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THE ASSOCIATION OF GENDERED RACISM AND RESILIENCE ON SENSE OF
BELONGING AND ACADEMIC SELF-EFFICACY IN BLACK WOMEN AT
PREDOMINANTLY WHITE INSTITUTIONS

by

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Abstract

The current study examined the moderating effects of resilience on the relationships between gendered racism and sense of belonging and gendered racism and academic self-efficacy for Black women at Predominantly White Institutions (PWIs). Data from 118 Black women (22.9% undergraduate students, 26.5% graduate students, and 50.6% alumni/graduated students) were collected from PWIs across the United States and analyzed using PROCESS 3.2 for SPSS. Gendered racism was negatively associated with both sense of belonging and academic self-efficacy, and resilience did not moderate the relationships between the predictor and outcome variables. Findings from this study contradict previous literature by indicating that resilience was not significant in buffering the impact of discrimination (gendered racism) on Black women's academic experiences (i.e., sense of belonging and academic self-efficacy) at PWIs. These findings highlight the importance of examining experiences of gendered racism and how they impact academic experiences for Black women. Additionally, the present findings tentatively suggest that there may be factors other than resilience that influence Black woman's ability to excel academically despite experiences of gendered racism.

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Introduction

In 2019, over 1 million female college students received bachelor's degrees, and 125,845 of those degree recipients were Black women (U.S. Department of Education, 2021). During that same year, 64% of all bachelor's degrees awarded to Black U.S. students were earned by Black women (U.S. Department of Education, 2019), the highest percentage of bachelor's degrees awarded to women across racial/ethnic groups in the United States. Not only did many Black women receive bachelor's degrees during that year, but according to the U.S. Department of Education (2021) they also earned 65,527 master's degrees and 10,042 doctoral degrees.

When choosing a postsecondary academic institution, U.S. Black students have the option of attending one of the 102 Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) or one of the 3,004 Predominantly White Institutions (PWI). Most Black women choose to attend PWIs due to the academic reputation of the school, indications that graduates of the school get good jobs, the social reputation of the PWI, and lower tuition costs (Norwood, 2010). However, the PWI environment puts them at an increased risk for experiencing gendered racism that could potentially negatively influence their academic experiences (e.g., sense of belonging and academic self-efficacy) (Smith et al., 2007; Soto & Deemer, 2018).

How is it that Black women have high graduation rates from universities where they experience prejudice and discrimination? Research by Corbin et al. (2018) suggested Black women experienced gendered racial tension while attending PWIs, forcing them to model and rely upon stereotypically "positive" representations of Black womanhood to deal with the pain of microaggressions. Modeling and relying on those representations may be used as a resilience strategy. Perhaps Black women's resilience helps to buffer the negative impact that gendered racism can have on their academic experience (i.e., sense of belonging and academic self-

efficacy). The current study adds to the literature on the resilience of Black women in higher education by examining the relationships between gendered racism, resilience, sense of belonging, and academic self-efficacy.

Intersectionality Theory as a Theoretical Framework

According to legal scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw, Black women could experience: (a) racism similar to Black men and sexism similar to White women, (b) racism and sexism that are separate yet accumulative experiences of oppression (double jeopardy), and (c) specific oppression that is based on the intersection of race and gender, which she coined as intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1989, 1991; Szymanski & Lewis, 2016). Intersectionality provides a theoretical framework for understanding how multiple social identities intersect at the micro level of individual experience to reflect interlocking structures of privilege and oppression (i.e., gendered racism) at the macrosocial systemic level (McConnell et al., 2018). Intersectionality theory posits that the combination of several social identities, such as gender, race, class, and sexual orientation shape how we see ourselves and how we are seen and treated by others (Cho et al., 2013; Cole, 2009; Collins, 2000; Shahid et al., 2018).

Intersectionality emerged out of activist and scholarly communities with the hopes of shedding light on the oppressive structures that disproportionately affect Black women (Hancock, 2016), and emphasized the need to examine overlapping systems of power. Black women possess an interesting position in American society due to two of their salient identities being historically and currently marginalized (Shahid et al., 2018). This intersectionality allows for experiences of gendered racism (Bowleg, 2012); however, despite their marginalization, Black women have been able to make impressive strides in higher education attainment by entering college and receiving college degrees at a higher rate than most other racial/ethnic

groups. Even with the increase in college enrollment and high graduation rates for Black women, they often face various difficulties while working toward their degrees, particularly at PWIs (Shahid et al., 2018). Typically, the atmospheres of PWIs are reflections of the racial, gender, and class inequities that influence the social structure of the United States (Wijeyesinghe & Jones, 2013). These inequities are apparent for Black women through their reports of feelings of isolation, experiencing gendered racism, and being misunderstood while attending PWIs (Shahid et al., 2018).

Using the lens of intersectionality theory to understand the experiences of the study participants is vital, “because it highlights the need to explore identities as interactive rather than additive” (Greyerbiehl & Mitchell, 2014, p. 284). It also takes a holistic view of social identities as mutually constructed and interdependent as opposed to distinct and separate pieces of experience (McConnell et al., 2018). Intersectionality is essential for the holistic exploration of Black women’s experiences at PWIs as viewing their identities as separate experiences would ignore the nuanced complexities of their lives. Intersectionality theory contributes to the current knowledge of what it means to belong to multiple social identities that are associated with interlocking systems of oppression and power. Using an intersectional framework of gendered racism, the current study examined how microaggressions based on the intersection of race and gender were related to the academic experiences of the participants at PWIs throughout the United States. This study adds to the literature because of its focus on the moderating effects of resilience on the relationships between gendered racism and both sense of belonging and academic self-efficacy.

Gendered Racism

At PWIs and within society at large, Black women have experiences of both racism and sexism due to being both racial and gender minorities (Thomas et al., 2008). Gendered racism is a unique form of oppression that occurs because of the intersection of race and gender, and it stems from perceptions, stereotypes, or images of specific groups (Szymanski & Lewis, 2016; Thomas et al., 2008). For example, a Black woman may experience both racism and sexism in the job hiring process, where she may be perceived to be less qualified on the basis of her intersecting and marginalized identities as a Black person and as a woman (Lewis et al., 2016; Lewis & Neville, 2015; Williams & Lewis, 2019).

Black women perceive this simultaneous experience of racism and sexism as stressful (Shorter-Gooden, 2004; Thomas et al., 2008; Williams & Lewis, 2019). When exploring the impact of gendered racism on Black women, researchers report associations between gendered racism and greater psychological distress such as depressive symptoms (Carr et al., 2014) and suicidal ideation (Perry et al., 2012), as well as sexual reproductive health disparities (Giscombé & Lobel, 2005; Rosenthal & Lobel, 2018). According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Black women have depression rates that are 11% higher than rates for White, Asian, and Hispanic women over the age of 20, and they also experience greater chronicity and severity of depression (CDC, 2018). Research specific to the impact of gendered racism on Black women in college suggested that an increased frequency of experiences of gendered racism was related to higher reports of depression (Burton, 2018). Research participants noted that encountering gendered racism (i.e., sexual assault, being mistaken as “the help,” and assumptions about communication style and educational level) was the norm on their college campuses (Burton, 2018). Other examples of gendered racism experienced by Black women

include negative comments when wearing their hair naturally or being the targets of sexually objectifying and demeaning comments about their curvy body figures (Williams & Lewis, 2019).

Due to the masculinized and patriarchal nature of universities, women tend to experience sexism regularly (Savigny, 2017); and for Black college women, experiences of racism occur simultaneously (Lewis et al., 2019). Black female students at PWIs are often overlooked for scholarships and student government positions (Riley et al., 2006). They are also often expected to fit projected stereotypes (i.e., the expectation of the Jezebel or the Angry Black Woman); are silenced and marginalized (i.e., struggle for respect and with invisibility); and are expected to fit assumptions about style and beauty (i.e., assumptions about communication styles and aesthetics) (Lewis et al., 2016). Awareness of these negative experiences is important as they suggest that gendered racism may lead to differing levels of psychological distress, specifically while attending PWIs, and may negatively impact Black women's academic experiences (Burton, 2018; Lewis et al., 2016; Moody & Lewis, 2019; Shorter-Gooden, 2004; Szymanski & Lewis, 2016; Thomas et al., 2008; Williams & Lewis, 2019). For the purposes of this study, the researcher was interested in the relationship between gendered racism and two aspects of academic experiences (i.e., sense of belonging and academic self-efficacy), and the influence of resilience on those relationships.

Sense of Belonging and Academic Self-Efficacy as Outcome Variables

Sense of belonging is conceptualized as students' psychological sense of identification and affiliation with the campus community (Hausmann et al., 2009). Attributes of belongingness are fit, the perception that one's values or characteristics are congruent with others, and valued involvement, which is the perception that one is valued, needed, or important to others (Hagerty et al., 1996). Additionally, sense of belonging has been operationalized as peer support, faculty

support, classroom comfort, and lower levels of perceived isolation (Morrow & Ackerman, 2012).

Literature indicates that faculty-student relationships are strongly positively correlated with sense of belonging and impact student success at college (Guiffrida & Douthit, 2010). Though such relationships are crucial to a successful college experience, Black women at PWIs reported feeling unsupported, lacking dedicated faculty mentors, and being held to low expectations by faculty and peers (Shahid et al., 2018), all of which impacted the relationships that are important for a strong sense of belonging. While many students of color at PWIs face discrimination that causes them to lack in belongingness, Black women experienced a significantly greater frequency of discrimination than the other students of color, and they also reported a lower sense of belonging (Lewis et al., 2019).

Not only did Black women have encounters that led to feelings of emotional pain, isolation, and invisibility on hostile PWI campuses (Howard-Vital, 1989), they also experienced indirect, demeaning and stereotypical comments that left them feeling uncomfortable in those environments as they were unable to definitively recognize the acts as racist and were unsure if they were being “too sensitive” for feeling bothered (Harper et al., 2011; Harwood et al., 2012; Lewis et al., 2019). Those experiences and other subtle and explicit messages that they do not belong tended to leave them feeling confused and out of place, leading to an outsider-within status (Harper et al., 2011; Harwood et al., 2012; Lewis et al., 2019). This outsider-within concept, or lowered sense of belonging, was heightened for Black women as they also had fears about their safety, beliefs of incompetence in their academic abilities, encountered professors and peers who were surprised by their level of intellect, and feelings that they were overlooked and

dismissed in classroom settings (Domingue, 2015; Robinson et al., 2013; Shahid et al., 2018) and in residence halls (Harwood et al., 2012).

Overall, research has demonstrated that experiences of racism were prevalent in many spaces on PWI campuses and negatively influenced sense of belonging for Black women (Lewis et al., 2019). Students of color often found the campuses unwelcoming and unsupportive, which influenced a lowered sense of belonging (Smith et al., 2007; Worthington et al., 2008).

Importantly, a decreased sense of belonging can negatively influence the academic performance and psychological well-being of Black women at PWIs (Lewis et al., 2019; Smith et al., 2007; Worthington et al., 2008). Sense of belonging helps to foster the development of empathy, tolerance, academic engagement, and active thinking (Harwood et al., 2012; Lewis et al., 2019; Thomas et al., 2008). Therefore, understanding the factors that negatively influence sense of belonging is important.

Researchers have also found it important to study academic self-efficacy in college students (Eccels & Wigfield, 2002; Guiffrida & Douthit, 2010; Soto & Deemer, 2018). Academic self-efficacy refers to individuals' beliefs that they can successfully reach a designated academic level, complete a certain academic task, or attain a specific academic goal (Schunk & Pajares, 2002; Wright et al., 2014). It is grounded in self-efficacy theory, which states that self-efficacy is confidence in personal ability to organize and execute a given course of action to solve a problem or accomplish a task (Bandura, 1977). In academia, self-efficacy is a key contributing factor to student success, because of its influence on the choices students make and the courses of action they take (Schunk & Pajares, 2002). For racial minorities, this concept is important due to the frequency of adverse experiences that they encounter while attending predominantly White institutions (Lewis et al., 2016; Soto & Deemer, 2018).

Welcoming and supportive academic environments, faculty, and peers have been found to be strong predictors of academic self-efficacy (Dortch, 2016). However, research with post-secondary students of color found that dimensions of racial microaggressions such as invisibility and unwelcoming environment were prevalent at PWIs and predicted lower academic self-efficacy (Smith, 2018). Challenges to student success such as experiences of discrimination, feelings of isolation, uninvolved or ambivalent faculty, difficult dissertation committee dynamics, and not feeling safe enough to ask for help, were also found to contribute to Black female students' decreased academic self-efficacy (Dortch, 2016). This finding is important as academic self-efficacy is related to academic performance and career decision self-efficacy, and it is an overall predictor of life satisfaction (Soto & Deemer, 2018). Hence, for this study, it was hypothesized that experiences of gendered racism would negatively influence academic self-efficacy in Black women at PWIs.

Despite these possible relationships between gendered racism, sense of belonging, and academic self-efficacy, Black women continue to successfully obtain bachelors, masters, and doctoral degrees (U.S. Department of Education, 2021). Such success suggests some protective factors that buffer the negative effects of sexism and racism. Resilience may be one important factor that allows Black women to succeed despite experiencing adversity at predominantly White institutions.

Resilience as a Moderator

Resilience can be defined as the ability to bounce back to a homeostatic level when confronted with a difficult situation (Mejia-Downs, 2017). It can also be thought of as the ability to maintain equilibrium under stress and successfully adapt to chronic adversity (Mejia-Downs, 2017). It occurs on both individual and community levels where individual resilience describes

an individual's capability to cope with stress and triumph over adversity, and community resilience refers to a community's capacity to empower marginalized members through tangible and intangible resources in order to facilitate successful coping with stress (Fergus & Zimmerman, 2005). Resilience is typically thought of as a noun, something one possesses; however, Nioclazzo (2017), in her work on transgender collegians, advanced a more nuanced understanding of resilience, conceptualizing it as a verb. She asserted that resilience can function as a practice, and that persons can describe themselves as not being resilient, yet still practice resilience as a strategy to overcome oppressions, such as gendered racism (Nicolazzo, 2017).

Zimmerman et al. (2015) believed that oppressed and marginalized groups of people excel despite adversity due to resilience. Literature supports such claims as it highlights resilience as a key factor of success for people who are generally marginalized as a result of identifying as women (Dale & Safren, 2018; Narendran et al., 2019) and identifying as Black (Morales, 2008). For instance, relying on resilience was found to help Black women and gay Black males overcome racial and sexist stereotypes and prejudices at PWIs (Duran, 2019; Narendran et al., 2019; Strayhorn, 2013).

Having resilience has been found to buffer the effects of negative life events for college students (Li et al., 2020). Resilience has also been found to help students with overcoming challenges by strengthening the relationship between coping mechanisms and achieving academic goals (Cotton et al., 2017; Duran, 2019). For Black female graduate students, resiliency factors such as "part of a bigger whole" (obtaining this degree is for my community) and "prove them wrong" (showing others that Black women are just as capable as they are) have been found to buffer the impact of negative academic experiences that threaten their overall wellbeing (Shavers & Moore, 2014). As experiences of gendered racism are potential sources of

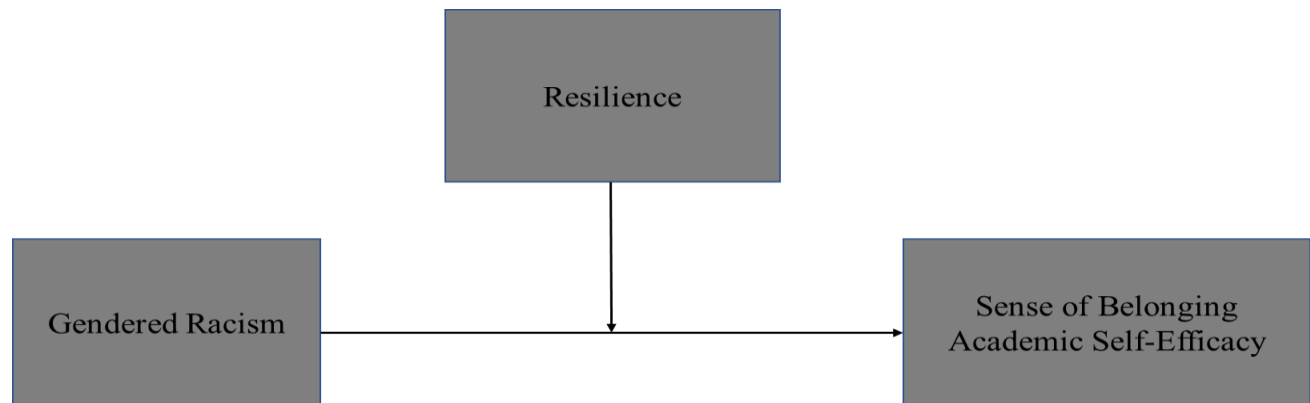
stress that could impact students' academic experiences, the contextual influence of resilience could potentially buffer that negative relationship. Resilience is a critical element in persevering despite adversity (McConnell et al, 2018) so the current study examined resilience as a moderator of the relationships between gendered racism and sense of belonging and gendered racism and academic self-efficacy.

Current Study and Hypotheses

Though there is a substantial amount of research regarding racism and sexism towards women, there is minimal research on whether gendered racism influences sense of belonging and academic self-efficacy of Black women at predominantly White institutions (PWIs). This study used intersectionality theory to guide the examination of relationships between gendered racism, resilience, sense of belonging and academic self-efficacy in Black women who attend or have attended PWIs. The primary hypotheses were that: (a) there would be a negative relationship between experiences of perceived gendered racism and sense of belonging (Hypothesis 1); (b) there would be a negative relationship between experiences of perceived gendered racism and academic self-efficacy (Hypothesis 2); (c) resilience would moderate the relationship between gendered racism and sense of belonging, such that, at higher levels of resilience, the negative relationship between experiences of gendered racism and sense of belonging would be weaker (Hypothesis 3); and (d) resilience would moderate the relationship between gendered racism and academic self-efficacy such that, at higher levels of resilience, the negative relationship between experiences of gendered racism and academic self-efficacy would be weaker for Black women at PWIs (Hypothesis 4). Figure 1 shows the hypothesized relationships.

Figure 1

Proposed Relationship between Variables



Note. Figure adapted from PROCESS model 1 moderation (Hayes, 2018).

Method

Participants

The sample consisted of 118 women who were undergraduate students (22.9%), graduate students (26.5%), and alumae (50.6%) at predominantly White institutions across the United States. Participants' ages ranged from 18 to 65 years old ($M = 33.61$, $SD = 11.56$). Participants identified as African American (96.6%), Biracial (2.5%, African American and Native American, Black and Mexican, and Black and White), and 0.8% identified as other race (Black Dominican/Afro Latina). For relationship status, 56.8% were single, 28.0% were married, 11.0% were in a committed relationship, 2.5% were divorced or separated, 0.8% were openly dating, and 0.8% did not specify. Of the participants, 86.4% identified as heterosexual and 13.6% identified as non-heterosexual (5.9% identified as gay/lesbian, 3.5% identified as bisexual, 1.7% identified as pansexual, 1.7% identified as queer, and 0.8% identified as questioning).

Measures

Demographics Participants completed demographic questions about their age, race, sex/gender, ethnicity, skin complexion, sexual orientation, relationship status, geographic location, father's and mother's highest attained degree, perceived social class, academic classification, and level of safety. For this study, only race and sex/gender were assessed. The additional data was collected for possible future studies.

Gendered Racism Gendered racism was measured using the 40 items from the Gendered Racial Microaggressions Scale (GRMS; Lewis & Neville, 2015) that assess the frequency of nonverbal, verbal, and behavioral negative racial and gender insults experienced by Black women. The frequency of experienced gendered racial microaggressions was assessed based on a 6-point Likert-type response scale ranging from 0 (*never*) to 5 (*once a week or more*). Higher total mean scores indicated a greater frequency of gendered racial microaggressions (Lewis & Neville, 2015). An example item includes "Someone has made a sexually inappropriate comment about my butt, hips, or thighs." The GRMS also includes an appraisal scale as well as four subscales: assumptions of beauty and sexual objectification subscale, silenced and marginalized subscale, strong Black woman subscale, and angry Black woman subscale. Scores from the appraisal of stress of gendered racial microaggressions scale and scores from the four subscales were not used in the current study.

Lewis and Neville (2015) demonstrated support for construct validity, finding that GRMS scores were significantly and positively related to racial and ethnic microaggressions, perceived sexist events, and psychological distress. Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficients were computed based on data collected from a norming sample of 210 participants. The following reliability coefficients were found: Standards of Beauty ($\alpha = .87$), Silenced and Marginalized (α

= .87), Strong Black Woman ($\alpha = .78$), and Angry Black Woman ($\alpha = .74$) demonstrating acceptable to strong reliability (Lewis & Neville, 2015). The GRMS total score had reliability coefficients of .92 for frequency and .93 for stress appraisal (Lewis & Neville, 2015). The Cronbach's alpha was found to be .92 in a study that used intersectionality to explore relations between gendered racism and health in Black women (Lewis et al., 2017).

Sense of Belonging Sense of Belonging was measured using the Sense of Belonging Scale (SOBS; Hoffman et al., 2002), a 26-item scale assessing students' sense of belonging in the college environment. Each item was rated on a scale that ranges from 1 (*completely true*) to 5 (*completely untrue*). This scale is also comprised of four subscales: perceived peer support (“I have met with classmates outside of class to study for an exam”), perceived classroom comfort (“I felt comfortable asking a question in class”), perceived isolation (“I rarely talked to other students in my class”), and perceived faculty support (“I felt comfortable talking about a problem with faculty”). The norming sample for this scale consisted of 205 mostly female (71%) and White (85%) college freshman who lived on campus (83%) and were between the ages of 18 and 20 years (Hoffman et al., 2002).

Validity scores for this assessment were not reported by Hoffman et al. (2002); however, Tovar and Simone (2010) assessed the evidence of the external aspects of validity of the SOBS and found that the highest observed correlation was between the perceived faculty understanding/comfort scale and the mattering to instructors scale ($r = -.59$). Lower scores on the SOBS are indicative of a higher sense of belonging; given this, high negative scale intercorrelations are indicative of strong convergent validity (Tovar & Simone, 2010). Coefficient alpha of the SOBS score was .92 among undergraduate college students (Hoffman et al., 2002).

Academic Self-Efficacy The College Academic Self-Efficacy Scale (CASES) (Owen & Froman, 1988) was used to evaluate students' academic self-efficacy. This 33-item scale asks respondents to rate items on a 5-point Likert scale from A (*quite a lot*) to E (*very little*) concerning academic self-efficacy. Students were asked to rate the amount of confidence they had for the several tasks like “writing a high-quality term paper,” “participating in a class discussion,” or “understanding most ideas presented in class.” Scores from this scale have exhibited test-retest reliability of .90 and .92 after being tested over an 8-week interval, and they have demonstrated strong incremental validity among a sample of psychology undergraduate students, with an internal consistency of .85 (Owen & Froman, 1988). For Black graduate students in Ayiku's (2005) study, Cronbach's alpha was .90. For the current study, scores were assigned a number 1 (A, quite a lot) to 5 (E, very little) where higher scores were an indication for lower academic self-efficacy.

Resilience Resilience was measured using the Connor-Davidson Resilience Inventory (CD-RISC), a 25-item scale that measures resilience (Connor & Davidson, 2003). Responses to the scale items were rated from 0 (*not at all true*) to 4 (*true nearly all of the time*) on a Likert-scale, with higher scores being indicative of higher levels of resilience. CD-RISC includes sample items such as “You try to see the humorous side of things when you are faced with problems” and “You work to attain your goals no matter what roadblocks you encounter along the way” (Connor & Davidson, 2003). Test-retest reliability ($r = 0.87$) was examined, and no clinical change was noted between two consecutive visits (Connor & Davidson, 2003); and internal consistency ($\alpha = 0.89$) was measured by using Cronbach's alpha for the total and item-total scores in subjects from Group 1 (Connor & Davidson, 2003). CD-RISC scores exhibited an initial Cronbach's alpha of .89, and the validity and reliability of CD-RISC scores have been

verified in a more recent study that found internal consistency of .93 and test-retest reliability of .93 between two consecutive visits (Baek, Lee, Joo, Lee, & Choi, 2010).

Procedures

After receiving approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at the University of Memphis, participants were recruited using convenience sampling. The recruitment email was sent through multiple listservs and the recruitment flyer was posted on several social media sites. Listservs and social media posts provided a hyperlink to the online consent form and then to the anonymous self-report survey provided by Qualtrics, an electronic research software. Sixteen participants who completed the survey were randomly selected and compensated for participation with a \$25 gift card.

Results

Preliminary Analyses

All analyses for this study were conducted using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 24. Because power computations are most meaningful when done before data are collected and examined (Wilkinson, 1999), an a priori power analysis was conducted in G*Power 3.1 with a hypothesized effect size of .02 at the .05 level. It was determined that 300 participants would be needed to achieve power of .80. Examination of multivariate outliers using Mahalanobis distance at $p < .001$ and Cooks distance > 1 (Nurunnabi, Nasser, & Iman 2016; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013) indicated 3 outliers that were eliminated, which resulted in the aforementioned 118 participants. Normality of all continuous variables was assessed visually (i.e., Histogram, Scatterplot, Q-Q Plot) and statistically (Shapiro-Wilk test) and were found to be normally distributed. Values for skewness and kurtosis were within the normal range. Homoscedasticity and linearity were assessed visually (i.e., scatter plots), no concerns were

found, and the relationships between the predictor variable and the criterion variables were linear. No concerns with multicollinearity ($VIF > 10$) were found. Using the Durbin-Watson statistic, the values of the residuals were found to be independent (Pearson & Hartley, 1972).

Means, standard deviations, and correlations for study variables are displayed in Table 1.

Table 1

Summary of Intercorrelations, Means, SDs, and Cronbach's Alphas for All Measured Variables

Variables	1	2	3	4
1. Gendered Racism	.95			
2. SOBS	.35**	.85		
3. CASE	.36**	.56**	.93	
4. Resilience	-.27**	-.28**	-.60**	.92
Mean	2.97	2.73	2.20	77.06
SD	.87	.54	.57	12.31

Note: $N = 118$. Sense of Belonging (SOBS) and College Academic Self-Efficacy (CASE) scales are reverse scored so that lower scale values represent greater feelings of sense of belonging and academic self-efficacy. Cronbach's alpha values are on the diagonal. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .001$.

As shown in Table 1, study participants reported moderate frequencies of recent experiences of gendered racism with a mean score equivalent to “a few times a year” or “about once a month.” In addition, they endorsed lower than average feelings of sense of belonging, producing a mean score equivalent to “equally true and untrue.” Regarding academic self-efficacy, scores were just below the midpoint in between the “quite a lot of confidence” and “very little confidence” anchors.

Gendered racism was significantly negatively correlated with sense of belonging and academic self-efficacy; such that higher frequencies of gendered racism were associated with lower levels of sense of belonging and lower levels or academic self-efficacy. Sense of

belonging and academic self-efficacy were also significantly positively correlated with one another. These findings supported Hypotheses 1 and 2.

Because there were as many graduated students as enrolled students in the study's sample, the researcher conducted two, oneway ANOVAs to determine if there were significant differences between groups (i.e., graduated and enrolled) on sense of belonging and academic self-efficacy. Results suggested that there was not a statistically significant difference in reports of sense of belonging ($F(1,116) = .05, p = .816, \eta^2 = .00$), nor was there a statistically significant difference in academic self-efficacy ($F(1,116) = 2.85, p = .094, \eta^2 = .02$) between graduated students and enrolled students. Therefore, analyses were conducted on the total sample, rather than running separate analyses for both groups.

Moderation Analyses

To test the hypotheses that the frequency of gendered racism experiences was related to sense of belonging and academic self-efficacy and that resilience moderated those relationships, two moderation analyses were conducted (one for sense of belonging and one for academic self-efficacy) using model 1 of the PROCESS Macro (Hayes, 2018) in the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 24.0. Scores for gendered racism and resilience were centered to guarantee that the coefficient for the interaction variables were interpretable according to the range of values in the data (Hayes et al., 2012).

Consistent with the bivariate correlations, gendered racism was negatively related to sense of belonging ($B = .18, SE = .05, p = .001$). Analyses also revealed that there was a significant effect for resilience ($B = -.01, SE = .00, p = .016$). The interaction effect of resilience and gendered racism was not statistically significant ($B = .01, SE = .00, 95\% \text{ C.I. } (-.00, .01), p > .05$). These results supported Hypothesis 1 regarding the relationship between gendered racism

and sense of belonging but did not support hypothesis 3. While resilience was a significant predictor of sense of belonging, it did not buffer the effect of gendered racism on sense of belonging. Table 2 presents the findings from the moderation analysis of the effect of resilience on the relationship between gendered racism and sense of belonging.

Table 2

Multiple Regression Analysis for Sense of Belonging

Variables	<i>B</i>	S.E.	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	95% CI
Gendered Racism (GRM)	.18	.05	3.37	.001*	.08 – .29
Resilience (CDRS)	-.01	.00	-2.46	.02*	-.02 – -.00
GRM*CDRS	.01	.00	1.36	.18	-.00 – .01

Note: * $p < .05$.

In the second regression for academic self-efficacy, there was a significant main effect for gendered racism in relation to academic self-efficacy ($B = .13$, $SE = .05$, $p = .007$). Analyses also indicated a significant effect for resilience ($B = -.03$, $SE = .00$, $p = .000$). As in the first test of moderation, the interaction effect of resilience and gendered racism was not statistically significant ($B = -.00$, $SE = .00$, 95 C.I. (-.01, .00), $p > .05$). These results supported Hypothesis 2 regarding the relationship between gendered racism and academic self-efficacy, but did not support hypothesis 4; resilience did not moderate the relationship between gendered racism and academic self-efficacy. Table 3 presents the findings from the moderation analysis of the effect of resilience on the relationship between gendered racism and academic self-efficacy.

Table 3

Multiple Regression Analysis for Academic Self-Efficacy

Variables	<i>B</i>	S.E.	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	95% CI
Gendered Racism (GRM)	.13	.05	2.72	.01*	.04 – .23
Resilience (CDRS)	-.03	.00	-7.10	<.001*	-.03 – -.02
GRM*CDRS	-.00	.00	-.77	.44	-.01 – .00

Note: * $p < .05$

Discussion

The purpose of the current study was to examine the relations between gendered racism and sense of belonging and gendered racism and academic self-efficacy for Black women at predominantly White institutions. Further, the researcher examined the moderating effect of resilience on the association between gendered racism and sense of belonging and on the association between gendered racism and academic self-efficacy for these participants. This study supports and expands past literature by examining whether having resilience can buffer the effects of gendered racism on sense of belonging and on academic self-efficacy for Black women at PWIs. Although many studies explore the constructs of racism and sexism separately (Bynum et al., 2007; Corbin et al., 2018; Fields et al., 2010; Guiffreda & Douthit, 2010; Harwood et al., 2012; Hurst & Beesley, 2013), few explore the intersection of racism and sexism (i.e., gendered racism) and how they impact the academic experiences (sense of belonging and academic self-efficacy) of Black women at predominantly White institutions. Additionally, many studies have examined the impact of resilience against adversity (Cunningham & Swanson, 2010; Dale & Safren, 2018; Duran, 2019; Kramer et al., 2015). However, no known studies to date have examined resilience as a factor that may buffer the relationships between gender racism and sense of belonging and gendered racism and academic self-efficacy on Black women at PWIs.

Discrimination based on possessing two marginalized identities, being both Black and female, has been shown to have negative impacts on the well-being of Black women. The significant relationship between experiences of perceived gendered racism and sense of belonging supports these previous findings and is consistent with accumulating research documenting an association between gendered racism and sense of belonging for Black women at PWIs (Howard-Vital, 1989; Lewis et al., 2019; Robinson et al., 2013; Shahid et al., 2018). Experiences of gendered racism are then associated with decreased feelings of sense of belonging for Black female students, as many of them enter university settings with feelings of anxiety and thoughts of not fitting in (Duran, 2019; Harper et al., 2011; Shahid et al., 2018).

Similarly, the negative relationship between experiences of perceived gendered racism and academic self-efficacy is also consistent with previous research that affirms that when students are discriminated against, they are less likely to view themselves as competent and self-efficacious (Dortch, 2016; Guiffrida & Douthit, 2010; Lewis et al., 2016; Smith, 2018). These findings are well aligned with intersectionality theory as they display how discrimination based on intersecting marginalized identities can have detrimental impacts on the lives of people who hold those identities. Furthermore, these findings highlight the need for predominantly White institutions to assess students' perceived experiences of gendered racism, their feelings of belongingness to the academic community, and their levels of academic self-efficacy. Such assessments are essential as sense of belonging is related to academic success at college (Guiffrida & Douthit, 2010) and academic self-efficacy beliefs are related to academic performance, career decision efficacy, and they are an overall predictor of life satisfaction (Soto & Deemer, 2018).

Surprisingly, the hypotheses stating that resilience would moderate the relationship between gendered racism and academic variables was not supported. The findings that resilience did not serve as a moderator are inconsistent with prior research findings suggesting that resilience, historically and currently, allowed for oppressed and marginalized groups of people to excel despite adversity (Corbin et al., 2018; McConnell et al., 2018; Zimmerman, 2015). Previous research also suggested that Black college women relied on resilience to help them overcome racial stereotypes and prejudices at PWIs (Corbin et al., 2018). This study presented different outcomes, suggesting that resilience may not be as important in buffering the impact of discrimination on Black women's academic experiences, at least for the current sample.

The lack of significance of resilience could have been found because a large percentage of this study's participants had already graduated from a PWI. To test for this possibility, after the main analyses, the researcher conducted a post-hoc moderated-moderation analysis where the moderating effect of graduation status (i.e., enrolled and graduated) on the interaction effect of resilience on the relationships between gendered racism and sense of belonging and gendered racism and academic self-efficacy was assessed. Graduation status was not significant in moderating the moderation effect of resilience on the associations between gendered racism and sense of belonging and gendered racism and academic self-efficacy. Although resilience was a significant predictor of sense of belonging and academic self-efficacy, this finding suggested that despite Black women's graduation status, resilience did not buffer the impact that experiences of gendered racism had on their sense of belonging and academic self-efficacy. The present findings tentatively suggest that there may be other factors that may influence Black women's ability to excel academically despite experiences of gendered racism.

The results of the current study add to the available literature and support intersectionality theory that indicates that the combination of several social identities, such as gender and race, may shape how Black women are seen and treated by others. Although the current study did not assess causality, experiences of gendered racism may negatively impact sense of belonging, because they may cause Black women to feel as though they are alone in their experiences, without allies or advocates. Experiences of gendered racism may also negatively impact Black women's academic self-efficacy as experiencing discrimination has been known to negatively impact mental health causing an increase in depression and anxiety. It may be increasingly difficult for Black women to believe in their ability to succeed academically if they are battling depression and anxiety as a result of gendered racism. If PWIs recognized the negative impact that systems of privilege, power, and oppression could have on the academic experiences of Black women, if they celebrated the intersecting identities of Black women, and they protected the rights of Black women, then Black women might have fewer experiences of gendered racism on PWI campuses. This decrease in gendered racism could influence an increase in feelings of belongingness and academic self-efficacy, thus improving the overall academic experience for Black women at predominately White institutions.

These findings contribute new knowledge to the literature on factors that may not buffer the impact of adversity on the academic experiences of Black women who have attended or attend a PWI. Historically, the concept of having resilience has been used to help Black people feel empowered to succeed despite adversity and oppression. Black people, specifically Black women, have been conditioned to believe that regardless of the pain they endure by society, they can conquer all, as long as they remain resilient. But, can they really? Can the impact of adverse experiences truly be buffered by having resilience? These findings suggest that experiences of

gendered racism have a negative impact on Black women's sense of belonging and academic self-efficacy despite their level of resilience. To our knowledge, this study is the first to explore the buffering effect of resilience on the association between gendered racism and sense of belonging and gendered racism and academic self-efficacy. As such, it is important that future research in this area considers other factors, such as faith or resistance that may buffer the impact that discrimination has on academic experiences or achievement, particularly among Black women.

Limitations and Future Research Directions

Although this study makes an important contribution to research surrounding the influence of gendered racism on Black women's experiences of sense of belonging and academic self-efficacy at predominantly White institutions, the present findings should be considered in the context of its limitations. Due to the sample of this study consisting of mostly Black women who are graduate students or alumnae, there is limited generalizability of the current findings overall. While research supports the finding that gendered racism may negatively influence sense of belonging and academic self-efficacy, the findings of this study are largely informed by results of Black women who are older than traditionally aged college students. Since the instructions for the measure of gendered racism ask about lifetime experiences, these Black women may have experienced more gendered racism across their lifespan, including experiences that happened outside the academic setting that were either more or less impactful on their academic experiences at PWIs. Since the measures of sense of belonging and academic self-efficacy are predicated on current enrollment, another limitation is the retrospective nature of the data for these graduates. These women might not accurately recall their day to day experiences as students, especially if they had not been enrolled for a number of years. Future research

should focus on women who are currently enrolled. Unfortunately, the small sample size did not allow for that in the current study and there were no differences between the two groups on the main dependent variables. The small sample size also did not allow for fine-grained analysis that might examine other aspects of the academic experiences (e.g., major choice, year in school), that might related to sense of belonging or academic self-efficacy.

Additionally, some universities that were once referred to as Predominantly White institutions may now be labeled as Traditionally White Institutions (TWIs) due to more diverse student bodies. It is possible that the increase in diversity on these campuses could impact the association of gendered racism and resilience on sense of belonging and academic self-efficacy for Black women who are currently enrolled versus those who were enrolled in the past. Future researchers may want to explore these differences in experiences between Black women at PWIs and TWIs.

The approach of intersectionality used in this study was limited to the two identities of race and gender. In the future, measures exploring all of the salient identities Black women possess will be important. This study did not consider potential discrimination based on other identities such as skin tone, disability, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, and nationality. A more comprehensive examination will be an important approach for future researchers to take since each supplementary marginalized identity comes with its own potential source of discrimination. Such an approach may in turn influence an individual's perception on sense of belonging and academic self-efficacy. In future studies, scholars can assess for additional identities that Black women consider to be salient that they are discriminated against in predominantly White spaces, such as major universities.

Lastly, this study focused on resilience as a moderator for the relationships between gendered racism, sense of belonging, and academic self-efficacy. Despite what was reported in previous studies, resilience was not found to be a significant buffer for the experiences of discrimination based on sex and gender. This could be due to low statistical power, or it could be due to other social factors. While research suggests that Black college women rely on traditional individual modes of resilience to help them overcome racial stereotypes and prejudices at PWIs (Corbin et al., 2018), there are other variables that are specific to this group of women that may buffer the experiences of gendered racism on sense of belonging and academic self-efficacy, such as being involved in sororities or other student groups. Future researchers should consider exploring the impact that being in Black Greek lettered sororities or Black student organizations may have on experiences of discrimination, belonging, and academic self-efficacy for Black women at PWIs.

Implications and Study Conclusion

Despite the above-mentioned limitations, findings from this study have important implications for clinicians who work with Black women, for university leaders, and for dialogue on gendered racial experiences at predominantly White institutions. The findings from this study build upon intersectionality theory (Cho et al., 2013; Cole, 2009; Collins, 2000; Crenshaw 1989, 1991; Szymanski & Lewis, 2016) by showing that discrimination occurs based on one's intersecting identities and has adverse effects on feeling as though one belongs or can be academically successful while attending a PWI (Dill & Zambrana, 2009). Understanding the uniqueness of possessing multiple marginalized identities, like those held by Black women, and how they may negatively impact their mental well-being (Burton, 2018; Moody & Lewis, 2019; Thomas 2008), can help clinicians create culturally relevant treatment plans, provide psycho-

educational resources, and develop mental health outreach initiatives for the Black women who work, live, and learn on the campuses of predominantly White institutions. It has been suggested by researchers that clinicians use a Black feminist therapeutic blueprint to aid them in becoming more knowledgeable and skilled in culturally congruent techniques (Jones & Guy-Sheftall 2015; Jones & Harris 2019), such as increased therapy accessibility, focus on spirituality techniques, and incorporating the role of internalized oppression on the daily lives of Black women (Jones & Harris 2019).

Exposing the negative mental health consequences of gendered racism, and how these consequences may be associated with poor academic experiences of Black women at PWIs (Jones et al., 2021) could be beneficial for helping educators understand the plight of their Black, female students. Conversations surrounding the frequency of these experiences of gendered racism can bring awareness, which often brings about change. It is important that universities are made aware of the conditions in which their students are expected to learn and thrive.

Although among women from racial/ethnic groups, Black women have the highest percentage of bachelors degrees earned in the United States (U.S. Department of Education, 2019), experiences of gendered racism may negatively impact their academic experiences. As such, research has shown that Black college women uniquely experience discrimination due to possessing many marginalized identities, which may impact their persistence in difficult majors. Specifically in STEM education, Black STEM students have reported maintaining an intense and continuous state of awareness that their racial identities and Blackness were undervalued and always under assault (McGee & Martin, 2011). Higher education professionals can lessen these negative effects by constructing policies and atmospheres that affirm Black women's identities and experiences. According to Jones et al. (2021), the creation of affirming collegiate

atmospheres can be done through the use of micro-affirmations, “which are culturally based small words, acts, and gestures of inclusion that confirm various social identities, hence promoting a stronger sense of belonging” (p.9). Creating spaces at PWIs where the gendered racial discriminatory experiences of Black women can be discussed and received by institutional leadership may be essential for initiating change, holding perpetrators of discrimination accountable, and creating inclusive environments that allow for Black female students to feel an increased sense of belonging and academic self-efficacy.

Through the lens of intersectionality theory, this current study highlighted Black women’s unique experiences based on the intersection of race and gender, which makes them distinctively vulnerable to disadvantageous academic experiences after facing discrimination. While Black women have historically used resilience to help them overcome adversity, it may not be useful in buffering the relationship between experiences of gendered racism, sense of belonging, and academic self-efficacy. The current study has particular implications for clinicians and university leaders in helping Black women at PWIs feel seen, heard, and valued. By understanding the relationships between Black women’s experiences of gendered racism and sense of belonging and gendered racism and academic self-efficacy, this research study brings awareness to the impact that gendered racial microgressions have on academic experiences for Black women at PWIs. This study also raises questions about what factors may influence their ability to successfully graduate from college when faced with adversity, as resilience was not found to buffer the negative impact of gendered racial microaggressions on Black women’s sense of belonging and academic self-efficacy at predominantly White institutions.

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