs and positions to foster diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts (Knox, 2023).

Nonetheless, two years later, a manifestation of racial realism (Bell, 1992; Martin, 2022a) took place in the form of backlash from states such as Florida and Texas that introduced legislation to staunch diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) efforts. Therefore, using racial battle fatigue (RBF) as a conceptual framework (Smith, 2004), this qualitative study employed the phenomenological research design (Creswell & Poth, 2018) to explore the experiences of Black professionals at predominantly White institutions in higher education who are navigating through a period of racial backlash and anti-DEI legislation (Stripling, 2023). The study included a survey and semi-structured interviews with Black educators across the country. There were two primary research questions:

1. How do Black higher education professionals cope with racial battle fatigue during the post-George Floyd era?
2. How can predominantly White institutions support Black higher education professionals who are experiencing racial battle fatigue during a polarizing political period?

The goals of the study were threefold: (1) to identify the psychological, physiological, and behavioral responses to the racial battle fatigue of Black educators who are experiencing a conservative backlash to the 2020 period of racial awakening, (2) to identify the self-preservation skills of Black educators who are experiencing pressure from anti-DEI legislation and college policies, and (3) to identify what institutions can do to retain and support Black educators during a polarizing political period (Acuff, 2018; Asare, 2022; Beatty et al., 2020; Briscoe, 2021; Connor, 2023; Flaherty, 2021; Knox, 2023; Levy, 2023; Lofstrom et al., 2021; Martin, 2022b; Richard-Craven, 2024).

Literature Review

There is much research regarding the impact of microaggressions and racial battle fatigue experienced by Black students at predominantly White institutions and historically White institutions (Casanova et al., 2018; Foster, 2005; Nadal et al., 2014; Salami et al., 2021; Smith et al., 2016; Solorzano et al., 2000; Sue et al., 2008; Torres-Harding et al., 2012; Turner, 2022). For example, in a mixed methods study using the microaggression theoretical framework, Casanova et al. (2018) examined microaggressions Black students encountered at three community colleges in the Northeast region of the United States. One of the key findings showed that most of the perpetrators of microaggressive encounters were faculty. Salami et al. (2021) employed a

quantitative analysis of the correlation between microaggressions faced by Black students and their views on campus climate and future employment. Per the results, Salami et al. (2021) contend that “having a campus that feels welcoming and safe allows Black students to attribute an experienced microaggression to the perpetrator and not as representative of their campus environment” (p. 251). Most of the research has analyzed the link between microaggressions and academic performance as national data show that Black students often have the highest failure rates, lowest retention rates, and lowest graduation rates compared to other ethnic groups at both two-year and four-year institutions (Espinosa et al., 2019; McClain et al., 2017; Turner, 2022).

While the research on the psychosocial impact of microaggressions and racial battle fatigue experienced by Black students is plentiful, studies examining the emotional and professional well-being of Black educators who also experience RBF are sparse. Black professionals struggle in higher education, especially on predominantly White campuses, to navigate through hegemonic systems, racial microaggressions, and legislative policies that impact the performance of their jobs (Acuff, 2018; Beatty et al., 2020; Briscoe, 2022; Chancellor, 2019; Connor, 2023; Martin, 2022b; Smith, 2004; Smith et al., 2006; Turner, 2022). Using the multi-contextual model for diverse learning environments, Briscoe (2022) examined the campus racial climate at a predominantly White institution. With a focus on the experiences of student affairs professionals, the findings indicated that professionals of color struggled to manage encounters with systemic racism, RBF, and microaggressions. Within the RBF conceptual framework, Chancellor (2019) examined the racial battle fatigue experienced by Black women faculty in library and information science (LIS) at predominately White institutions. The study revealed that compared to their White counterparts, Black women experienced organizational barriers, unwelcoming institutional climates, open disrespect, and inaccessible career support.

Racial Battle Fatigue and Microaggressions

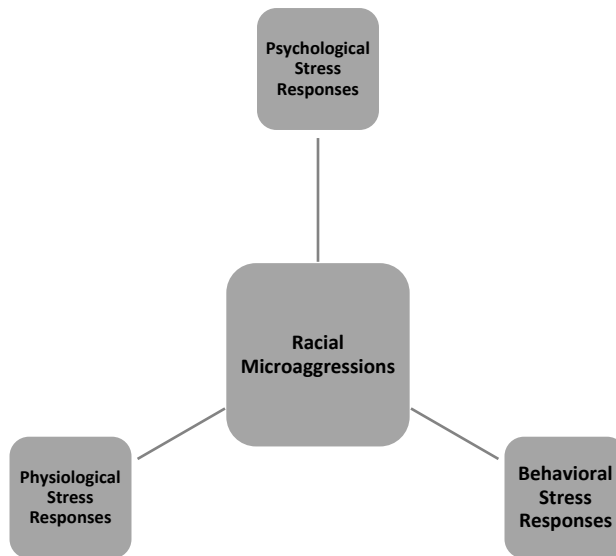
Racial battle fatigue occurs when racially marginalized groups are repeatedly exposed to microaggressions (Acuff, 2018; Smith, 2004). Bell (2008) asserts that “as a result of chronic microaggressions, many people of color perceive the campus environment as extremely stressful, exhausting and diminishing to their sense of control” (p. 616). Racial microaggressions include racial slights, recurrent indignities, unfair treatment, stigmatization, hyper-surveillance, and personal threats. Microaggressions can manifest as microassaults, microinsults, and microinvalidations (Sue et al., 2008). Microassaults are overt forms of racial animus that may occur physically or verbally. For example, a victim of a microassault may have been physically or verbally assaulted because of his or her race or gender. Microinsults are more subtle forms of racism that may occur when the perpetrator makes casual, yet disparaging, race-based remarks. For instance, a Black person may be told that he or she speaks well, or a Black female may be told that she looks pretty “for a Black girl.” Most times the perpetrators of microinsults do not realize that their remarks are culturally insensitive (Sue et al., 2008). Lastly, microinvalidations are words and actions that nullify people’s cultural identity and experience. Most recently, the governor of Florida, Ron DeSantis, stated that one of the benefits of slavery was that it provided Black people with workforce training and skills (Sullivan & Rozsa, 2023). His culturally invalidating remarks completely ignored the brutal, oppressive history of chattel slavery for African Americans and were soundly rebuked by members of the Black community, the media, and politicians on both sides of the political aisle (Blake, 2023; Brackell, 2023; Gittelsohn et al.,

2023, Gomez et al., 2023; Harriott, 2023; Luna, 2023; Myers, 2023; Smalls, 2023; Solochek, 2023).

Repeated exposure to one or more of the three forms of microaggressions causes racial battle fatigue. The RBF framework (Smith, 2004) categorizes the stress responses of people of color in three ways: psychological, physiological, and behavioral (see Figure 1). Psychological stress responses include frustration, defensiveness, apathy, irritability, shock, disappointment, helplessness, hopelessness, and fear (Smith, 2004). Physiological stress responses include headaches, grinding teeth, chest pain, high blood pressure, indigestion, gastric distress, constipation or diarrhea, increased perspiration, hives, rashes, fatigue, insomnia, and frequent illness (Smith, 2004). Behavioral stress responses involve high effort coping with difficult psychological stressors, increased commitment to spirituality, overeating or loss of appetite, impatience, quickness to argue, anger, procrastination, increased use of alcohol or drugs, increased smoking, withdrawal or isolation from others, neglect of responsibility, poor job performance, and changes in close family relationships (Smith, 2004).

Figure 1

Racial Battle Fatigue (RBF) Framework (Smith, 2004)



Racial Realism

Racial realism refers to the peaks of racial progress usually followed by racial backlash from the dominant culture (Bell, 1992; Martin, 2022a). Bell (1992) calls the periods of racial awakening temporary, and he further posits that “even those herculean efforts we hail as successful will produce no more than temporary ‘peaks of progress,’ short-lived victories that slide into irrelevance as racial patterns adapt in ways that maintain White dominance” (p. 373). A prime example of racial realism is 2020. Glued to the television and social media because of the national COVID-19 quarantine, citizens in the United States were captive audiences to the

racially charged events that unfolded as the video of George Floyd played repeatedly on news outlets and social media (Blake, 2020). The outrage that ensued resulted in an awareness of what Black citizens had been dealing with for decades – unlawful policing that disproportionately affected Black communities (Ghandoosh & Berry, 2023; Hinton et al., 2018; Januta et al., 2020; Lofstrom et al., 2021). The Black Lives Matter (BLM) protests heightened, and non-Black citizens took notice and embarked on a period of racial awareness and enlightenment in which they participated in activities that fostered racial reconciliation (Lane et al., 2020).

Nonetheless, by 2022, some states countered the activism of the BLM movement by rolling back diversity, equity, and inclusion practices, policies, and programs based upon misconceptions of critical race theory (Martin, 2022a). According to Martinez-Alvaredo and Perez (2023), “In 2023 more than 45 bills were introduced across state legislatures targeting diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts in higher education” (para. 1). Oklahoma’s governor, Kevin Stitt, closed out 2023 by signing an executive order in December to eliminate DEI initiatives and offices from all state agencies, colleges, and universities (Jackson, 2023). Nonetheless, Florida led the way in anti-DEI legislation with two bills, HB 999 and HB 931, passed in 2022 and 2023 known as the “Stop WOKE Act” (Diaz, 2023; Irwin, 2023). During his second inauguration as governor in January 2023, Ron DeSantis proclaimed that “Florida is where woke goes to die” (Dixon & Fineout, 2023, para. 14). To comply with Florida’s anti-DEI legislation, in the middle of an academic year, the University of Florida shut down its DEI office, eliminated all DEI positions, and halted all DEI-related vendor contracts (Turbeville, 2024).

Not only was there widespread divestment in DEI programs and initiatives post the 2020 George Floyd era of racial awakening, but in some states, policies were also enacted to remove or alter the teaching of African-American history. For example, the education department in Arkansas removed AP African American studies from its high school credit-bearing offerings (Najarro, 2023). Alleging that the AP African-American studies curriculum used critical race theory to indoctrinate students, Florida’s governor claimed that it lacked educational value (Meckler, 2023). Subsequently, until the curriculum was modified, Florida suspended the AP African-American curriculum from its public high schools.

By the end of 2023, much of the racial awakening and progress that began in earnest in 2020 because of George Floyd’s death evaporated in a swath of ideological demagoguery and demonization. Martin (2022b) concludes that “there was a perception that perhaps American social institutions, including education, had turned a corner concerning racial relations in America after the horrific killing of George Floyd” (p. 1). Instead, the dominant culture prevailed by renegeing on its commitment to social justice and racial reconciliation.

Methods

After receiving Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval from Christian Brothers University, the study proceeded with convenience sampling (Creswell & Poth, 2018) to recruit participants for the study and targeted Black higher education professionals at predominantly White institutions in the following states: Florida, Tennessee, Texas, North Carolina, and North Dakota. These five states implemented rigid anti-diversity and anti-equity legislation within the last two years (Martinez-Alvarado & Perez, 2023). For example, in the 2023 legislative session, Florida lawmakers passed bills signed by the governor that banned diversity and equity offices

and programs and prohibited colleges from issuing diversity and equity statements (Diaz, 2023; Irwin, 2023).

The researchers engaged study participants by employing survey instruments to gather responses and to identify interview participants (see Table 1). The study began with the distribution of a flyer using word of mouth and social media platforms, such as Facebook and LinkedIn, with research information and a QR code to an online questionnaire that required potential participants to respond to basic demographic information to determine eligibility for the study. Once eligibility was established, to capture candid responses and minimize the risk of participation in a study on a politically charged topic, the researchers deployed an anonymous online Qualtrics survey broadly to Black educators at higher education institutions. The highest number of participants were from Florida and Texas (see Appendix D). To identify interview participants, the researchers selected ten Black educators from predominantly White or historically White institutions who indicated on the Qualtrics survey that they were willing to participate in an on-camera Zoom interview for more in-depth discussion about their experiences with racial battle fatigue. Before each online interview, the researchers provided a summary of the research proposal and an assurance of anonymity. To incentivize participation, researchers offered each participant a \$20 virtual Amazon gift card upon the interview's conclusion.

Table 1

Data Collection Instruments

Instruments	Participants	<i>n</i>
Qualifying Questionnaire	Educators in Higher Education	206
Qualtrics Survey	Faculty	67
	Staff	43
	Administrators	24
Interviews	Faculty	2
	Staff	7
	Administrators	1

Research Design

According to Creswell and Poth (2018), the phenomenological research design is applied to describe a common lived experience. Since the researchers used the death of George Floyd in 2020 as a contextual springboard for the study, the phenomenological design appropriately accommodated research activities such as the Qualtrics survey, the Zoom interview questions, data collection, and data analysis.

Data Collection and Analysis

The data collection consisted of results from the anonymous Qualtrics survey as well as notes, audio recordings, and transcripts from interviews with selected Black faculty, staff, and administrators. From the 22-item survey, the researchers received descriptive data on the perceptions of participants on their experiences with microaggressions and racial battle fatigue.

Data analysis entailed memoing and open coding to ascertain major themes (Bergin, 2018; Creswell & Poth, 2018) related to the research questions and the RBF conceptual framework (see Table 1). Moreover, the researchers utilized peer debriefing by identifying two educators in higher education who were not study participants to offer candid critiques of the study (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Findings

Upon review of the data collected from the Qualtrics survey and the Zoom interviews, four major themes emerged: (1) the impact of George Floyd’s death, (2) the toll of microaggressions and racial battle fatigue, (3) the impact of dismantling DEI initiatives and programs post-George Floyd, and (4) the coping strategies to survive racial battle fatigue (see Table 2).

Table 2

Frequency of Major Themes

Major Themes	Frequency, <i>n</i> (%)
The Impact of George Floyd’s Death	103 (67.32)
The Toll of Microaggressions and Racial Battle Fatigue	101 (66.01)
The Impact of Dismantling DEI Initiatives and Programs Post-George Floyd	100 (65.36)
Coping Strategies to Survive Racial Battle Fatigue	100 (65.36)

The Impact of George Floyd’s Death

Many of the research participants expressed anguish, compounded by the nationwide COVID-19 quarantine, over the death of George Floyd in 2020 (Asare, 2023). Floyd’s death was on the heels of the traumatic deaths of Trayvon Martin in 2012, Mike Brown in 2014, Sandra Bland in 2015, Philando Castille in 2016, and Atatiana Jefferson in 2019 (Lane et al., 2020). One of the interview participants, Mr. Herring, director of student programs at a university in Tennessee, said, “As a Black male, it was personally hurtful, but not surprising. What happened to George Floyd happens way too frequently.” Mr. Jones, another participant from Tennessee, expressed fear and said that he was worried about his friends and family because what happened to George Floyd could happen to anyone. Dr. Perry, director of a student affairs program in Texas, spoke with great passion about how Floyd’s death impacted her personally and professionally:

Personally, I was devastated. I am married to a Black man. I have Black nieces and nephews. I think it’s one thing to see different clips and you see the aftermath of something, but we literally saw a man take his last breath. And I think that unlike

Trayvon Martin or Sandra Bland, it was raw, uncut, and in your face. And to watch other so-called police officers, civil servants to protect and serve, just stand idly by was devastating. It literally felt like I was watching, not just death in front of me that I have never experienced before, but the lack of humanity. It was like humanity disappeared in that moment. Professionally, I was angry.

Dr. Brown, a retired academic dean from Florida, also referenced Trayvon Martin's death in 2012 in her response to the George Floyd murder:

I have not watched that whole video of that incident. I just can't bring myself to watch that entire thing. Whenever it came on TV, I would turn the channel. It was just enough for me because now I'm still reeling from the death of Trayvon Martin, and so what happened to George Floyd was on top of everything else, all the other deaths and shootings that had occurred. And so by the time this happened to him, I'm just kind of numb, honestly. And so how did it make me feel? Helpless.

Mr. Tippy, a program director in Tennessee, described how he grappled with his emotions. He spoke about the dual challenge of processing George Floyd's death while maintaining his composure at work:

I think this incident really made me speak out more about how I feel professionally and personally. When the incident took place, I tried to separate my feelings at work, but I just couldn't do it. In fact, I got to a point where I'm tired of doing this. I'm here eight hours out of the day, and how do I just act like I didn't just see a man die on national television and still be expected to do a job?

Dr. Beverly, a program director from North Carolina, also described her internal struggle with the events that unfolded in 2020. At the time, she was working at a Title I middle school in the public school system.

It was the height of COVID, so there were a lot of things. I felt very trapped. My anger, my emotions felt trapped and confined. I am forced to be isolated. I literally cannot lean into any tangible sense of community. And there's this expectation for educators, especially in urban schools, that you just have to be okay because the students have to be okay. So there's really no time to process things for the sake of yourself. I think professionally it was my first time thinking about leaving education.

While the interview participants were critical of their institutions' responses to the social justice awakening that was spreading across the country after George Floyd's death and the Black Lives Matter protests, the Qualtrics survey participants were more positive. Per the survey, 86% reported that their institutions responded in some manner to the George Floyd death, and 67% were pleased with how their institutions managed their responses. Many of them shared that their colleges and universities held seminars, focus groups, and town halls to discuss social justice issues. One participant stated, "The Black Lives Matter and George Floyd protests forced my school to re-evaluate how it serves Black students and marginalized communities." Another participant claimed that his institution "issued statements condemning racism, police brutality, and systemic injustice." Nonetheless, some survey participants cited lapses in their institutions' responses. Quite a few stated that their colleges and universities were silent and behaved as if nothing was happening. Some described institutions that may have initially issued public statements denouncing police brutality and promising to provide a platform on campus to

address racism and social injustice but never followed through with any programming. One participant recalled appreciating her institution's intentional response to George Floyd's death as her college president convened a campuswide virtual town hall to affirm the college's commitment to equity. He also created a task force to address campus race and equity issues. Nevertheless, the task force vanished after one year of meetings.

Both the interview candidates and the survey participants described the challenges their institutions faced with juggling the transition to remote operations because of the COVID-19 quarantine in 2020 and the country's racial upheaval (Lane et al., 2020). The isolation of the quarantine made it difficult to process emotions. Dr. Beverly described feelings of helplessness:

I think that especially being a classroom teacher at the time and teaching students that are on a screen, I felt helpless. And I can't hug my babies. I can't sit down and have a face-to-face conversation with them. I can't address their fear. I can't address their anxiety. I can't address their anger in a way that I feel that we have been able to tackle difficult conversations before.

Dr. Perry recalled becoming irate in a Student Affairs Zoom meeting two days after George Floyd's death. She was one of three Black staff members on the call, yet there was no acknowledgment of what transpired. Dr. Perry was so incensed that she silently seethed during the meeting:

When I logged onto the Zoom, my White colleagues and leadership were just talking about what they had for dinner the night before. Totally oblivious! And I went from zero to a thousand. I was angry. I was like, "How are y'all going to just ignore the fact that we literally saw a man die on television?" So I was angry because of the ignorance and lack of empathy or even awareness to know that any Black face on the screen was probably mourning and feeling PTSD.

Mr. George, an adjunct professor in Texas, also recalled the isolation of the COVID-19 quarantine and the way he was able to process his emotions and interact with his colleagues when he saw George Floyd's video:

Well, I think that COVID had a little bit to do with not lessening the impact but lessening the interaction of the impact of George Floyd. Meaning, had I been on campus and not isolated during COVID, there would've been more discussion. There would've been more people that had more of an opinion. Being a Black male, being a large Black male, six three, well over 200 pounds, I've always had to deal with that being a barrier with a lot of colleagues, just because the intimidation factor or what they considered an intimidation factor.

The Toll of Microaggressions and Racial Battle Fatigue Post-George Floyd

According to the Qualtrics survey, 97% personally experienced or witnessed microaggressions at their institutions, and 76% contend that incidences of microaggressions have increased since 2020. In her interview, Dr. Perry described being excluded from leadership meetings and committees because of her increasing outspokenness since 2020. She states, "I'm not a palatable Black person. There are two other Black people currently on the Student Affairs leadership team. They assimilate. I do not." Dr. Beverly painfully recalled troubling encounters

with White co-workers who feigned recognizing her because of her hairstyles or refused to pronounce her first name correctly:

I had to have a mediated conversation with a colleague who refused to spell my name correctly in an email across twelve email correspondences, would never say my name correctly. And then more recently in a meeting, did not recognize me after working together for a year and said in front of a group of people, at least 30, in a meeting, “Oh, you changed your hair, and I don’t see you that much.”

Dr. Brown shared that a White male executive leader on her campus would greet her by calling her “girl.” Because of the power dynamic, she did not challenge him, but the cultural insensitivity of his greeting made her feel uncomfortable.

Sometimes he would see me on campus, and he would look at me and smile and say, "Hey, girl." And I'm like, "Girl? I'm not one of these students out here." And it made me think about my late father. My father grew up in the Jim Crow era, and so he could not stand it when White people addressed my mother by her first name, or they used the word “gal” or “boy.” He just couldn't get that. And I'm not sure why this particular administrator would see me and the first thing out of his mouth was, "Hey, girl" because we weren't buddies like that. And I'm not sure why he thought that was cool. I'm a grown woman.

In essence, participants described recent workplace encounters where they were subjects of racially bigoted actions and remarks.

The Personal and Professional Toll of Racial Battle Fatigue

The mounting racial microaggressions detailed by the research participants contributed to psychological, physiological, and behavioral stressors. Per the Qualtrics survey, 98% reported experiencing psychological stress; 94% reported physiological stress; and 88% reported experiencing behavioral stress within the last three years (see Appendix E). Respondents listed the following psychological RBF stressors: irritability, frustration, helplessness, fear, disappointment apathy, and anxiety. The physiological RBF stressors were headaches, increased use of alcohol, rashes, fatigue, insomnia, perspiration, teeth grinding, increased smoking, high blood pressure, and gastric distress. Some of the behavioral RBF stressors survey respondents listed were outbursts of anger, isolation, neglect of responsibilities, lack of appetite, poor job performance, high-effort coping, difficulty communicating, quickness to argue, procrastination, impatience, increased commitment to spirituality, increased commitment to physical fitness, and withdrawal. In her interview, Dr. Perry explained that because of her bouts of RBF, she has undergone therapy and has taken medication:

After George Floyd’s death, I've had to see a therapist. And she's a Black female therapist. So that's what I've had to deal with for the last three years. I've had to make sure I stay connected to God and my faith through all of this because there's no way I would be sitting here talking to y'all right now if it wasn't for faith and prayer if it wasn't for my therapist and, quite frankly, the Lexapro.

Dr. Beverly described the racial trauma she faced as a first-generation undergraduate student at a predominantly White institution and how the wounds that did not heal from her college experience transferred to her professional practice.

And I think that there were underlying issues before arriving to college that were definitely exacerbated by the lack of support and community. Having people ask, "Can I touch your hair?" Treating me like a pet kind of thing. Sitting in classrooms where I had a professor that reenacted a lynching in front of the class. I had an experience where they brought in some organization to come and explore differences and asked everybody to call out stereotypes about different racial groups where I had to listen to White people laugh and joke about how Black people in the room love fried chicken and watermelon. In the days of YikYak with the anonymous Twitter, so to speak, I had to read messages about how White students on campus had guns in their room and they were going to kill all the Black people on campus. That was my undergraduate experience. So I think that that took a severe toll on me for sure because I had no context before college of how to deal with these issues. I had no context of who to reach out for support. And I was a first-generation college student, so this wasn't anything that my parents could even prepare me for necessarily. So I think I carried over trauma between my undergrad experience, my experience in K-12, and then now at work. I experience severe anxiety going into work.

Dr. Brown, who retired in 2023 after 38 years in higher education in Florida, expressed feelings of rage and exhaustion because of the current social and political landscape post the period of social justice awakening in 2020:

Well, I think racial battle fatigue is properly named because the fatigue is real. I'm tired of this. I'm really tired of all of this. I have girls, I have daughters in their thirties, and they now have to fight the same battles that I had to fight when I was in college, to have to hear the same crap all over again. It ticks me off. It really does. I just wish that we could, as a country, move forward. And now granted in some states, they are moving forward. I'm watching other states doing some incredible work still on equity. But my state, Florida, has decided, to opt out, and I'm really sorry about that.

Therefore, participants shared examples of ways RBF affected them personally and professionally post the George-Floyd period of racial and social justice awakening.

The Dismantling of DEI initiatives and Programs post-George Floyd

A major source of fatigue cited by survey and interview participants was the rollback of support for diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) initiatives (Martinez-Alvaredo & Perez, 2017). Some of the participants said that in 2020, their institutions created diversity, equity, and inclusion programs, issued statements, and adopted policies to advance DEI efforts only for them to disappear with anti-DEI legislation. For instance, Dr. Brown, from Florida, recalled how encouraged she was when a program in her division designed to support female students of color received a financial boost in 2020 from the college's foundation and from private donors. Moreover, she was a member of a campus task force on race and equity that developed the institution's official equity statement. Nonetheless, the task force, which began in 2020 in the wake of George Floyd's death, disbanded at the end of 2021, and the equity statement disappeared because it was out of compliance with Florida's anti-DEI statutes (Irwin, 2023). When Dr. Brown retired in 2023, she was disheartened to receive the news from the college's foundation that the student program for female students of color would no longer receive operational funding. Receiving an incoherent response to her inquiries about the reasons for the defunding, she attributed both to Florida's anti-DEI bills approved in the 2022 and 2023

legislative sessions (Irwin, 2023). She spoke bitterly about the complicity of the 28 community college presidents in the state, including her own, who wrote and signed a letter in support of Florida's anti-DEI legislation (Weissman, 2023). She was particularly hurt by the betrayal of her college president whom she felt had been progressive and socially conscious in his initial response to the racial awakening in 2020.

Indeed, not only have DEI programs and initiatives been shelved in states such as Florida, Texas, Tennessee, and North Carolina, but also those who have held DEI positions have resigned, been reassigned, or have been terminated (Schweha, 2023; Turbeville, 2024). For example, the former vice-president of DEI at the University of South Florida (USF) resigned his position in 2021 after USF's president made controversial statements about George Floyd's death (Knox, 2023). Additionally, appointed to her position in 2020, after 40 years of service at her institution, the former DEI director at State College of Florida in Sarasota was terminated in 2023 (Schweha, 2023). At the time of her interview, Dr. Perry, director of a multicultural program at her Texas institution, was uncertain about the future of her position and was actively seeking other employment. Additionally, Dr. Beverly described how she was lured to her college in 2022 with the promise that she would be given the resources to implement an initiative to support female students of color, but a few months into her tenure, she was informed that the college could no longer support the program. She was subsequently redirected to other work on campus which she finds unfulfilling; therefore, she is also seeking other employment.

Coping Strategies to Survive Racial Battle Fatigue

In addition to identifying RBF stressors, some of the participants shared strategies for coping with racial trauma. Most participants mentioned the importance of therapy, physical activity, mindfulness and spirituality practices, and peer and family support. For example, one of the survey participants stated she was currently in therapy specifically for RBF but has also found an outlet in affinity groups that enable her to connect with other Black professionals and organizations. Another described the importance of getting rest and practicing mindfulness. Several mentioned physical activities such as walking and working out at gyms. Additionally, participants highlighted the importance of prayer and meditation. Some, though, revealed that they coped by relying on substances such as alcohol and marijuana. According to Dr. George, possessing a positive mindset is key to surviving polarizing racial times:

I think it's like anything else. Your resolve as a person has to be at a strength level where it's internal only to you. You can't depend on your spouse. You can't just depend on family to understand all the time what you experience. Sometimes you got to encourage yourself because ain't nobody else going to encourage you. Again, you got to purpose it in your heart to be a fighter because all of these things that they do to us... I'm not going to say it doesn't knock you down sometimes. It does, and people think that you're crazy that you would even say that some of these things happen. It's like, 'Man, that doesn't really happen.' Yeah, it does. It really does. Coping, you have to know that there's got to be something better on the other side.

Mr. Tippy stressed the benefits of self-efficacy and self-awareness:

Don't measure your success or accolades based off what somebody else is saying. As long as you know you come in and do your job every day and you do the best you can, and you are doing right by the student, that's all that matters at the end of the day. At the

end of the day, it's about the students. That's what you are here for. If you help a student succeed and your purpose is aligned with that, then you're doing a good job. So that's why I say you need to celebrate yourself. Ain't nothing wrong with having a little drink here and there. You know? I'm going to tell you. Hang out with your friends, enjoy life, travel, take the trip because at the end of the day, when it's all said and done, you want to make sure you gave this thing called life your best shot. And sitting around, being stressed out, sad and stuff based off somebody else's opinion or what somebody else is saying ain't going to work. So you've got to be comfortable in your own skin and be comfortable with who you are, because when you work in these spaces, you're going to have to deal with that, and you're going to have to be strong enough to know how to handle the microaggression and all this stuff based off how somebody else views you, and it really don't matter how they view you. It's how you view yourself.

Dr. Brown mentioned alleviating the stress of RBF by finding community, taking time off from work, seeking therapy, and re-evaluating careers:

Well, there's strength in community, so being around like-minded people, that helps, right? Leaning on one another, there's strength in that. Also, what I mentioned earlier, sometimes you just have to step back and do some self-care. Take some days off if you need to. There's no shame in going to therapy, seeking out a good therapist, taking care of your health for real though. Because as a people, we're plagued with certain things, hypertension and diabetes and that kind of thing. So make sure we're taking care of our health. Those are the things. Oh, another thing too is do what's best for you. Meaning there are some people who will say, 'don't quit.' And I've said that before, but sometimes you might be in a situation where you're just going to have to save yourself for real and find another vocation to be in or another institution to work in. So there is a time when you might need to leave to save yourself.

Moreover, several acknowledged the importance of gaining the support of White allies. Briscoe (2022) asserted that in the field of student affairs, for example, "White SAPS (student affairs professionals), especially White women, who make up the majority of the student affairs profession must be willing to call out and engage in activism to support their peers of color" (p. 569). Nevertheless, most of the Black educators interviewed for the study lamented that very few of their White colleagues genuinely understood the concept of allyship. For instance, Dr. Brown recalled receiving personal calls from several of her White colleagues once George Floyd's video was released:

This little door opened where all of a sudden, I have White colleagues calling me asking me if I was okay and saying 'I'm here to support you' because they had seen the video. There were White people reading anti-racist books and books about White privilege. I mean, they were opening themselves up to some things.

Dr. Perry recalled a similar scenario of performative gestures of sympathy from White colleagues:

You are not an ally in secret. Allyship is going to have to cost you something. Allyship is active. It's a verb. You've got to do something. And doing something means you do something when it's not convenient for you. When you are willing to put your name and your reputation on the line, when you are willing to allow it to cost you something. Allyship is not in private, it is not behind closed doors. If you're going to say that you are,

then you freaking wear that title like a badge of honor, and you go out there and you commit to it. Not some of the time, but all of the time.

Dr. Beverly shared the same position as Dr. Perry regarding the cost of allyship. From her personal and professional standpoint, she has witnessed a lot of tears and sympathy but little authentic allyship:

The word allyship is used so loosely, but I think there are White colleagues that will recognize and acknowledge when things are wrong and say that they're wrong. Do they use their White privilege and/or social mobility to do anything about it? No. So for me, that's not allyship. Anybody can acknowledge that we have a problem. In not doing something about it, you're complicit to whatever is happening. So yeah, there is acknowledgment, but no real work going on.

In addition to the support of White colleagues, Black educators emphasized the importance of institutional support, particularly at predominantly White institutions. Such support should strive to address the challenges of Black educators through campus climate, professional development, allocation of resources, partnerships, and career opportunities. Dr. Beverly described the support she felt would be helpful:

Ideally, support would look like culturally relevant and culturally sustaining professional development. It would look like seeing more people that look like me in leadership roles and more pathways for people that look like me to explore leadership roles in ways that really play to their strengths. Support would look like identity-based supervision. It would look like understanding for mental health days that need to be taken because education is a hard work no matter who is doing it, but when you are showing up to it with intersecting identities, it becomes even harder work. And just more empathy and compassion around what black women specifically need in predominantly white spaces.

Mr. Tippy also mentioned the importance of providing Black professionals the proper tools and resources to perform their jobs:

Recognize the talent that you have and give them the tools to get better at what they're doing. I think the goal for anybody who's leading the institution is to make sure the people under him are as good as them or better. And that's putting the tools in place to make sure the people get the support that they need. That means thinking as a team, which means that ego is out. That means acknowledging the fact that race does exist. And not playing games and trying to play the political game all the time.

Furthermore, Qualtrics survey respondents suggested the following institutional support for the emotional well-being of Black faculty who deal with racial battle fatigue:

- Ensure we are all treated equally.
- Create an environment that is a safe place to share and support each other.
- Hold seminars and workshops.
- Understand the difference between equality and equity.
- Hire Black executive leaders.

- Proactively address prejudices and racial aggressions experienced by students, staff, faculty, and community partners.
- Be more inclusive.
- Be consistent and update efforts to ensure meaningful progress in supporting Black educators.
- Acknowledge that we have a problem and that the work to lessen RBF should exist.

Discussion

This research was a phenomenological study of the impact of racial battle fatigue (RBF) on Black educators at predominantly White colleges and universities post the George Floyd era of racial awakening (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Using the conceptual framework of racial battle fatigue (Smith, 2004), the study examined the psychological, physiological, and behavioral stressors of chronic microaggressions. The robust qualitative data collection included results from a qualifying questionnaire, a Qualtrics survey, and face-to-face Zoom interviews as shown in Table 1. The research questions posed by the study were designed to ascertain how Black professionals cope with the stressors of RBF and how predominantly White colleges and universities can leverage resources to support Black educators on their campuses. To answer the two research questions, the researchers employed open coding in their review of survey results and interview transcripts as shown in Table 2.

The findings indicate that George Floyd's death in 2020 was the source of pain and opportunity for Black educators in higher education. Study participants expressed anguish, exacerbated by the nationwide COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, over the death of George Floyd (Lane et al., 2020; Martin, 2022b; Richard-Craven, 2024). In addition to their personal stories of how they struggled to process their emotions while still performing the duties of their jobs, some participants also shared examples of promising DEI initiatives and programs that their respective colleges and universities implemented in response to the racial awakening that followed Floyd's death. Disappointingly, many of the participants recounted the ways their institutions have capitulated on their commitments to DEI work because of anti-DEI laws from state legislatures (Martinez-Alvaredo & Perry, 2017).

Moreover, this research exposes the serious physical and mental health consequences of racial battle fatigue (Smith, 2004). Racial trauma is deadly (Comas-Diaz et al., 2019). The survey and interview participants provided candid responses to questions about their encounters with microaggressions and struggles with the psychological, physiological, and behavioral RBF stressors (see Appendix E). For example, of the 98% who reported challenges with psychological stress, frustration and disappointment were the most frequent symptoms. Headaches, chest pains, and insomnia were the most frequent symptoms of physiological stress. Isolation and anger were the most frequent symptoms of behavioral stress. In addition to describing their RBF symptoms, participants shared various coping strategies. Some mentioned therapy, physical activity, prayer, and meditation. They shared the importance of finding a supportive community on campus. They defined allyship and talked about gaining the support of White allies professionally (Briscoe, 2022).

This research adds to the literature on the racial battle fatigue experienced by Black educators in higher education (Beatty et al., 2020; Chancellor, 2019; Flaherty, 2020). While there

is much research on RBF and its impact on Black students in higher education (Casanova et al., 2018; Foster, 2005; Nadal et al., 2014; Salami et al., 2021; Smith et al., 2016; Torres-Harding et al., 2012; Turner, 2022), there is a gap in the literature regarding the impact of RBF on Black professionals at colleges and universities. Therefore, one of the purposes of the study is to add to the scholarship on this subject and inform higher education institutions, particularly predominantly White institutions, of the importance of addressing policies and practices that will support and retain Black educators (Connor, 2023; Richard-Craven, 2024; Smith et al., 2006). Institutional support of Black educators should include addressing campus climate, providing professional development opportunities, allocating proper resources, and increasing career opportunities (Briscoe, 2021; Chancellor, 2019; Connor, 2023; Flaherty, 2020).

Implications for Practice

This study suggests four major implications for practice. First, predominantly White campuses need to create spaces for Black professionals to grow and thrive. Campus climates that are conducive to success benefit students and professionals (Felten & Lambert, 2021; Turner, 2022). One way to create affirming spaces is to establish affinity groups and professional mentoring programs that engender a sense of belonging (Connor, 2023). Second, institutions must strive to be equitable in their allocation of resources. Many of the research participants described “cultural taxation” in which they were expected to perform duties beyond their job descriptions, such as mentoring students of color, without proper resources and compensation (Flaherty, 2020). Third, institutions should be intentional in supporting Black educators by including them in decision-making (Beatty et al., 2020). Representation is important; therefore, Black educators should be equitably represented on key campus committees and forums that are integral to the formation of campus policies and procedures. Fourth and final, institutions should strive to be more culturally inclusive and responsive (Beatty et al., 2020). Executive leaders should commit to developing research-based strategies to provide support for Black educators and to address the racial battle fatigue they encounter.

Limitations

One of the purposes of the study was to provide a forum for Black educators at all levels of higher education to voice their concerns. Nevertheless, the primary limitation of the study was that it did not include enough stratified voices. For example, 72% of the respondents were employed at four-year institutions, and only 27% were from two-year institutions. Additionally, while 53% of faculty and 34% of staff responded to the Qualtrics survey, only 19% of the responses came from administrators (e.g., deans, vice presidents, and presidents). Just two faculty agreed to an interview. Moreover, the researchers were stunned by the near absence of Florida educators in the interviews. While Florida and Texas had the highest number of Qualtrics survey responses, only one educator from Florida, a retired dean, was willing to be interviewed on camera.

Future Research

Future studies on racial battle fatigue should explore the intersectionality of race and gender as the researchers noted striking differences between the responses of the men and

women who were interviewed. For instance, two of the three women described struggles with their mental health because of racial battle fatigue. According to Winters (2020), for Black women “navigating the intersection of race and gender in work environments with deep-seated cultural biases is fatiguing” (p. 121). In the fall of 2023, Dr. Christine Johnson McPhail, former president of Saint Augustine University, filed an EEOC (Equal Employment Opportunity Commission) lawsuit against the institution alleging that it created a hostile work environment that discriminated against Black women (Moody, 2023). Additionally, as the study concluded, news media outlets reported that two Black female college presidents, JoAnne Epps, acting president of Temple University, and Dr. Orinthia Montague, president of Volunteer State Community College, died suddenly within one week of each other in September 2023 (Romero, 2023; Valbrun, 2023). Furthermore, Dr. Claudine Gay, former president of Harvard University, endured a tirade of racist, misogynistic vitriol before being compelled to step down in January 2024 after her disastrous appearance before the United States Congress to testify about antisemitism at Ivy League universities (Dorman, 2024). Even more recently, Dr. Antoinette “Bonnie” Candia-Bailey, vice-president of student affairs at Lincoln University in Missouri, committed suicide on January 8, 2024, due to a toxic work environment (Williams, 2024). Therefore, future studies should examine the microaggressions experienced by Black female administrators and executive leaders in higher education inclusive of predominantly White institutions and HBCUs (Historically Black Colleges and Universities).

Conclusion

Speaking before the Democratic nominating committee in 1964, Fannie Lou Hamer, a Civil Rights icon from Mississippi, famously said, “I’m sick and tired of being sick and tired” (Demuth, 1964). Black professionals in higher education post the George Floyd period of racial awakening are not okay. They are tired (Flaherty, 2020). While they are committed to serving students, they have been caught in the crosshairs of a cultural war waged from state houses and governor’s mansions. Asare (2023) asserts that “it’s a bad idea to focus so heavily on getting underrepresented groups into the workplace without giving an equal amount of attention to ensuring that these individuals actually feel safe” (p. 123). Unless colleges and universities commit to addressing the challenges Black educators face, especially at predominantly White colleges and universities, they will lose talent as Black faculty, staff, and administrators will continue to succumb to the physical, physiological, and behavioral toll of racial battle fatigue.

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Appendix A
Racial Battle Fatigue Research Qualifying Questionnaire

Questions

1. What is your age?
 - a. 18-27
 - b. 22-26
 - c. 27-36
 - d. 37-46
 - e. 47-56
 - f. 57-65
 - g. 66 - above
2. What is your race/ethnicity?
 - a. Black (non-Hispanic)
 - b. Black (Hispanic)
 - c. Multiracial
 - d. Asian
 - e. Hispanic
 - f. White
3. At what type of higher education institution are you employed?
 - a. Two-year transferrable college (offering associate degrees and/or some baccalaureate degrees)
 - b. Four-year college or university
 - c. Technical college or institute
4. Is it a public or private institution?
 - a. Public
 - b. Private
5. Is it a predominantly or historically White institution?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
6. What is your job title at your institution?
7. Check below the state where your institution is located.
 - a. Florida
 - b. Tennessee
 - c. Texas
 - d. North Carolina
 - e. North Dakota
 - f. None of the above
8. If you checked "none of the above," write the name of the state where your institution is located (or write N/A if you responded affirmatively above).
9. How many years have you been employed at your institution?
 - a. 0-5 years
 - b. 6-10 years
 - c. 11-15 years
 - d. 16-20 years
 - e. 21-25 years
 - f. 26-30 years

- g. 31 years or more
- 10. Are you retired from education?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
- 11. Is your position full-time or part-time?
 - a. Full- time
 - b. Part-time
- 12. Please explain your understanding of the racial battle fatigue (RBF) conceptual theory.
- 13. Please explain your understanding of the term *racial realism*.
- 14. This study will include a Qualtrics survey as well as on-camera individual Zoom interviews. The researchers will ensure your anonymity. Interview participants will receive a \$20 virtual Amazon gift card. Check your participant preference (s) below. Check all that apply.
 - a. I would like to take the Qualtrics survey.
 - b. I would like to participate in the Zoom interviews.
- 15. Provide your email address.

Appendix B
Qualtrics Survey Questions

Questions

1. Which state do you work in?
 - a. Florida
 - b. Tennessee
 - c. Texas
 - d. North Carolina
 - e. North Dakota
 - f. Other
 - g. What type of higher education institution do you work in?
 - h. Two-year transferrable college (offering associate degrees and/or some baccalaureate degrees)
 - i. Four-year college or university
 - j. Technical college or institute
2. My institution is (choose one)
 - a. Predominately/Historically White
 - b. Historically Black
 - c. Hispanic-Serving
 - d. Native-Serving/Tribal College or University
3. I hold the following position(s) at my institution (choose all that apply):
 - a. Faculty (full-time or part-time)
 - b. Staff (e.g., director, coordinator, etc.)
 - c. Administrator (e.g., dean, vice-president, department chair, etc.)
4. Gender
 - a. Female
 - b. Male
 - c. Non-binary
5. Age Range
 - a. 21-25
 - b. 26-35
 - c. 36-45
 - d. 46-55
 - e. 56+
6. I am aware of the most recent DEI (diversity, equity, and inclusion) legislation in my state.
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
7. In 2020, my institution responded in some manner to the death of George Floyd and to the Black Lives Matter movement.
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
8. Describe briefly how your institution responded to the death of George Floyd and to the Black Lives Matter movement.
9. I was pleased with my institution's response to the death of George Floyd and to the Black Lives Matter movement.

10. Racial microaggressions include racial slights, recurrent indignities, unfair treatment, stigmatization, hypersurveillance, contentious classrooms, and personal threats. Have you experienced or witnessed any microaggressions at your institution?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
11. If you answered yes, have the incidences of microaggressions increased since 2020?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
12. Briefly describe the most recent micro-aggressive incident that you have encountered.
13. Chronic racial microaggressions on college or university campuses can create environments that are stressful, exhausting, and diminishing.
 - a. Identify the level of stress you have experienced at your institution (Likert scale of 1-5)
 - b. Identify the level of exhaustion you have experienced at your institution (Likert scale of 1-5)
 - c. Identify the level at which you experience a diminishing sense of control, comfort, and meaning at your institution (Likert scale of 1-5).
14. Chronic racial microaggressions can also elicit feelings of loss, ambiguity, frustration, and injustice.
 - a. Identify the level of loss you have experienced at your institution (Likert scale of 1-5)
 - b. Identify the level of ambiguity you have experienced at your institution (Likert scale of 1-5)
 - c. Identify the level of frustration you have experienced at your institution (Likert scale of 1-5)
 - d. Identify the level of injustice you have experienced at your institution (Likert scale of 1-5)
15. Racial battle fatigue (RBF) as defined by Smith (2008) addresses the physiological, psychological, and behavioral strain exacted on racially marginalized and stigmatized groups.
 - a. Psychological Stress Responses: frustration, defensiveness, apathy, irritability, shock, disappointment, helplessness, hopelessness, fear. Have you experienced any of these RBF stressors?
 - i. Yes
 - ii. No
 - b. Which psychological stressor have you experienced the most within the last two years?
 - c. Physiological Stress Responses: headaches, grinding teeth, chest pain, high blood pressure, indigestion, gastric distress, constipation or diarrhea, increased perspiration, hives, rashes, fatigue, insomnia, and frequent illness. Have you experienced any of these RBF stressors?
 - i. Yes
 - ii. No
 - d. Which physiological stressor have you experienced the most within the last two years?

- e. Behavioral Stress Responses: high effort coping with difficult psychological stressors, increased commitment to spirituality, overeating or loss of appetite, impatience, quickness to argue, anger, procrastination, increased use of alcohol or drugs, increased smoking, withdrawal or isolation from others, neglect of responsibility, poor job performance, changes in close family relationships. Have you experienced any of these RBF stressors within the last two years?
 - i. Yes
 - ii. No
 - f. Which behavioral stressor have you experienced the most within the last two years?
16. List your coping methods for dealing with racial battle fatigue.
17. Do you feel like you have any White allies at your institution?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
18. Does the executive leadership on your campus provide any support for the emotional well-being of Black educators who are operating in a polarizing political period?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
19. List how your institution can support your well-being as a Black educator.
20. Consider the most recent DEI legislation in your state. Briefly explain how you feel about the legislation and how it has affected you professionally.
21. What other comments would you like to share regarding racial battle fatigue and the times we are experiencing?
22. The researchers for this project will conduct individual on-camera Zoom interviews with selected participants. Each interview participant will receive a virtual \$20 Amazon gift card. If you are willing to participate in an interview to provide deeper insight into the topic of the racial battle fatigue experienced by Black educators at higher education institutions, provide the following information:
 - a. Name
 - b. Email Address

Appendix C
Zoom Interview Questions

Questions

1. How long have you worked in the field of higher education? What state is your current institution in?
2. Are you currently a faculty, staff, or administrator? Describe your role.
3. Describe the culture of your campus.
4. Explain how the George Floyd incident impacted you personally and professionally.
5. What stance did your institution take with the George Floyd incident?
6. Did your institution develop a diversity, equity, and/or inclusion statement after the George Floyd incident?
7. Did your institution create a diversity, equity, and/or inclusion office or position after the George Floyd incident?
8. What are your thoughts on your state's most recent DEI legislation?
9. What is your opinion about the affirmative action ruling made by the Supreme Court?
10. As a Black professional, what does support look like to you at your institution?
11. Do you feel supported by your current institution during these polarizing political times? Why or why not?
12. Racial realism refers to the peaks of racial progress that are usually followed by racial backlash from the dominant culture. In essence, racial patterns adapt in ways that maintain white dominance. What are your thoughts on this term? How have you seen this demonstrated personally and/or professionally?
13. Racial battle fatigue (RBF) occurs when a person is repeatedly exposed to racial microaggressions. The negative effects of RBF can be psychological, physiological, or behavioral.
 - a. Describe any microaggressions you have encountered as a Black professional at your institution.
 - b. Describe any psychological, physiological, or behavioral responses you have experienced because of your experiences with microaggressions.
14. How do you think your encounters with RBF affect your students, particularly your Black students?
15. One of the goals of this study is to identify coping strategies for Black professionals in higher education who are experiencing RBF. What suggestions do you have for coping with RBF?
16. Would you like to provide more information about your overall experience with racial battle fatigue at your institution?

Appendix D
Qualtrics Survey Demographics

Characteristics	<i>n</i>	%
Age		
21-25	30	23
26-35	66	52
36-45	27	21
46-55	2	2
56+	3	2
Gender		
Female	41	32
Male	86	68
Employment Status		
Faculty	67	53
Staff	43	34
Administrator	24	19
Type of Institution		
Four-year	92	72
Two -year	34	27
States Represented		
Florida	40	31
Texas	40	31
Tennessee	27	21
North Carolina	16	13
North Dakota	4	3

Appendix E

Racial Battle Fatigue (RBF) Stressors Experienced by Participants

Stressors	Symptoms	<i>n</i> (%)
Psychological Stress		107 (98)
	Frustration	28 (26.16)
	Fear/Anxiety	19 (17.75)
	Disappointment	18 (16.82)
	Helplessness/Hopelessness	13 (12.14)
	Shock	10 (9.34)
	Irritability	8 (7.47)
	Defensiveness	3 (2.80)
	Apathy	3 (2.80)
Physiological Stress		103 (94)
	Headaches	24 (23.30)
	Insomnia	20 (19.41)
	High Blood Pressure	19 (18.45)
	Fatigue	19 (18.45)
	Chest Pain	13 (12.62)
	Frequent Illness	10 (9.71)
	Hives/Rashes	9 (8.73)
	Grinding Teeth	5 (4.85)
	Gastric Issues	4 (3.88)
	Indigestion	2 (1.94)
	Increased Perspiration	2 (1.94)
Behavioral Stress		94 (88)
	Anger	18 (19.14)
	Withdrawal/Isolation	18 (19.14)
	Overeating/Loss of Appetite	17 (18.09)
	Poor Job Performance	10 (10.64)
	Increased Use of Alcohol/Drugs	9 (9.57)
	Impatience	8 (8.51)
	Procrastination	8 (8.51)
	Quickness to Argue	6 (6.38)
	Increased Spirituality	5 (5.32)
	Increased Smoking	5 (5.32)
	Changes in Family Relationships	5 (5.32)
	High Effort Coping	2 (2.13)
	Neglect of Responsibilities	2 (2.13)



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