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Combating Racial Microaggression in Higher Education: a case study of East Asian students' experiences on campus space

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of Education degree in Education

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Abstract

In recent years, universities in Ontario have intensified their anti-racism efforts in response to calls for greater accountability in creating safer and more inclusive campus environments. This study investigates the experiences of East Asian students in higher education—a demographic that has traditionally been overlooked in studies of racism in education. Critical Race Theory was employed as the main theoretical framework and qualitative case study as the research methodology. Data was drawn from individual semi-structured interviews with five East Asian university students; all of whom reported having experienced various forms of racial microaggression on campus space. The findings highlight the gaps between the stated aims of institutional anti-discrimination policies and the lived realities of racialized students on campus. The themes that emerged from the data raise important questions about the social and academic experiences of East Asian students on campus. Recommendations for future directions are provided.

Keywords

Critical Race Theory, racial microaggression, model minority, East Asians, higher education

Summary for Lay Audience

East Asians are overlooked in studies of racism in education. Their experiences with racial discrimination and racism are often disregarded due to their model minority stereotypes that are overly glorified and positive. The purpose of the research was to investigate the lived experiences of East Asian students in higher educational spaces. Their experiences brought up important questions around the effectiveness of the anti-discrimination policies in place to protect students against racial discrimination. In particular, a subtle and covert form of racial discrimination—racial microaggression—was evident in the lives of these students. This research provided recommendations in the hope of encouraging new and improved policies and practices that can better serve racialized students in higher educational spaces.

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Chapter 1: Introduction, Context, and Theoretical Frameworks

This first chapter introduces the reader to the context and rationale for my research, including the background and importance of racial microaggression and the role of universities in combatting racial microaggression on campus. I then discuss my positionality as a researcher, outline the theoretical frameworks that shape the foundation of my research, and conclude with a summary of key points.

Context

In recent years, higher education institutions have been pressured to take responsibility for shaping an inclusive and safe campus climate (Winton, 2018). Museus et al. (2015) suggest that students and community members are becoming more aware of the systemic racism that exists within higher education systems. Consequently, most universities in Ontario have publicly declared their commitment to anti-racism through the creation of various policies. Western University, for instance, has implemented its Safe Campus Policy and Non-Discrimination/Harassment Policy to protect students against racial discrimination on campus and the University of Toronto has publicly announced its Policy Statement on Equity, Diversity, and Excellence to ensure an equitable and inclusive campus climate (University of Toronto, 2006; Western University, 2017). However, Ahmed (2006) argues that declarations of commitment can block recognition of racism in institutional spaces (i.e., institutions can now announce their efforts without taking subsequent actions to ensure their effectiveness). For example, when universities announce the need for diversity recruitments of faculty members, such an announcement provides a surface level appearance that the need is being met; however, the absence of actionable steps negates the systemic issues at play (Ahmed, 2012). Subsequently,

it is up to the hired racialized faculty members to adapt to a systemically non-inclusive workplace climate and to advocate for the equity and inclusion that their university claims to provide (Ahmed, 2006, 2012).

Declarations of inclusivity and diversity are meaningless without the appropriate course of action to support the cause. Despite universities' efforts to address the need for more inclusive campus climates, race-related stress and racial discrimination continue to affect racialized students' experiences in educational settings (Sue et al., 2007). In particular, a more subtle form of racial discrimination known as racial microaggression has begun to flourish in the field of education. The research on racial microaggression suggests that although its unintended nature may seem innocuous, it has long-lasting psychological, physical, and academic consequences on racialized groups (Sue et al., 2007). This study explores the gaps between the stated aims and prevailing realities of Ontario universities' anti-discrimination policies.

Research Questions

In this study, I address the following research questions:

- 1) How do East Asian students experience racial microaggression on campus space in Ontario universities?
- 2) How are the anti-discrimination policies and policy statements on anti-racism protecting East Asian students from racial microaggression?
- 3) How could Ontario universities better protect racialized students from racial microaggression on campus space?

Rationale

Background of Racial Microaggression and Its Importance

In Canada, the grand narratives of “racial and cultural tolerance” and the national priority of “multiculturalism” continue to promote the ideology of a post-racial society (Senthe & Xavier, 2013). Under this ideology, people openly condemn the more explicit forms of racial discrimination; however, a more subtle form of racial discrimination known as racial microaggression continues to thrive and affect racialized groups (Sue et al., 2007; Wong et al., 2014).

Pierce (1970) introduced the term “microaggression” in the book *The Black Seventies* and describes it as follows:

Most offensive actions are not gross and crippling. They are subtle and stunning. The enormity of the complications they cause can be appreciated only when one considers that these subtle blows are delivered incessantly. Even though any single negotiation of offense can in justice be considered of itself to be relatively innocuous, the cumulative effect to the victim and to the victimizer is of an unimaginable magnitude. (p. 303)

Despite the word ‘racial microaggression’ being coined in the 1970s, it was not commonly used until Sue et al. (2007) reintroduced the concept in their work *Racial Microaggression in Everyday Life: Implication for Clinical Practice*. Since then, social psychology scholars have studied this subtler form of racial discrimination more intensively, in addition to other aversive and covert racism research.

For this research, I adopted Sue et al.'s (2007) definition of racial microaggression, defined as "brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioural, or environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative prejudicial slights and insults toward any group, particularly culturally marginalized groups" (p. 271). Sue et al. (2007) proposed that most incidents of racial microaggressions can be grouped within the following categories of racial microaggression: microassault, microinsult, and microinvalidation. Microassault is described as the "explicit racial derogations characterized primarily by a violent verbal or nonverbal attack meant to hurt the intended victim through name-calling, avoidant behaviour, or purposeful discriminatory actions"; microinsult is described as the "behavioural or verbal remarks or comments that convey rudeness, insensitivity and demean a person's racial heritage or identity"; and microinvalidation is described as the "verbal comments or behaviours that exclude, negate, or nullify the psychological thoughts, feelings, or experiential reality of a person of colour" (pp. 274-275). These daily, subtle racist acts are particularly dangerous because perpetrators, often White, are typically ordinary citizens who believe they are good people that are not racist and do not carry any racial prejudice (Wong et al., 2014). Therefore, the hidden nature of racial microaggression makes it a difficult field to study.

A growing body of literature highlights the seriousness of racial microaggression on students' wellbeing in educational contexts (e.g., Coster & Thompson, 2017; Kohli & Solórzano, 2012). Daily racial microaggressive events can result in long-term consequences on individuals' identity and quality of life (DeCoster & Thompson, 2017). Educational institutions have historically been seen as a safe and inclusive place for students from diverse backgrounds; however, scholars have argued that the 'inclusive space' mindset is precisely what prevents educators and administrators from challenging the existing inequalities racialized students face on campus space (Kelly,

2012). The literature on safe school climates has supported the contention that educators and school administrators unintentionally participate in stereotyping and expressing prejudice in their everyday activities. Because, as Verjee (2013) asserts, educational institutions serve as sites that reproduce political power relations and social inequalities, scholars are urging educational institutions to recognize and acknowledge students' experiences with racial microaggression (Kelly, 2012; Kohli & Solorzano, 2012).

There have been limited race and racism studies involving East Asians due to the “model minority” narrative and its associated “positive” stereotypes, such as ascription of intelligence and high socioeconomic status (SES) (Kim & Aquino, 2015; Sue et al., 2007). The limited research that does exist has found that Asian-Americans have experienced discrimination based on their race, English-language proficiency, and socioeconomic status since the beginning of their immigration to North America (Gee et al., 2007; Liang, 1994).

Universities' Role in Combatting Racial Microaggression

In recent years, more attention has been paid to the wellbeing of students enrolled in higher education institutions (Museus et al., 2015). In 2005, the Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario (HEQCO) was founded through the Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario Act (HEQCO, 2019) to provide recommendations for improving the quality, accessibility and effectiveness of higher education in Ontario. The HEQCO has obliged with anti-discriminatory policies that specifically target racial discriminations and proposed equitable funding practices (HEQCO, 2011). In the context of Ontario universities, some have implemented various policies with the aim of combatting racism on campus and achieving a safe and inclusive space for

students—for example, universities have developed Anti-Racism and Cultural Diversity offices on campus for students and faculty members.

Despite universities' efforts, concerns arise about the effectiveness of these policies. Pak Tee (2008) suggests that, at the macro-level, government statistics may indicate that policies are achieving their aims but, at the micro-level, some institutions are experiencing the exact opposite of policy goals. Moreover, Aveling (2007) argues that the majority of the individuals in leadership positions in educational institutions are White and so can afford to neglect the significance of these policies in combating racism. These policies become meaningless when there is no appropriate action that follows (Aveling, 2017; Ahmed, 2006).

There has been limited research done on the effects of such policies in protecting students from the subtler type of racism - racial microaggression. Gillborn (2006) argues that the “conventional forms of anti-racism have proven unable to keep pace with the development of increasingly racist and exclusionary education policies that operate beneath a veneer of professed tolerance and diversity” (p.11). On a macro-level, this covert form of racism manifests itself through policies, curriculum, and recruitment; on a micro-level, it is revealed through an individual's attitudes, beliefs, and behaviour. In other words, although universities in Ontario have proposed various strategies and action plans to combat racism on campus space, there needs to be a higher level of responsibility and accountability by universities to ensure the effectiveness and implementation of their policies.

Researcher Positionality

This research recognizes that knowledge is a social construction; one that is shaped by the knower's individual experience, positionality, and intersectionality (Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2017).

Reflecting on my positionality, I find that I am positioned in various intersections that affect my subjectivity as a researcher. In particular, my social identity allows me to gain privilege in some areas and face disadvantage in others, as I identify as an able-bodied, straight, cisgender female of East Asian descent. Making sense of how my social categories affect the dynamic of my social position in society allows me to critically reflect on the ways I conduct research, what methods I choose for my research, and how I analyze and interpret my research data (Wilson, 2008).

Furthermore, my life experience and history have helped shape my worldview and reality. Until now, I have spent time in both Hong Kong and Canada. In Hong Kong, there was very minimal racial diversity; all of my peers were East Asians—Chinese. I was part of the dominant ethnic population in that particular space and location. Moreover, the topic of race is neglected in the Hong Kong educational curriculum due to the lack of racial diversity and the history of colonization in this region; Hong Kong was part of the British colony for 99 years. It was not until I immigrated to Canada ten years ago that I became aware of other ethnicities and, when I moved to Canada, I attended a predominantly White school, where I was exposed to the struggles and difficulties of being a member of a racialized population in a predominantly White space.

When I was in Hong Kong, I always looked up to my teachers and school administrators as role models; however, in Canada, I found it difficult to relate to the teachers and school administrators as none of them were members of my ethnic background. As a result, I feared interactions with the teachers and school administrators. Now, reflecting on that experience, I realized that it stemmed from the feeling that I did not belong in the space because most of my

peers connected with their teachers and school administrators through common cultural traditions, values and customs.

A false sense of inclusivity masked the hidden racism in my day-to-day interactions. For example, I was on a competitive swim team composed of children from upper-middle class White families. As a result of my family's similar socioeconomic status, I did not feel discriminated against even though I was the only Asian person on the team. This false feeling of inclusion ended when we went to a swim meet in Markham, Ontario, where we met a large population of Asians. My teammates mocked them with derogatory names, so I told them that I am the same ethnicity as them. My coach quickly stopped the mocking and 'comforted' me by telling me that I am White to them because I do not act like 'those people'. After that incident, I realized that my acceptance was not because they were inclusive of my racial background, but because I participated in Whiteness that was not threatening or challenging to them.

After that incident, I realized that these seemingly innocent jokes have consequences. Name-calling, labeling based on stereotypes, and teachers' racial biases were all experiences that I did not pay attention to as a child. In hindsight, I did not pay attention to them because of the following factors: 1) my teachers never paid attention to them, 2) they were not the explicit type of racism that we were taught was unacceptable, and 3) it happened daily so I had normalized it. Once I grew up and studied more about systemic racism and racial microaggression, I realized that all my encounters had meanings. For instance, the experiences I have had in Canada are not in isolation from what I experienced in Hong Kong. Although in Hong Kong, I was a member of the dominant ethnic group, the curriculum was still predominantly Eurocentric due to Hong Kong's long history of colonization by Britain. At first, I separated my experiences in Hong Kong and Canada, but once I reflected on how my experiences connected, I began to understand

the depth and impact of colonization. These realizations make it important for me to study this topic. I hope my experience and others' can help educators gain awareness of the systemic challenges that exist for racialized students. I hope my research contributes to preventing racialized students from experiencing this more implicit form of racism and allowing other racialized students to feel validated and valued in their stories. There is a reason why I still remember those incidents from my childhood. Such seemingly 'innocent and non-racist' interactions have long-lasting effects on a person's psyche, and this makes racial microaggression an important area of study.

Theoretical Frameworks

Critical Race Theory

Originally, Critical Race Theory (CRT) was used to analyze the role of race and racism in perpetuating social disparities between dominant and marginalized racial groups in critical legal studies. In the Canadian context, CRT has evolved slowly and gained its popularity within legal and race-studies scholarship (Senthe & Xavier, 2013). Canadian critical race theorists sought to explore the relationship between race, law, and power in a settler-colonial context drawn from our Canadian history (Senthe & Xavier, 2013). Canadian lands have always been the ancestral territories of Indigenous peoples and nations. The effects of colonialism, White supremacy and racist narratives are ongoing (Dei & Villanueva, 2021; Neeganagwedgin, 2010).

Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) proposed the notion that the use of CRT should be explored explicitly within educational research, where racial inequalities need to be examined within academia and other academic spaces by way of centering the experiences of racialized people.

Since then, CRT has been used by education scholars as an analytical framework to assess inequity in education (Hiraldo, 2010). This framework places issues of race and racism at the centre of contemporary Western society (Gillborn, 2006; Hiraldo, 2010). To challenge the dominant perspective, CRT focuses on the experiences of marginalized communities and includes analysis of the power differentials that lead to marginalization. CRT challenges the White supremacy that historically and continually affects racialized people's everyday experiences (Sue, 2010; Perez & Solorzano, 2014).

From a critical race perspective, Asian Canadians' experiences with racism have been historically silenced and ignored. From the early 1880s, a significant number of Chinese migrant workers arrived in Canada to help build the Canadian Pacific Railway in British Columbia. Once the railway project was finished, incidents of anti-Chinese racism soared. This anti-Chinese sentiment led to the introduction of the discriminatory federal Chinese Head Tax and the Chinese Immigration Act of 1923, which were used as exclusion tactics against Chinese immigrants (Wallace, 2018). A CRT framework puts East Asians' experiences at the forefront and guides this research in examining the experiences of race and racism across dominant cultural modes of expression (Hiraldo, 2010; Milner 2007).

Critical Race Theory incorporates five central tenets that describe the racial injustice that exists within society. These five tenets include: 1) counter-storytelling, 2) the permanence of racism, 3) Whiteness as property, 4) interest conversion and 5) critique of liberalism (Hiraldo, 2010). First, counter-storytelling enables racialized students in schools to voice their own narratives in analyzing the true diversity and climate of educational spaces (Hiraldo, 2010). CRT works to validate the voices of marginalized groups which are otherwise overlooked and invalidated. CRT theorists draw from shared history as "others" with their struggles to bring power to stories. In

this research, I interviewed East Asian students because I recognize their unique experiences as expert sources of knowledge (Minikel-Lacocque, 2013). This approach pushes the conversation on race and racism forward by honouring and giving racialized students an opportunity to tell their own stories (Minikel-Lacocque, 2013). Second, CRT compels us to recognize that racism is normalized in our society (Ladson-Billings, 2010). Within Canada, we not only normalize racism, but we also falsely differentiate ourselves from Americans' hostile attitudes towards racialized groups. Dei and Villanueva (2021) argue that White supremacy, colonialism, and race are still very relevant in Canadian society. In education, the permanence of racism manifests itself through the structural and systemic aspects of schools. When schools neglect the existence of systemic racism, any diversity or inclusivity plans are ineffective (Hiraldo, 2010). Therefore, it is important to analyze schools through a lens that examines the effects and outcomes of institutional policies and practices, rather than through their stated intentions to unmask the institutional racism that is embedded in our day-to-day lives. Third, Whiteness as property characterizes the embedded racism within our society and educational sector. Carr (2016) argues that "Whiteness captures different, overlapping and fundamental concerns that shape contemporary societies globally, and can be used to understand, problematize and deconstruct a range of social conditions, interactions, and lived realities for all people" (p.51). In other words, cultures and values that do not mimic Whiteness or Eurocentric ideologies are pathologized and unprivileged (Carr, 2016). This becomes problematic in education when individuals demand the dominant type of culture which determines who is invited or included in a campus space. For example, universities' clubs, organizations, and administrative offices portray a certain set of prejudices and precedents that can prevent racialized students from occupying that space (Solorzano et al., 2000). Thus, the uninviting campus climate further supports the embedded

hierarchical racist paradigms that currently exist in our society. Fourth, interest conversion describes how White elites will tolerate or encourage racial advances for Blacks only when such advances also promote White self-interest (Delgado & Stefancic, 2002). Ladson-Billings (2010), for instance, argues that Whites have been the primary beneficiaries of civil rights legislation and, in education, resources and funding benefit the majority of White, middle-class individuals while claiming to benefit all. Funding and resources are often inaccessible to Blacks and other racialized groups. This discrepancy between White and racialized recipients is the focus of the fourth tenet (Hirald, 2010). Finally, the fifth tenet—critique of liberalism—rejects the ideas of colorblindness, neutrality of race, and equal opportunity for all by contending that these concepts allow people to ignore the racist biases and prejudices that perpetuate social inequality by falsely assuming that all individuals now have equal opportunities to succeed in a systemically racist educational structure (Hirald, 2010).

In education, objectivity and colour-blindness promote the false claim to meritocracy and work to exclude particular groups from the mainstream educational setting (Gilborn, 2006). Next, I discuss CRT specifically in the context of education as this study examines critically how race is central to East Asian students' experiences, particularly, in the form of racial microaggressions in higher education spaces.

Critical Race Theory in Education

In the context of my research, I adopt CRT to reject the benign celebration of differences in educational settings. The undertone of multiculturalism policies is that racism is an issue of the past, and that true progression to a non-racist society is through the diversity rhetoric of colour-blindness and racelessness (Berman & Paradies, 2010). Berman and Paradies (2010) argue that

multiculturalism thrives on the notion of a raceless society whilst neglecting the colonial history of racism. Similarly, Rezai-Rashti (1995) presses for investigation into the imperial, colonial, and neocolonial experiences of racialized minorities. She further suggests that racism expresses itself through the systemically racist structures within education. Therefore, the superficiality of the multiculturalism framework fails to interrogate the existing structural racism in schools (Rezai-Rashti, 1995). Since then, after critiques from community members and scholars regarding the limits of multiculturalism, the majority of educational sectors have accepted the need to incorporate an anti-racist framework in their policies, curriculums, and teaching practices.

Anti-Racism Education. The anti-racist education framework that derives from CRT can help identify the struggles racialized minorities face against the imperial, colonial, and neocolonial histories and structures that still remain in educational institutions today by validating and listening to minorities' stories (Kehoe, 1994). Further, Gillborn (2006) argues that the anti-racist framework is particularly important in policy work as the language can be easily changed but the reality of racial inequality persists. Similar to Ahmed (2006), Gillborn (2006) continues to point out that simply asserting anti-racist intentions does not guarantee results and written policies on race equality are often rhetoric tactics that are performative and meaningless. The anti-racist education framework analyzes documents and practices in schools through a critical lens, as opposed to a celebratory lens, and critically examines the historical roots, power relationships, and impacts of racism in our society. Anti-racist education originates from the voices of racialized groups and focuses on interrogating the histories and practices that prejudice supports; thus, aiming to eliminate the biases within the classroom that arise from institutionalized racism (Rezai-Rashti, 1995). In particular, the fifth tenet of CRT rejects the

liberal perspectives in multicultural education in favour of the transformative perspectives of anti-racist education to address institutional racism (Hiraldo, 2010; Kehoe, 1994).

Transformative theorists in anti-racist education view schools as social institutions where critical thinking and radical ideas can be developed using a comprehensive analysis of existing social and political structures, such as educational policies (Kehoe, 1994). In my research, I used the anti-racist education framework to reject passively celebrating race and confront the institutional racism that remains in educational spaces today.

The Intersectionality of Race. The theory of intersectionality was coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw (1991) who asserted that race, class, gender, and other individual characteristics intersect and overlap with each other. Hill Collins and Bilge (2018) discuss how the study of intersectionality and its relational social hierarchy in institutions helps us develop a critical consciousness about the ways in which “intersecting systems of power are organized within and across the structural disciplinary, cultural and interpersonal domains of power” (p. 163). The theory of intersectionality can help us claim individual complexity by also simultaneously challenging how society has focused primarily on only one aspect of our identities. Thus, studies on race and racial microaggression often include the framework of intersectionality. Oppression is not a singular experience nor a singular matrix of domination; it is a combination of different forms of oppression together that shapes a person’s own unique positionality in society (Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2017). Consequently, the intersecting nature of these oppressions is what creates the various magnitudes of oppression individuals experience. As individuals, we have different social categories that shape our identities, such as our gender, race, class, disability and sexuality (Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2017). The magnitude of the oppression we experience is generated based on the overlap and interconnection of these social

categories. Specifically, the theory of intersectionality helps bring out the inequality and inequity that persist in educational institutions today (Gillborn, 2015).

East Asians' experiences in North America, in particular, has been predominantly overlooked due to the 'positive' stereotypes commonly associated with them (Choi et al., 2017). These 'positive' stereotypes lead to the false assumption that East Asian students are exempted from experiencing hardships and racism in North America (Choi et al., 2017). In my research, I examine the experiences of East Asian students in higher education using race as the entry point. It is necessary for researchers and scholars to recognize how social categories intersect to impact one's lived experiences and acknowledge the complexity of the prejudices and discriminations we and others experience (Gillborn, 2015).

Summary of Chapter

This chapter introduced the context of my research, research questions, researcher positionality, and theoretical frameworks that shape the foundation of my research. Drawing on Critical Race Theory, Anti-Racist Education and Intersectionality, the objective of my study is to recognize and acknowledge the experiences of East Asian students in higher education. In the following chapter, an in-depth overview of the current literature on East Asian students' experiences and racial microaggression in education, more generally, will be presented.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

This chapter reviews the existing literature on East Asian students and their experiences with racism in educational settings in Canada as well as other Western countries with large East Asian student populations, such as England, United States, and Australia. The literature review is organized according to the following themes: the model minority myth, East Asian students' experiences in educational settings, impacts of racial microaggression in racialized groups, and Whiteness and White supremacy in education. This is followed by a discussion of educational policies and policy rhetoric. This chapter ends with a section dedicated to Covid-related racism and xenophobia and summary of key points.

East Asian Stereotypes: The Model Minority

The term “model minority” has been used since the late sixties by William Petersen (1966) who wrote on the ‘positive’ experiences and outcomes of Japanese Americans immigrating to America. Subsequently, multiple press articles emerged describing the “success” of various Asian American groups in overcoming discrimination (Kasinitz, 2016). Historically, it is believed that Chinese and Japanese immigrants overcame racial adversity through their high academic and economic success (Shih et al., 2019; Suzuki, 1995). As a result, the model minority identity became a gateway for Asian Americans to integrate into U.S. society. Another reason for the emergence of the term “model minority” is attributed to the power play by the dominant group to further oppress African Americans during the Civil Rights movement in the 1960s (Ng et al., 2017). At that time, Whites praised East Asians as the model minority, while simultaneously creating racial tensions between East Asians and other racialized groups. Representing East Asians as superior worked to marginalize other racialized minorities (Ng et

al., 2017). In more recent years, the ideology of “model minorities” has flourished within Canadian and American media with East Asian Canadians, in particular, being characterized as the “new elites” due to their “intense ambition” and their associated positive stereotypes, for example, that they are hardworking, ambitious, intelligent, self-disciplined, and of high socioeconomic status (Lee, 2009).

A study by Gupta et al. (2011) found that this “model minority myth” exerts negative consequences on Asians. Since the early seventies, student populations at many Canadian universities have experienced an influx of East Asians (Wong, 1979). This increase in East Asian student enrollment is due to the changes in immigration and trade policies over the last decade, as well as the rapid Asian population growth in Canadian and North American societies overall (Lee & Trimble, 1982). However, the glorified model minority image places psychological distress on East Asians, resulting in reluctance toward seeking help in academic settings (Gupta et al., 2011; Lee, 1994). Because East Asian students are expected to perform at higher levels due to their high achievement stereotype, they find it difficult to seek academic help when they need it (Gupta et al., 2011). Alvarez et al.’s (2006) study further suggests that, contrary to the model minority stereotype, Asian Americans do not receive privileged status. Conversely, Asian Americans experience a unique form of discrimination that is not well studied due to the stereotypes that exist within this group. In particular, Asian Americans are not seen as racialized minorities and are “de-minoritized” but, at the same time, continue to experience racial discrimination (Lee, 2006). In addition, higher education institutions continue to carry the model minority ideology when providing services for Asian students. For example, Delucchi and Do (1996) suggest that the model minority myth can lead to indifference toward Asian students as victims of racial intolerance. Administrators and faculty members compromise their efforts in

assisting Asian students with their experiences of racism because of the positive stereotypes associated with them.

Interestingly, Lee (1994) suggests that there are cultural and ethnic subgroups that contribute to differences in experiences and attitudes among those within the East Asian community. The subgroups identified in Lee's (1994) study include Asian, Asian New Wave, and Asian American. The Asian subgroup includes individuals from China, Hong Kong, Laos, Cambodia, Vietnam, and Taiwan, who have expressed a panethnic identity as 'Asians'. Korean students expressed a sense of superiority that informed a desire to be identified as Koreans, as opposed to being grouped under the panethnic identity of "Asian". The Asian New Wave is a subgroup of new immigrants or refugees, often used to identify South or Southeast Asians, while Asian American is a subgroup used to describe Asians that were born and raised in the U.S. Lee (1994) contends that the behaviour and identities of individuals who belong to these various subgroups are informed by the different prejudices and treatment they have received. For example, the Asian subgroup and the Asian New Wave subgroup prefer associating with other Asians, but Koreans and Asian Americans subgroups express more interest in having White peers as friends. Lee (1994) argues that the Asian and the Asian New Wave subgroups are seen as risks for the Asian American subgroup because Asian Americans have built their model minority status by generations of assimilation into the White culture, whereas Asian and Asian New Wave subgroups preserve most of their cultural identity. As a result, within the Korean and Asian American subgroups, there is the promotion of dual identity. At home, these Asian students are expected to act and behave according to their own cultural values and habits; at schools and educational spaces, these Asian subgroups aspire to emulate their White middle-class peers to protect their model minority image. Overall, the literature on East Asian stereotypes and the

model minority myth suggests that East Asians face immense pressure to protect their model minority image and, as a result, they risk internalizing the racial microaggression directed at them and assimilating into White culture (Lee, 1994).

East Asians' Experiences in Educational Settings

Despite the model minority myth, Asians are still frequently perceived as perpetual foreigners (Sue et al., 2007). As a result, many Asian students exhibit a strong eagerness to be accepted as members of the majority group by avoiding behaviour that reveals their cultural and ethnic backgrounds (Lee, 1994). For example, one study found that Chinese Canadian students avoid speaking in Chinese and eating Chinese food and, within the university environment, often belong to an ethnically heterogeneous friendship network to familiarize themselves with the “Canadian lifestyle” (Wong, 1979). This further indicates that Canadian society normalizes Whiteness while problematizing other behaviour patterns and customs (Sue et al., 2007). Additionally, Vo's (2019) study highlights that most educators and policymakers hold the assumption that all Asian students share similar experiences and cultures and neglect the diversity and complexity of East Asian experiences. The assumption of homogeneity among East Asians risks compromising these students' own unique personal experiences. These racial prejudices and the resulting discrimination against East Asians in North America continue to take a toll on East Asian students' standard of living, self-esteem and psychological well-being (Sue et al., 2007).

Although my research focuses on East Asian students' experiences in higher education, their K-12 school experience is not isolated; students' experiences with racial microaggression from earlier education can translate to their experiences in higher education settings. The literature

reviewed supports the contention that educators and school administrators unintentionally participate in stereotyping and expressing prejudice in their everyday activities in schools. These experiences of racial microaggression are an important influence on the lives of young people (Kelly, 2012; Kohli & Solorzano, 2012). A study by Kohli et al. (2018) suggests that “compliments” and “jokes” are the most common forms of racial microaggression experienced in K-12 classrooms. Aligning with the model minority stereotype, students indicate that the most common compliment East Asian students receive is “Asians are naturally good at math”, which often turns into a running joke within the classroom. Despite the seemingly positive intentions of compliments and jokes, it is important to recognize that compliments and jokes with racial undertones can bring negativity to racialized students’ experiences. Several racialized students from the study expressed that they felt uncomfortable and othered. Furthermore, it can be difficult for racialized students to speak up against racial microaggressions in classroom settings, especially when they are expressed in the form of jokes and compliments (Kohli et al., 2018).

Another study by Kohli and Solorzano (2012) explores the impact of racial microaggression and internalized racial microaggression for racialized students in K-12 schools. In particular, this research examined incidents of mispronunciation of names by teachers in schools. Racialized students reported feeling invalidated and undervalued when their native names are mispronounced. The authors highlight that although these incidents of mispronunciation may appear minor, a student’s experience with racial microaggression does not disappear once the incident is over; it can impact their self-esteem and identity development long-term (Kohli & Solorzano, 2012). Students’ experiences with racial microaggression can leave long-lasting impacts that accompany them into higher education institutions.

In higher education settings, East Asian students report feeling excluded and invisible to others on campus due to their race (Andrade, 2016; Choi et al., 2017; Kim & Kim, 2010). Negative attitudes toward East Asian students, such as those which stem from popular media representations and those that blame Asian students for creating competitive campus environments, result in Asian students being subjected to covert forms of hostility, cultural intolerance, and unfairness from White peers, faculty members, and administrators (Choi et al., 2017).

With the rise of globalization, Australia, the UK, and Canada have developed clear national priorities and comprehensive strategies to attract a large number of international students to their universities (Schneider, 2000). In the Canadian context, most of these students are from East Asian countries, including China, Korea and Japan (Chen, 2007). However, Andrade (2006) argues that these institutions do not offer adequate support for East Asian students to adjust to life in a new country. Furthermore, there is a discrepancy between the professors' and administrators' understanding of East Asian students' experience and the reality of these students' experience. For example, some professors assume that students from East Asian countries are less involved than other students because these students lack interest and have reserved personalities. However, students profess that their lack of involvement stems from difficulties with the language and sociocultural understanding (Andrade, 2006). Without a contextual understanding of students' behaviours, common prejudices and stereotypes may be projected onto racialized students.

Kim and Kim's (2010) study also focuses primarily on East Asian international students' experiences in higher education. Using Sue et al.'s (2017) original categories of racial microaggression, Kim and Kim (2010) analyzed student responses into seven sub-categories:

ascription of intelligence, pathologized cultural values and/or communication style, invalidation of international issues and perspectives, assumptions of homogeneity, exclusion and social avoidance, invisibility, and environmental and systemic microaggressions. First, East Asian students are often assumed to be intelligent in classroom settings and, in some instances, even stereotyped as having superior intelligence. However, in other contexts, their accents and lower English proficiency are perceived as signs that they lack intelligence. Second, White institutions pathologize cultural values with the assumption that East Asian students should assimilate into the dominant culture. Third, professors and administrators often invalidate international issues and perspectives and, consequently, exclude East Asian perspectives, as evidenced by the lack of global and cultural representations in curriculum. Fourth, assumptions of homogeneity conclude that all Asians are the same, which neglects students' own personal and cultural identities. Fifth, exclusion and social avoidance manifest in the exclusion of East Asian students in social gatherings (e.g., the students in Kim and Kim's (2010) study highlight that their White peers often reference only American pop culture, slangs, and jokes, which makes it difficult for them to understand). These students' lack of participation and understanding can lead to them being excluded from future social gatherings. Sixth, international students report the feeling of invisibility on campus space. For instance, professors and domestic students typically dismiss ideas of international students and/or do not acknowledge their presence in lectures. Subsequently, international students feel undervalued. Seventh, educational institutions create environmental and systemic microaggressions through the lack of funding, cultural insensitivity in programs, and preferential treatment given to domestic students for teaching and/or research assistantships. These experiences further suggest that campus space is not inclusive of East Asian students, specifically East Asian international students. In summary, Kim and Kim (2010) urge

institutions to recognize the experiences of East Asian international students and make policy and systemic changes accordingly.

Overall, the literature highlights that universities lack support for Asian students, particularly, East Asian international students who are adjusting to a new country and educational system (Andrade, 2006). Houshmand et al. (2014) argue that higher educational institutions in Canada are breeding grounds for racial intolerance and that the lack of anti-racist activism in Canadian universities is partly due to the denial of racism and the perception of Canada as the “better, less racist society” when compared to the U.S. Amid the increasing effects of globalization, Andrade (2006) argues that there must be a stronger push for intercultural education, training, and understanding.

Impact of Racial Microaggression on Racialized Students

Name-calling, discrimination, and stereotypes all contribute to a racialized student’s daily experience (Kohli & Solorzano, 2012). Furthermore, the frequent questions about ethnic backgrounds label racialized groups as “others” which sends the message that they do not belong in the space. When experienced cumulatively, the reminders of their racial minority status can have long-term developmental consequences, such as lower self-esteem and self-efficacy than their White counterparts (Nadal et al., 2014). Huynh (2012) suggests that racial microaggression can have negative effects on adolescents’ psychological health (e.g., higher depressive and somatic symptoms), and academic achievement. Keels et al. (2017), who examined the relationship between racial microaggression and psychological and educational outcomes, also found that racialized students who have experienced racial microaggression report more depressive and somatic symptoms and lower academic achievement. In particular, these students

discussed experiences of discouragement at school, feelings of intellectually inferiority, minimization of their classroom contributions, and isolation due to their racial and ethnic backgrounds. Furthermore, students who transitioned from traditionally non-White high schools to predominantly White colleges report feeling greater academic inferiority than their White counterparts (Keels et al., 2017). Although both studies recruited subjects from different ethnic backgrounds—Huynh (2012) focused on Asian and Latinx populations and Keel et al. (2017) focused on African American and Latinx adolescents—the results were similar. The reactivity components of microaggression explained additional variance in predicting depressive and somatic symptoms; the degree of emotional distress participants felt when encountering racial microaggressive events corresponded with varying psychological effects (Huynh, 2012). Additionally, De Coster and Thompson (2017) suggest that racial microaggressions can exert a “more powerful emotional toll—in the form of anger, frustration, paranoia, resentment, hopelessness, anxiety, and depression—than overtly racist encounters” (p. 905). Overall, the literature reviewed suggests that racial microaggression can have negative psychological and academic impacts on racialized groups.

Martin (2018) describes racial battle fatigue as a phenomenon that involves three stress responses – physiological, psychological and behavioural – produced by racialized groups to deal with daily microaggressions. White people and others from dominant groups may feel guilty about issues of race, thus choosing to detach themselves by ignoring or denying the existence of microaggression and, as a result of such behaviours, extra burdens are placed on racialized groups to defend their lived experiences (Martin, 2018). The term “gaslighting” is used to describe when individuals explicitly deny the existence of racism and direct accusations of racism back onto the racialized group with the goal of further enabling the perpetrator, often

White, to gain power and control over racialized groups. Martin (2018) claims that gaslighting, ignorance, and denial of racism all contribute to racial battle fatigue for racialized groups. The consequences of racial battle fatigue include “headaches, high blood pressure, digestive problems, stress, fatigue, sleep problems, loss of confidence, anger, fear, procrastination, neglecting responsibilities, resentment, hopelessness, and helplessness” (Martin, 2018, p. 104). As a result, racial battle fatigue leads to lower grades, higher dropout rates, and drug abuse among racialized college students (Martin, 2018). Racial battle fatigue and stress can be particularly difficult for racialized students to cope with when individuals first learn about the privileges and disadvantages that exist in society. Emotions such as guilt, shame, anger, and anxiety are provoked when individuals find that they have unearned discrimination based on their race (DeCoster & Thompson, 2017). Moreover, racialized students might not recognize their stress responses, as they are normalized as part of their daily living. Some racialized students even unwarily participate in self-inflicted racial microaggression because their peers have normalized it in their environments.

Whiteness and White Supremacy

It is important to review how Whiteness and White supremacy operate in North American societies when analyzing East Asians’ experiences in North America. The ideologies of Whiteness and White supremacy further reproduce racial inequity towards racialized individuals (Bonilla-Silva, 2013). For the purposes of this research, White supremacy is defined by Ansley (1997) as cited in Gillborn (2005):

A political, economic, and cultural system in which Whites overwhelmingly control power and material resources, conscious and unconscious ideas of White superiority and

entitlement are widespread, and relations of White dominance and non-White subordination are daily reenacted across a broad array of institutions and social settings. (p. 592)

White supremacy manifests through a one-way flow of power that benefits White people while, simultaneously, harming non-White people (Walton, 2019). Perez and Solorzano (2014) argue that White supremacy is the ideological foundation for the reproduction and perpetuation of institutional and everyday racism. They describe racial microaggression as “a form of systemic, everyday racism used to keep those at the racial margins in their place” (p. 6). Moreover, White supremacy captures the dominant nature of Whites over others, in which, the process of racism is described. As Leonardo, as cited in Walton (2019) aptly points out:

[W]hite dominance is never settled once and for all; it is constantly re-established and reconstructed by Whites *from all walks of life*. It is not a relation of power secured by slavery, Jim Crow, or job discrimination alone. It is not a process with a clear beginning or a foreseeable end (Bell, 1992). Last, it is not solely the domain of White supremacist groups. It is rather the domain of average, tolerant people, of lovers of diversity, and of believers in justice. (p. 143)

Furthermore, the promotion of Whiteness dominates and controls the identities of the racialized group and causes them to experience racial identity invalidation by way of colour-blindness and false inclusion, which are considered forms of racial microaggression (Franco & Franco, 2015). This phenomenon is especially pronounced when dealing with East Asians. East Asians have both been praised and pathologized by Whites, depending on the context which benefits the dominant group. In addition, the invisibility of privilege of the dominant group is a key element

of White supremacy, where Whites deny the idea that racism still happens (Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2017). However, the denial of racism places racialized students in a more vulnerable position because their experience with racial microaggression is much harder to detect, especially by the dominant group. As Delpit (1988) suggests, “those with power are frequently least aware of - or least willing to acknowledge its existence. Those with less power are often most aware of its existence” (p. 283). Accordingly, Gallagher (2006) argues that because the majority of Whites live in neighbourhoods that are predominantly White, they do not interact with non-Whites to gain perspectives on how race matters. In other words, geographical segregation means that Whites often only connect with fellow White peers, and this homogeneity in their social circles provides the privilege of not having to deal with issues of race. Ironically, one plausible reason for the lack of representation in Whites’ real-life interactions is that non-Whites still do not have access and equal opportunities to White social spaces. When White people see representations of racialized people, it is often through glamorized inclusions in the media, where commercials and movies make an effort to showcase cultural diversity (Gallagher, 2006).

Whiteness and White supremacy can be traced within our educational system through “policies, practices, processes, and rituals which confer privilege for one group, White people, and disprivilege for people of colour” (Allen, 1999, p. 3). Similar to Gallagher’s (2006) argument that Whites have the privilege to ignore racial issues when interacting within their own White social circles, Aveling’s (2007) research finds that, in educational settings, the majority of principals or individuals in leadership positions in education are White, thus their privilege allows them to ignore the racism that is happening in schools. This, in turn, affects the experience of racialized students. Moreover, Whiteness and White supremacy manifest through curriculum content and design. The phenomenon of “master scripting” is defined in education as

the dominant culture's monopoly on determining the essential content of the official curriculum and subsequently, the type of pedagogical delivery (Blanchett, 2006). This form of curriculum design and pedagogical practices serves as a form of power to oppress the marginalized groups by constructing normalcy based on White supremacy (Blanchett, 2006). Additionally, Peters (2015) highlights that when the curriculum is comprised of 'White ideas' by 'White authors', it normalizes Whiteness while making non-White studies invisible. Furthermore, Gillborn (2005) suggests that schools are increasingly using 'setting by ability' and other forms of internal selection to separate children into hierarchical groups such as 'gifted' programs. These higher-ranked teaching groups, such as the 'gifted' programs allow for more advantageous academic pathways for students. Evidence has shown that certain racialized groups, especially Black students, are markedly underrepresented in these higher-ranked teaching groups. In sum, Gillborn (2005) and other scholars argue that educational practices and policies become an extension of White supremacy to continue to perpetuate racial inequality.

Implications of Educational Policies

As mentioned previously, higher education institutions have declared their commitments to anti-racism in the form of policies. Shore and Wright (2011) propose that when policies interact with other social agents in processes that are dynamic and contingent, they can produce unpredictable effects. Consequently, it is important to recognize that the intent of policies does not guarantee results. In educational settings, policies are implemented by multiple actors, from policymakers to policy deliverers (e.g., professors, faculty members and administrators). These actors' interactions with these policies are intricately interdependent. As Rizvi and Kemmis (1987) point out, the undefined course of action is problematic because the document now relies on the board,

the institutions, and their leaders to interpret and reinterpret what it means to be safe and inclusive on campus space. This interpretation and reinterpretation then affect the design and enactment of these policies. In policy analysis, the process of interpretation and recontextualization is important for understanding the issues around power and interests amongst actors (Rizvi & Lingard, 2010). Complexity increases when different actors bring in their own positionality, intersectionality, and prejudices to interacting and engaging with these policies. Concepts such as habitus and disposition of the policy implementation are important factors to consider when designing a policy in order to limit the unpredictability of the policy's realities once it has been introduced into a real-life context (Shore & Wright, 2011). Habitus refers to the individual's way of living that embodies the culture that is integrated into the individual (Bourdieu, 1986). When policymakers and deliverers all embody the dominant cultural habitus—Whiteness—it undermines those who do not possess similar habitual knowledge and skills (Verjee, 2013). However, researchers have suggested that experiences of racial microaggression are not unidimensional (Sue et al., 2007). Therefore, it can be challenging for policymakers to adequately target these multi-dimensional aspects of racism, while navigating through their own positionalities in the process of policymaking and policy implementations.

Policy rhetoric includes all the ways in which actors use strategic means (e.g., discursive, textual, and gestural practices) to persuade others to interpret a social situation in a particular way (Winton, 2018). Ahmed (2006) suggests that discussions about what has failed and what needs to be done are not enough if racism is not recognized as an institutional matter. It is important to acknowledge that simply creating these documents and policies will not solve the roots of the issue— racial inequality as an institutional and structural problem in North America (Aveling, 2017). In Australia, the UK, the U.S., and Canada, countries “have developed clear national

priorities and comprehensive strategies to attract a larger number of international students” (Schneider, 2000, pp. 2-3). These strategies include “centralized planning, cooperative efforts between government and education, funding for outreach programs and marketing, centralizing websites with higher education information, and simplified visa and university application processes” (Andrade, 2006, p.132). However, it is essential to identify the difference in needs between domestic East Asian students and international East Asian students. Kim and Kim (2010) argue that colleges and universities enrolling international students should have a clearly stated policy on the goals and objectives of the international education program at the institution. Furthermore, institutions should be responsible for training and informing faculty and administrative staff on the needs of international students, such as negotiating conflicting cultural norms in the classroom (Kim & Kim, 2010).

Novel Coronavirus-Related Racism and Xenophobia Toward East Asians

This section examines the impact of the spike in hate crimes due to the novel coronavirus being attributed to East Asians. In January of 2020, the novel coronavirus was first reported in Wuhan, China. Soon after, in March, the World Health Organization declared it a global pandemic (WHO, 2020). Subsequently, novel coronavirus-related xenophobia and racism became part of the daily experience of Chinese and other East Asian communities.

Devakumar et al. (2020) argue that “outbreaks create fear, and fear is a key ingredient for racism and xenophobia to thrive”. ‘Fear’ has always been a theme in the racism experienced by East Asians. Lee (2009) proposed that the model minority narrative is an example of Whites labeling Asians as ‘threats’ out of fear for their own job security due to the intelligence ascription and ambitious work ethic stereotypes attached to East Asians. Misinformation spread from social

media and political leaders have further reinforced the racial discrimination East Asians face in North America (Chung & Li, 2020). Consequently, this virus outbreak sparked an Anti-Chinese sentiment. The anti-Chinese sentiment includes blame that was inappropriately and disproportionately placed on Chinese communities. This blame then spilled over to anyone not identified as Chinese but looked Chinese. The racial undertone is obvious. For example, anti-Chinese hashtags were trending on social media platforms, such as Twitter and Facebook (Chung & Li, 2020). In addition, news channels have reported a significant increase in racist incidents reported by Chinese Canadians (Shah, 2020). Name-calling and blame were the most prevalent forms of discrimination. As a consequence, Chinese Canadians have faced an increase in race-based threats and aggressions. Shah (2020) cites a survey carried out by the Angus Reid Institute and the University of Alberta in which thirty percent of Chinese Canadian online respondents reported that they have been frequently exposed to racist social media posts since the pandemic outbreak in March. East Asian groups that do not identify as Chinese have been generalized and targeted in these racist incidents as well (Shah, 2020). These findings align with prevalent forms of racial discrimination towards East Asians; for example, an overgeneralization of Asian subgroups has always been present, despite their own unique cultural and ethnic identities (Lee, 1994; Vo, 2019).

Although reports have suggested that these are isolated incidents that stem from the initial fear of the virus, the Chinese Canadian National Council Toronto Chapter (CCNCTO) alone has documented over 1,150 incidents of reported anti-Asian racist attacks between March 2020 to February 2021, with 500 occurring in just the first two months of 2021 (CCNC, 2021). One possible outcome proposed by Gee et al. (2020) is that Asian Americans delay their medical treatments out of fear of discrimination. The study further proposed that racist hate crimes can

lead to injury and death of the victims and, even minor microaggressions, can contribute to increased risk of heart disease, substance abuse, and suicide among Asian Americans (Gee et al., 2020). Therefore, in this study, I further investigate how Covid-related racism and xenophobia appears in East Asian students' experience in higher education institutions today.

Summary of Chapter

This chapter summarized some of the key findings from existing literature on topics regarding racialized students' experiences in North America, with a specific focus on East Asians in higher education. The impacts of racial microaggression, Whiteness and White supremacy, and the effectiveness of educational policy were discussed. Further, due to the recent increase in Covid-related anti-Asian hate crimes, I dedicated a section to exploring the potential implications of the Novel Coronavirus for East Asian students. My research is designed to fill the gap in empirical data on the experiences of East Asian university students by shedding light on their lived experiences. In the next chapter, I will discuss the research methodology, and methods I employed for this research.

Chapter 3: Methodology, Methods, and Research Design

This chapter describes the research methodology and methods adopted in this study. The chapter also includes an outline of the data collection and analysis process. Later in the chapter, I provide a short description of each participant.

Methodology

Qualitative Case Study

I employed qualitative case study as my research methodology. Qualitative research explores a particular central phenomenon and collects detailed and in-depth views of participants (Cohen et al., 2018). In previous chapters, I discussed that higher education institutions often neglect the voices of racialized students (Aveling, 2017; Hiraldo, 2010). A qualitative approach provides participants with a platform to voice their own stories. Qualitative research regards people as meaning-making beings and thus values subjective accounts. From these subjective retellings, researchers aspire to understand, describe, and explain multiple and differing interpretations of the central phenomenon (Cohen, et al., 2018). Qualitative research allows participants to be involved in and interpret situations based on their own unique cultural and contextual realities. As seen in schools and other social institutions, the structures privilege certain groups while marginalizing others; they legitimize this social order by couching it in the language of normalcy and common sense (Kumashiro, 2002). For that reason, it is most suitable to study and make sense of the manifestations of racial discrimination in real-life contexts within the university that capture the nuances of these experiences.

Qualitative research takes the researcher's positionality into account and allows for reflexivity. Consequently, I was able to build relationships and trust with participants, bridging the gaps between myself and the participants (Cohen et al., 2018; Maxwell, 2008). As an East Asian student at a Canadian university, I have had similar experiences as my participants in these educational settings. I am able to understand their experiences and the discomfort they might have discussing such a personal research topic. Hammersley and Atkinson (1995) propose that in a qualitative study, "research design should be a reflexive process operating through every stage of a project" (p. 24). Qualitative research is a dynamic process that allows flexibility in the research design.

I conducted my research using an exploratory case study. Case study is an empirical inquiry that derives from original data to answer a set of questions about a particular topic (Cohen et al., 2018). An exploratory case study, specifically, describes an approach whereby the researcher explores situations in which the intervention being evaluated has no clear, single set of outcomes (Yin, 2003). The issue of racial-microaggression is complex; the frequency and intensity of these racial microaggressions depend largely on context, geographical environment, and the interactions between participants. I cannot analyze my data without considering the context in which incidents of racial microaggression occur. A case study allows the researcher to conduct their research in a natural setting, rather than a controlled setting, which allows participants to share their experiences and stories comfortably without constraints and restrictions (Baxter & Jack, 2008). This is important because the overarching goal of qualitative case study (in accordance with my research) is to provide an insider perspective on 'what it is like' to be in a particular situation by displaying a close-up reality, rich detail, and thick description of participants' lived experiences and feelings about a phenomenon (Cohen et al., 2018).

Stake (1995) and Yin (2003) suggest that case study recognizes “the importance of the subjective human creation of meaning but does not reject outright some notion of objectivity” of constructivist paradigm (Miller & Crabtree, 1999, p.10). This intricate balance of subjectivity and objectivity is appropriate to my study because it allows me to analyze data from subjective accounts of experience while, at the same time, explaining the phenomenon through theoretical frameworks and pattern finding (Yin, 2018). Additionally, the literature suggests that the intent of a policy does not equal results (Ahmed, 2006; Aveling, 2017; Rizvi & Lingard, 2010). Yin (2003) proposed that studies designed to answer explorative questions should consider a case study methodology. In my research, I examined how East Asian students face racial microaggression on campus and the use of qualitative case study allowed me to explore the lived experiences of these students.

Sampling and Recruitment

Participants for this case study were recruited from a large undergraduate, graduate, and postgraduate degree granting university in Ontario, Canada with a diverse student population and high percentage of international students. This university considers racial equity, inclusivity, and diversity as high priorities. I recruited a total of five East Asian (specifically, Chinese) upper-year university students through the online social media platform, Facebook. I selected upper-year students because they had a wider range of experiences in different contexts within the university. For instance, upper-year students took more courses on campus and interacted with more professors. As a result, they were able to provide more comprehensive insight into their perceptions of the campus climate.

For recruitment, I used non-probability or non-random sampling methods. One main criterion for my sample was that participants should have basic knowledge of racial microaggression. The reasoning for this was due to the subtle nature of racial microaggressions, in which victims often normalize and internalize racial microaggression and, consequently, under-report incidents of racial microaggression. To avoid discrepancy among participants' awareness of racial microaggression, the use of non-probability/non-random sampling allowed me to select participants that were already aware of this phenomenon. Because qualitative research does not rely solely on objectivity but instead relies heavily on the subjectivity of participants, non-probability sampling allowed for an effective way to recruit suitable participants that have similar basic knowledge on the central phenomenon (Cohen et al., 2018).

Research Method

Interviews

All participants attended three sessions that ranged from 45 to 60 minutes in length. The sessions consisted of an introduction session, an interview session, and a follow-up session. In the introduction session, I provided a brief introduction of myself as the researcher and an overview of the research. After the initial introduction, I provided participants with consent forms and Letters of Information to sign over the Docusign application. To ensure maximal protection for the participants, I collected consent forms a week after our initial meeting to verify understanding of my research. The week period served as a window of opportunity for the participants to reflect on their readiness to consent to participate (Cohen et al., 2018). The participants were informed that they could ask any questions or voice any concerns they may have regarding the research, and their participation was completely voluntary. Once consents and

clear understandings were established between me and the participants, I began my data collection via interviews.

I conducted semi-structured, one-on-one interviews with participants in recognition of the fact that, in research, interviews with racialized groups begin with the assumption that the perspectives they provide are meaningful and valuable (Cohen et al., 2018). The use of qualitative interviews allowed me to legitimize and validate the voices of racialized groups. Furthermore, the semi-structured nature of the interviews allowed me to restrict and/or pursue the topics and questions during the interview that were central to my research while also permitting me some flexibility to tailor questions specifically to each interviewee to obtain more personal data (Cohen et al., 2018). I used probing techniques to obtain richer and deeper information about these students' experiences based on the information they provided during the first interview session. To document the interviews, I conducted and recorded my interviews via Zoom due to Covid-19 related health measures. The use of recording allowed me to provide full attention to the participants during their interviews and ensured accuracy during the transcribing stage. At the beginning of the interview, I provided pseudonyms for each participant to conceal their identities throughout my research for anonymity. Due to the highly personal nature of my research, I strived to provide a safe and trusting environment for participants by maintaining emotional neutrality during the interviews. For the last session, I scheduled a follow-up meeting with each participant to answer any questions or concerns they had regarding their experience participating in my research. During the follow-up session, I shared the interview transcripts with the participants to ensure accurate interpretations.

Data Analysis

The purpose of data analysis in case studies is to “facilitate the search for patterns and themes” that can later be transformed into findings (Patton, 1990, p. 384). I transcribed participant interviews and read through them several times. I began to ‘code’ my data into different categories based on emerging patterns, common themes, and relevance. ‘Coding’ in data analysis refers to “how you define what the data you are analyzing are about” to find meaning and relationships in the texts (Gibbs, 2018, p. 55). Content analysis, based on the similarities and/or differences in the students’ responses, produced themes and sub-themes that I describe in greater detail in Chapter 4. I formed logical links through pattern matching, explanation building, and reflection of my initial study proposition (Yin, 2018).

My analysis procedure followed Lincoln and Guba’s (1985) standards of trustworthiness in qualitative research. The criteria include credibility, transferability, confirmability, and dependability. To enhance credibility, I recruited students that are currently enrolled in higher education institutions to avoid having participants recall noncurrent and remote events of racial microaggression. Furthermore, I utilized the “member-checking” technique to increase credibility, in which I shared the data, interpretations, and conclusions with the participants to allow for them to correct any errors or misinterpretations, and to give them an opportunity to provide additional information. It is my responsibility as researcher to protect participants’ stories by ensuring that they are presented accurately (King, 2003). For transferability, I detailed the context in which my case study takes place to ensure that my results are transferable to other appropriately fit contexts. The dependability of my research is emphasized by accounting for the changing nature of the context, and confirmability is achieved by displaying my researcher’s

reflexivity to eliminate bias (Lois & Barton, 2002). I recognize and take into consideration that my experience and positionality bring a unique lens to my research.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations for my target population included confidentiality issues, identity protection, and consent. To combat these barriers, pseudonyms were assigned to participants to conceal their identities, signed copies of the consent forms were collected from all participants, and Letters of Information were provided to participants to maximize transparency. Furthermore, I recognized that anonymity and confidentiality are important factors to consider when designing my research. As a result, identifiable characteristics such as name, professional backgrounds and parental information were not disclosed in my study. In addition, all files collected during my research were kept secure in my computer by setting up passwords to eliminate other people from accessing my computer. The aforementioned procedures to protect participants were presented in the consent forms and Letters of Information for ethical purposes prior to the initiation of this research.

Participants

A total of five participants participated in this research. Table 1 outlines basic information about each participant. Following that, a short description of each participant is provided for context.

Table 1: Research Sample

Pseudonym	Age	Sex	Year of Study at the University	International/ Domestic Students	Ethnicity
Charlie	24	M	Recent Graduate	Domestic	Chinese (Cantonese) and Japanese
Andrew	23	M	Recent Graduate	Domestic	Chinese (Cantonese)
Phoebe	24	F	Recent Graduate	International	Chinese
Philip	21	M	4th Year Student	International	Chinese (Cantonese)
Ka Wei	21	F	4th Year Student	Domestic	Chinese

Charlie

Charlie is a 24-year-old male. He identifies as Chinese (Cantonese) and Japanese. He grew up speaking both English and Cantonese at home and is proficient in both Cantonese and English. He identifies as a domestic student and is a former undergraduate and graduate student at the university. He describes himself as an individual who is proud of his ethnic identity and loves to share that part of himself with others. Charlie worked as a Resident Assistant at the university and his involvement at the university allowed him to observe various social interactions on campus across different contexts. Initially, Charlie did not report noticing much of the racial

power dynamics happening on campus, but as the interview progressed, he noted that he had brushed over a lot of these experiences involving his race, and he was able to recall more experiences of racial microaggression toward the end of our interview.

Andrew

Andrew is a 23-year-old male. He identifies as a Chinese Canadian and speaks fluent English. Before he was born, his parents and sister immigrated from Hong Kong to Vancouver, where he spent his time before attending university in Toronto. In Vancouver, he and his family lived in the suburbs, and he describes his move to Toronto, a metropolitan city, to be a difficult transition for him. He was enrolled as a domestic student during his time at university and he gained in-depth knowledge on subjects of inequity, diversity, and inclusion through his undergraduate degree at the university. He is a passionate individual and has been extremely involved in various extracurricular activities and student life on campus.

Phoebe

Phoebe is a 24-year-old female. Phoebe identifies as Chinese. Her native language is Mandarin and she is proficient in English. During her time at the university, she was enrolled as an international student. Thus, Phoebe was able to provide valuable insights into the struggles she faced as an international student in Canada. She describes herself as an active individual, who was involved in extracurricular activities on campus and, in her final year of study, she also worked for a student service program, where she gained insights into administrative aspects of the school.

Philip

Philip is a 21-year-old male. He identifies as Chinese (Cantonese). He is currently enrolled as an international student at the university; however, he finds himself navigating his place between international and domestic students because of his earlier exposure to Canadian culture—he moved to Canada at the age of 14. Due to Covid-related restrictions placed on campus, he was able to provide insights on his experience with online learning. Overall, he describes himself as a carefree and logical individual.

Ka Wei

Ka Wei is a 24-year-old female. She identifies as Chinese and Chinese Canadian. She is currently enrolled as a domestic student at the university. Although she identifies as a domestic student, she finds that she is in-between cultures—Chinese and Canadian. She suggests that her dual ethnicity/nationality provides her a unique experience at the university, especially in the social context. Similar to Philip, Ka Wei was able to provide insights on her experience with online learning and the current campus climate.

Summary of Chapter

In this chapter, I provided a rationale for the methodology and methods employed in my research. I discussed my method of data collection and analysis and provided introductions to the participants in the study. In the next chapter, I will present and discuss the findings.

Chapter 4: Presentation of Research Findings

In this chapter, I present my findings related to my first and second research questions: (1) How do East Asian students experience racial microaggression on campus space in Ontario universities? and (2) How are the anti-discrimination policies and policy statements on anti-racism protecting East Asian students from racial microaggression? A total of five themes were identified: 1) experiences with peers on campus space, 2) experiences with professors, 3) experiences with student services, 4) experiences with racism and racial microaggression, and 5) students' perspectives on anti-racism policies and initiatives on campus. Each theme has been divided into sub-themes based on patterns that emerged during the data analysis phase. Sub-themes were discussed in conjunction with the existing literature.

Experiences with Peers on Campus Space

In the initial part of the interview, all five participants described their experiences at the university as "good" and "positive". During the interviews, they described the academic aspects as "most sufficient" while outlining the social aspects as "least sufficient". When probed about their social experiences on campus, participants expressed that their childhood experiences did play a role in how they interact with their peers. They further highlighted that the lack of shared cultural experience and a diminished sense of belonging were the most significant barriers when evaluating their experiences with peers. Similar barriers were identified in Kim and Kim (2010), who found that references to American pop culture, slang, and jokes made it difficult for non-White students, especially international students, to participate and argued that this can manifest into social exclusion of East Asian or other racialized students.

Lack of Shared Cultural Experiences

Participants in this study reported struggling to relate to the dominant Western cultural values most commonly encountered on campus space. For example, Charlie states that although he was born in Canada and identified as a domestic student, he grew up mainly in Hong Kong, which meant he identified as bicultural. As a result, he found himself to be an outcast. People often assumed that he shared the dominant Western cultural values because he identified as a domestic student, yet he had a challenging time relating to his White peers who grew up in Canadian context. He highlighted those different cultural experiences in childhood can affect how peers interact:

In my lab at my Master of Science program, where I did my research, most colleagues were White. Even people that are racialized adopted this White culture, which was a bit of a barrier for me because I couldn't relate to things they did growing up as kids. There is no one for me to relate with which affected how well we got along.

When asked about his thoughts about seeing his racialized peers adopting the dominant culture, Charlie described it as 'sad':

It is a bit sad to see that my Asian peers completely erase their ethnic identities in order to fit into the dominant culture. But for me, I am very proud of my ethnic heritage and do not find it to be an issue to show that part of myself off to others.

This observation might be categorized as code-switching in the field of linguistics. Code-switching refers to “the act of changing one’s language or vernacular in order to better adapt to a social situation” (Casimir, 2020, p. 7). Specifically, code-switching is commonly seen in

racialized or bilingual individuals' communications. From a critical race standpoint, code-switching enables racialized groups to survive in the dominant social situation; a particular language or way of talking is demanded for safety and inclusion in White spaces (Morris, 2020). As Charlie describes, East Asian students can imitate behaviours of their White peers by not acting or behaving in ways that reflect their cultural values and habits to fit into the dominant culture (Lee, 1994).

Ka Wei further suggested that for East Asian students with lived experiences in both Canada and East Asia, it can be difficult to relate to peers; she explained:

In my experience, I had trouble connecting with students from overseas (China) because I am a bit too Canadian for them, but at the same time, not Canadian enough for the local students. I find that I'm in between cultures and couldn't really find my group until my second year.

Like Charlie, Ka Wei found that her cultural identity was a barrier for her in making connections with peers on campus. Ka Wei faced a unique form of discrimination by both social groups due to the intersectional complexity in her positionality (Casimir, 2020). This is problematic because her hybrid cultural identity was subjected to stereotypes and assumptions by Whites and Asian subgroups. These prejudices prevented her from comfortably fitting into either social group.

Perpetuating East Asians' Foreigner Status

In contrast to Charlie and Ka Wei's experiences, Philip reported that his exposure to diverse cultures enabled him to make friends from different cultural backgrounds more easily. He explained that having moved to Canada when he was 14, he was able to socialize effortlessly

with both international and domestic students. Philip described how his White peers would often be surprised to see that he knew Western references despite him growing up in Hong Kong:

It is kind of funny. They just assume I do not watch the same things growing up but in Hong Kong, we get exposed to a lot of Western media. They just get so surprised when I am able to reference the same shows and videos.

From a critical race perspective, Philip's peers' surprised reactions reveal a normalized Whiteness and further perpetuate East Asians' foreigner status. East Asians have historically been seen as perpetual foreigners who do not understand Western references, such as movies and TV shows from mainstream Western media (Sue et al., 2007). As a result, East Asians have worked through generations of assimilation into Western culture to gain their recognition as citizens in North American societies. This promotion of Whiteness from his peers risks a false inclusion wherein racialized students are only rewarded with inclusion in the social group when they participate in Whiteness and are excluded when they fail to exhibit Western values and identities. The consequential undertone in Whiteness and White supremacy has caused racialized students to further erase their cultural identities and assimilate into Western culture (Franco & Franco, 2016). Charlie's description of his experiences with his peers in his Master's lab provide an additional example of this.

Social Inclusion/Exclusion

When probed further on the social nuances between East Asian students and White students, all participants acknowledged that there was a social divide between East Asian students and White students at the university. When asked about the reason for this social divide, Charlie explained that many people had the tendency to group East Asian students into 'one bubble' with the

assumption that they behave a certain way and proceed to ignore them because East Asians are seen as ‘different’. This difference is, again, a promotion of Whiteness where other cultural identities are pathologized by Whites or Western societies as “different” (Carr, 2016). Cultures and values that do not mimic Whiteness are pathologized or unprivileged, which leads to social exclusion. Fortunately, for Phoebe, she found that with the large population of East Asian international students at the university, she was able to find peers who shared similar cultural backgrounds. She described it as a significant positive factor in her social experience whilst living in a campus residence, but distinguishes this from her overall experience on campus:

I think my experience at residence differs from my campus experience. The demographic of the residence I lived at had a lot of East Asian international students, and it felt like home.

In other campus contexts, Phoebe described experiences of exclusion, highlighting the imbalance in student distribution during classroom group projects. She observed that most White students did not prefer to work with East Asian students, which led to East Asian students getting ignored in class. This accords with the Choi et al. (2017) study, in which East Asian international students reported feeling invisible and excluded by others on campus. A likely reason for this avoidance from White students is that the stereotypes of East Asian students “not speaking English well” and “having accents” causes domestic students to avoid working with them (Chou & Feagin, 2015; Vo, 2019). However, the opposite was also observed in this study; East Asian students avoided domestic students and preferred their own cultural group. For example, Philip suggested that East Asian students only spoke with each other in Chinese and excluded students who do not speak Chinese. Philip also observed that East Asian students were most comfortable hanging out with their own cultural group. This preference caused an imbalance in dynamics

within peers, where there was a clear divide between East Asian and White students. Ka Wei attributed this reluctance by East Asian students to approach White students to the colonial influence in East Asia:

In my culture, everyone sees White people as 'gods'; they are the golden standards and people both praise and respect Westerners. I think it is in part due to the long history of colonization that happened. They can be seen as intimidating and more superior to East Asian students when coming to Canada.

Ka Wei indicated that it can be difficult at times to rethink the colonial racial hierarchy that positions White as the most superior race. While Ka Wei knows that to be untrue, she has to constantly remind herself that East Asians do not possess lower status than Whites in her day-to-day interactions. Her example further highlights that the colonial history of racism is still embedded in racialized students' experiences in educational settings. White supremacy is embedded in our educational system and continues to be internalized by racial students (Dei & Villanueva, 2021). Thus, the imperial, colonial, and neocolonial experiences of racialized students need to be further examined (Rezai-Rashti, 1995).

Experiences with Professors on Campus Space

When describing their experiences with professors, two themes emerged - English proficiency and cultural differences. Andrade's (2006) research on East Asian students in English-speaking universities revealed a discrepancy between professors' understanding of East Asian students' cultural expressions and their identities. The study highlighted that East Asian students' perceived shyness and quietness stemmed from their lack of confidence in their English language proficiency; however, professors could misinterpret their lack of participation as a lack

of interest, which consequently affected the students' participation grades (Andrade, 2006). Liggett (2014) further proposed that non-native English speakers frequently face discrimination based on their English language proficiency; the discourse around race and English language proficiency is reflective of the uneven societal power relationships between the dominant group and minority group that is considered to be the "natural order of things" (Liggett, 2014, p.114).

The Role of English Language Proficiency

In Canada, there has been a dominance of the English language and a history of erasure of non-English languages since settler colonialism (Patrick, 2017). This is illustrated by the designation of English and French as Canada's two official languages. Both are colonial languages that repressed Indigenous languages (Patrick, 2017). Language discrimination oppresses certain languages and dominates and privileges the dominant language(s) (Roche, 2019). Pennycook (1998) illustrated a correlation between college students' linguistic backgrounds and their social hierarchy whereby native English speakers were placed at the top while non-White, non-native English speakers ranked at the bottom of the social order. Phoebe described that English language proficiency was a significant factor that impacted East Asian students' interactions with professors. Phoebe explained:

I am an East Asian student myself, and because I am more fluent than some other East Asian students, the gaps between myself and the professors are much smaller[...] I feel more comfortable speaking to professors when I am more confident in my English [...] I am much more comfortable raising my hand, asking questions and approaching professors. I feel less intimidated talking to professors. My friends who are not comfortable with their English are more timid when approaching professors.

Charlie believed that accents also determined how comfortable students are in their interactions with professors. In cases where students do not speak English well, professors can be ignorant of East Asian students' linguistic difficulties in their studies and falsely attribute their hardships to other non-race and cultural factors (Andrade, 2006). Charlie also added that his English proficiency allowed him to gain privilege in an English language dominant environment, and the lack of English proficiency or accents would result in negative assumptions. When asked about his own bilingual ability, he responded:

If I had a Chinese accent, I would not feel as comfortable speaking with someone who is super fluent in English. I think that is a big thing because people can assume things about me if I do not speak as well as they do.

Phoebe highlighted the importance of having diverse representations in terms of faculty members at the university. She identified that East Asian students connected better with professors from East Asian backgrounds. In Phoebe's experience, professors with East Asian backgrounds incorporated different teaching methods to help include East Asian students in class discussions, whereas other professors would ignore East Asian students as they assumed silence was a choice. She further suggested that there is a better sense of belonging for racialized students when they see a racialized faculty member. She described:

I remember there was one time in my class, I had an Asian professor, he really tried to engage a couple of students who are usually shy and sit in the back of the class and specifically asked them for their opinions and thoughts. Overtime, the students felt more comfortable engaging with the professor because his willingness to accommodate to the cultural difference and language barriers. A lot of students whose first language is not

English would hide in the corner and not try to engage. In the long run, that is really bad for their academic success because they are being neglected. That is, in my opinion, a great example of how professors can support their racialized students to come out of their comfort zones. The norm is that other professors would just ignore them, and I don't think that is positive or supportive for the students.

Critical race theorists reject this claim to meritocracy where White values, including the English language, have continued to be the dominant paradigm in educational settings (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). Advantages were granted when the East Asian students in my study participated in White ideologies, such as speaking fluent, accent-free English. This demand for White values continues to privilege Whiteness and discriminates against non-White and non-Western ways of knowing and being.

Cultural Differences

Aside from English proficiency, Philip and Phoebe suggested that there are cultural differences between East Asians and Westerners in their attitudes towards professors. Phoebe expressed that in East Asian culture, professors are seen as authorities who should not be challenged:

Cultural differences, too, such as confronting a professor, is not a thing in East Asia, particularly China. They are seen as authority figures in our culture, so international students at North American universities do not challenge professors as much as their peers do, where the norm here is for Canadian students to challenge professors. I notice a cultural difference there.

Philip described a similar understanding of cultural difference that has implications for professor-student interactions. He stated:

I think one of the things in my background is that we do not really encourage people to be expressive or stand out, and most Asian societies are kind of like that; you are supposed to fit in and be normal.

Overall, the students in my study described their interactions with professors as pleasant. When recent graduates, Charlie, Andrew, and Phoebe reflected back on their interactions with professors, they found that they were intimidated at the prospect of approaching their professors in the early years of their time at the university. However, they recalled that once they went into their third and fourth year, they became more comfortable approaching professors and found that the professors at the university are generally passionate about helping students with their academic and professional journeys. For current students, Ka Wei and Philip, Ka Wei suggested that the large class sizes were a barrier for her to reach out to professors because they are not always accessible. Typically, the teaching assistants (TAs) would act as her initial point of contact when requiring assistance with classwork, and she described her TAs as "patient and willing to work with students". Philip found that his interactions with professors varied but didn't recall anything exceptionally negative. Due to Covid-19-induced online learning, his interactions with professors had been mainly through emails and the interactions had been, as he described, "easy, teacher and mentor-type" interactions.

Asian Canadians' voices have historically been silenced and ignored by the dominant group (Wallace, 2018). In combination with the model minority narrative, East Asians are falsely encouraged to be silent and submissive in order to protect their model minority image (Lee,

1994; Lee, 2009; Ng, Lee, & Pak, 2017). As a result, it is important to examine the cultural nuances that contribute to East Asian students' interactions with professors.

Experiences with Student Services

A Lack of Cultural Understanding

When asked about their experiences with student services on campus, participants stated that they had their most negative experiences at the Registrar's Office and the Writing Centre.

Andrew explained that due to his socioeconomic status and race, he was often intimidated by the Writing Centre and Registrar's Office. He found himself unable to relate to the administrators/staff and further described that they showed a lack of empathy to his issues: He described this as follows:

I did not have great interactions with, for example, the writing services and the Registrar's. I think the contributing reasons were the inability for me to relate to them and a lack of empathy. Speaking of the inability to relate, a lot of the encounters start with them introducing themselves and academic credentials. I don't even know what half of that means, especially coming from a lower-income immigrant family and my parents never went to university. It was daunting, to begin with, and created that inability to connect.

Andrew indicated that these experiences discouraged him from seeking further assistance. He further described that most of the administrative staff were White and had not experienced these issues first-hand:

The administrators and faculty members are mostly White, and I think the cultural understanding was lacking. A lot of the issues came from the lack of understanding because they do not necessarily have a good understanding of the culture and as a person of colour, it is hard to exclude culture in my experience and needs.

Phoebe shared similar experiences. She noted that it can be difficult for East Asian students to relate to administrators and service providers at the university who are White. She reasoned that the level of resonance and relatability can be low when someone does not look like you or has not been through similar experiences. She found that although the administrators are very supportive and have a strong willingness to help, there is still a lack of understanding of the experiences of racialized students. Whiteness and White supremacy are embedded in the university's colonial structure, including their hiring practices and types of services provided. For example, in Phoebe's first year at the university, she found herself having difficulty excelling in her courses. Subsequently, she sought support from the academic advisors at the university. Although they were able to identify helpful learning strategies, they could not identify the cultural barriers that were most affecting her learning. For instance, one of the learning struggles she faced was the cultural transition of moving to Toronto. Similar to the findings from Kim and Kim's (2010) study, Phoebe was not provided with the needed support to help her adjust to life in Canada. She wondered if, had the academic advisors had similar lived experiences, perhaps they may have been able to identify the root causes of her academic struggles. She explained:

The administrative staff were 99% White folks. Although they are supportive and want to assist students, there is a lack of understanding of what international students or racialized students are going through. If someone could be there with similar experiences, it would be more helpful for me to relate to them.

These findings align with Andrade's (2006) research, which contends that administrators are often neglectful and ignorant to the cultural aspects of a student's experience. This color-blindness risks overlooking the systemic racism and inequality students face due to their race and culture (Gilborn, 2006). In both Andrew and Phoebe's cases, it was impossible to ignore the power structure that exists between Whites and non-Whites. Their race and cultural identities affected their experiences on campus. Furthermore, for Andrew, his experience with the administrators further highlighted how his social categories resulted in a different experience for him when encountering academic advisors from a different socio-economic and racial background. Consequently, academic advisors and university administrators must be conscious of this intersectionality in students' experiences, in order to provide more comprehensive support for racialized students.

Negative Attitudes & Stereotyping

Moreover, participants in this study also attributed their negative experiences on campus to faculty and staff's negative attitudes. Andrew shared a similar experience with negative attitudes from administrative staff but additionally noted that it was difficult to exempt race and culture from his experience, especially when there was a lack of diversity in staff members. Andrew explained:

When I look back at some of my encounters with the Registrar's, they have a passive-aggressive demeanour. A bit demeaning. A part of me wonders if it's because of the power hierarchy or my race because there have been situations where the tone being communicated is a sign of microaggression towards my race.

According to Solorzano et al. (2000), the negative attitudes of the administrators may not have been coincidental. Their study found that administrative offices portray a certain set of prejudice and precedent that creates an uninviting campus climate to further support the embedded hierarchical racist paradigms. In other words, their negative attitudes are used to prevent racialized students from occupying that space. For Ka Wei, she found that her interactions with administrators were impersonal, where Ka Wei recalled feeling like a “student number”. CRT highlights that the needs of racialized students are often overlooked, and racialized students are seen as an invisible part of campus (Yosso, 2009). Ka Wei reported that the academic advisors were judgmental about her grades and this judgmental attitude discouraged her from seeking further assistance from the Registrar:

The administrator and staff, I would say, are always friendly, but it is (name of the university), they have to handle a high volume of students. I met with the academic advisors [...] I wish [the encounter] was more personalized, and they would know me as more than just a number. I went to the Registrar to plan out my academic course selections, and when the academic advisor saw my GPA and program, she immediately mentioned something like "you will not get into law schools with these grades", instead of being supportive and proposing alternative solutions. It was discouraging and uncomfortable.

When looking at her academic transcript, the academic advisor immediately assumed Ka Wei was pursuing law school without knowing anything about her, other than her program. This assumption left an impression that law school was the only acceptable career choice and, being an Asian, she felt a heightened sense of academic pressure as a result. Gupta et al. (2011) found that in schools, East Asian students have higher academic expectations due to their model

minority stereotypes. In Ka Wei's recollection, the Registrar's reluctance to assist her demonstrated this stereotype, and risked preventing her from seeking further help.

Students' Experiences with Racism and Racial Microaggression

During the second part of the interview, participants were asked about their experiences with racism and racial microaggression. All participants said they did not experience any explicit racism on campus. Furthermore, although at the time of the study, Covid-19 had exacerbated incidents of anti-Asian hate crimes, none of the participants experienced any Covid-related anti-Asian hate on campus space. However, like Sue et al., (2007), who suggested that racial microaggression is the form of racism that continues to affect racialized students' experiences in educational settings, most of the participants expressed that they had experienced incidents of racial microaggression on campus space. These experiences have been categorized into five subthemes: 1) model minority stereotypes, 2) pathologizing cultural values, 3) Eurocentric curriculum and invalidation of international perspectives, 4) mispronunciation of names, and 5) the impacts of racial microaggression.

Model Minority Stereotypes

The model minority stereotype was brought up by most participants during the interviews. Their experiences align with existing findings on the model minority myth. The model minority myth glorifies the "positive" experiences of East Asians in North America, despite the reality of not gaining privileged status (Alvarez et al., 2006; Gupta et al. 2011; Lee, 1994). Delucchi and Do (1996) and Lee (1994) both found that the model minority myth led to Asian students not being

recognized as victims of racial intolerance. Analogously, Phoebe expressed that these positive stereotypes created negligence of East Asians' hardships and voices:

I think, historically, they [East Asians] are framed and perceived that way. We are called model minorities where we come from wealth, and we do better socioeconomically. It could be true for some, but it totally minimizes the hardships that Asians go through. A lot of Asians come to Canada as refugees and immigrants. The model minority stereotypes ignore the diverse voices within the East Asian communities and hide the hardships Asians face in society.

Furthermore, Charlie observed that model minority stereotypes are commonly used even within the East Asian communities. He noticed that ascription of intelligence is a common stereotype used towards East Asians, and he wondered if these stereotypes could have continuous damaging outcomes on East Asian students. He explained:

Asians have this model minority myth. It is fabricated to discourage the civil rights movement from Black people by placing other minorities above Blacks, and the expectations that can make Asians perform worse than what they are capable of, academically and in other life pursuits. Even Asians within their group make jokes like "95% on a test is not good enough". I wonder if these stereotypes can perpetuate damaging outcomes on students.

Charlie's concern was the subject of a study conducted by Kohli et al. (2018) who found that racialized students expressed discomfort when they were subjected to compliments and jokes with racial undertones. These 'compliments' and 'jokes' further perpetuate stereotypes that are not true. For example, Ka Wei found that, despite majoring in

political science, she was still the recipient of stereotypes related to her mathematical proficiency. She joked and said “I have not done math since high school” to indicate the falsehoods in these stereotypes. She also noticed that people often assume her socioeconomic background due to her race. She described:

Sometimes you get called the "positive" stereotypes. I am in political science, and people somehow still assume "you must be so good at math", which is odd. Then you also get peers who joke about my socioeconomic background, without actually knowing my family's socioeconomic situation.

The model minority stereotypes minimize East Asians’ individual identities and continue to promote “racial lumping” (Vo, 2019, p. 20). ‘Racial lumping’ groups East Asians into a homogeneous group that is devoid of in-depth understanding of East Asians’ personal racial identities. The superficiality of these East Asian representations continues to reproduce racial inequality and further reduces East Asians’ “histories, characteristics, traditions and values” (Vo, 2019, p. 20). For Philip, although he recognized that there is an ascription of intelligence to East Asians, he found that the model minority stereotypes happened much more in high school. He suggested that in university, people could recognize that the model minority stereotypes do not apply to all East Asians:

There is a stereotype of Asian students being good at science and math in high school, but I think in university, that is less of a case because you are exposed to more people. People start to understand more how you cannot generalize people from the same background.

However, Philip further added that during his university experience, people were hyper-focused on his socioeconomic status. For example, his friends would correlate his day-to-day spending, such as him buying a Starbucks coffee, to his family's socio-economic status:

It is funny. I feel like because of the model minority stereotypes of East Asians being rich, even when I buy a Starbucks coffee, my friend would joke and call me "rich boy" as if my coffee was 25 dollars. There is a weird sense of inflation with everything I buy and do because people just assume it is more expensive.

Andrew expressed that the model minority narrative was frustrating for him because he didn't embody the stereotypes. He described people's behaviours towards him based on the model minority stereotypes as follows:

It would be like coming from a wealthy family, sometimes potentially as a fob (a derogatory term to describe a foreigner), a foreigner with limited English proficiency. They do not try to get to know me personally because they just assume they know what I am like. It is frustrating because I do not identify as those, I mean I wish I was from a wealthy family, but I am not.

The model minority image was made to place East Asians in a vulnerable racial position by replicating the monolithic truths of a few successful examples that drive further divides between East Asians and other racialized groups (Ng et al., 2007; Pang et al. 2004). It became a narrative other people repeat when they encounter East Asian students, where they homogenize East Asians' identities without considering their individual identities. Subsequently, racialized students risk internalizing the myths placed on them without examining how racism is lived in

everyday lives (Lee et al., 2007). Lee (1994) argued that the glorified model minority image can result in academic and mental health challenges for East Asian students.

Further generalizations experienced by participants included projections about what an Asian's temperament should be. Chin's (2015) study proposed that racial stereotypes impact Asians' sports engagements because Asian stereotypes often overshadow their physical abilities. As Chin (2015) notes, Asian basketball players are stereotyped as hardworking, intelligent, humble, and non-threatening, similar to the model minority stereotypes outlined by Lee (2009). Charlie recalled his experience playing basketball at the Athletic Center on campus when his peers would be surprised to see that he was competitive and aggressive on the court. Charlie reflected:

I think, for me, I played basketball growing up; I'm very passionate about the sport and play in a very aggressive way. When it comes to that, they [White peers] get surprised when I play the way that I do being an Asian person. There is a certain level of generalization that people have of how you are supposed to be in sports, especially in a sport like basketball.

In general, East Asian men are not commonly depicted as athletic or aggressive (Chin, 2015). Therefore, when Charlie showed his competitive playstyle, his peers were surprised because it conflicted with the model minority stereotypes they held for him.

Another stereotype reported by participants was centered around the assumption of homogeneity — a subcategory of racial microaggression proposed in Kim and Kim's (2010) study. Kim and Kim (2010) described the assumption of homogeneity as an assumption that all Asians are the same, which neglects students' own personal and cultural identities. An example Phoebe

described was when a man came up to her and her other East Asian friends, and generalized all of them as Chinese, even though they were of different Asian ethnicities. She recalled:

He approached us and mumbled to us, "so you are Chinese, you are also Chinese, you are Chinese too," and said that to all of us. We were shocked and extremely uncomfortable. We were so shocked that we did not know what to say. We were at a loss for words. For a lot of Asians, that is what they have to experience many times.

Similarly, Ka Wei described how cafeteria and administrative staff would speak to her in Asian languages, assuming her ethnic background:

Usually, racial microaggression occurs with school staff, not students, for example, cafeteria workers or administrators. First of all, they would try to speak Asian languages to me regardless of where they know you are from. I get that they are trying to be friendly but still, it does generalize Asians.

Like was found in the Sue et al., (2007) study, Ka Wei recalled thinking that the perpetrators' intentions were "good"; however, they conveyed a strong generalization of East Asians that disregarded her own cultural and ethnic identity (Lee, 1994). Overall, participants agreed that the model minority stereotypes are not accurate depictions of East Asians' experiences.

Pathologizing Cultural Values

Most participants brought up experiences where cultural values and food choices were seen as "problematic" by the dominant group. Sue et al. (2009) proposed that the pathologizing cultural values is a tactic used by the dominant group to further separate Asians as 'others' and perpetual foreigners that do not possess the dominant cultural values. Aligning with this, Charlie described

racial microaggressive incidents where his cultural food choices were questioned, and people made comments about his eating habits. He related how these incidents can discourage people from practicing their cultural values out of the fear of being seen as 'different.' As a result, he saw a lot of his fellow East Asian peers assimilated into the dominant culture to avoid judgment or being seen as 'different'. He recounted:

This one time, I was eating with chopsticks, and my friend made comments and brought them up. It was definitely interesting to see why she thought to bring it up, and I am sure it was because it is seen as 'different' here, but it is such a common practice in Hong Kong. People's reactions can discourage other racialized minorities from practicing their own cultural habits to avoid being seen as 'different'. At times, international students can behave in a way that is much different than how people typically go about their day-to-day lives, and the difference can be off-putting to some people.

Nonetheless, Charlie found food to be an exciting and contradicting topic because it also connects people from different cultures together. Phoebe also shared her experience with how the dominant group exerted an influence on her food choices. She described:

Chinese food choices can be problematic to the dominant group. Whenever I eat chicken feet, I always get weird reactions, so I stop eating them. I feel like because I have not had chicken feet for so long, I feel weird eating it now, too. This was never the case before I came to Canada. I feel like when you avoid certain foods to avoid reactions from others, you can grow distant from that food, and it becomes hard to reintroduce it back into your diet.

By avoiding certain types of food, Phoebe internalized the racism and became adverse to those foods as well. Ka Wei also said judgement about her food choices from the dominant group did happen, but much more so in middle school and early high school. The ethnic foods she brought to school for lunch were described as "pungent" by her White peers and, as a result, she started assimilating herself and only ate Western foods. Since coming to university, however, she reported that she felt more comfortable eating her ethnic food:

I used to hate bringing ethnic foods to school because, in middle school and high school, the kids are less exposed to diverse foods. I used to be so embarrassed and started only eating and bringing Western foods. Once I got to university, it got better and I became more comfortable eating my own cultural foods. I think even White folks got more exposed to diverse foods and, now, my White friends all love sushi and other Asian foods.

The participants' experiences echoed Lee's (1994) findings where Asian students avoided practices that reflected their own cultural values and habits, such as eating their own cultural foods in schools and educational spaces, to avoid negative social consequences and judgements. The pathologization of cultural values causes East Asians to adopt White cultural values in the effort to be accepted by members of the dominant group (Lee, 1994).

Eurocentric Curriculum and Invalidation of International Perspectives

As discussed in the previous section, food choices and cultural expressions that do not resemble Whiteness are pathologized by the dominant group. In the curriculum, ideas that do not resemble Whiteness are also pathologized by the dominant group. Peters (2015) highlighted that "when curriculums are comprised of 'White ideas' by 'White authors', it normalizes Whiteness while

making non-White studies invisible” (p. 641). Congruently, Andrew reported that almost all of the courses he took required that he focuses mainly on biblical and Eurocentric literature. As a result, he described feeling constrained in what he could and could not cite in his work:

If I do not cite biblical and Eurocentric references, I risk losing marks. It is hard for me to reference someone from another culture without jeopardizing my grades. They [professors and teaching assistants] have a particular way of wanting things done, and if you do not have those elements, you risk losing marks.

Likewise, Ka Wei only used Western sources and references to avoid grade deduction. She expressed concern about courses only valuing Western sources:

We are taught that any sources that are not Western references are not deemed as credible and, for me, I did not find it to be an option to cite non-Western references. Rubrics do not say they are open to multicultural references, and I do not think professors and/or teaching assistants would spend the additional time understanding any non-Western references I put on my assignments.

Ka Wei further suggested that the current course selection at the university lacks diversity. She reiterated that while the university is making an effort to become more progressive with its course choices—having added a few more political science and philosophy courses focused on women scholars in a male-dominated academic stream—the focus is still mainly on Western thinkers. She found it problematic when professors assumed every student understands Western biblical references (i.e., Catholicism and Christianity). She recounted:

They assume that students study the Bible and that they are familiar with Catholicism and Christianity. Times like that are where you feel like they aren't accommodating to international students or students with different cultural and religious backgrounds.

Phoebe also recalled that courses predominantly referenced Western and European thinkers:

When I took courses on world history, they often neglected any other world references and focused mainly on Western and European references. The course material strongly implies that the world started with only European countries.

The participants' experiences with the school curriculum speak to the severe lack of references and materials from around the world and are examples of how Whiteness and White supremacy manifest in educational settings. Blanchett (2006) describes this as "master scripting", a technique used in education where the dominant culture determines what is essential in curriculums and the ways to teach them. There is a normalcy around Whiteness that centralizes on Eurocentric perspectives, while simultaneously ignoring global and non-White perspectives (Sue et al., 2007; Kim & Kim, 2010). Eurocentric curriculums further promote White supremacy in educational spaces. In this study, participants found that non-Western references were not valued or mentioned in their education. This sends a message of what knowledge and whose knowledge are being valued and legitimized.

Despite the incorporation of an anti-racist framework in universities' policies, the curriculum and professors' teaching practices are still based on ideologies of White supremacy with no structural efforts to provide diverse perspectives in their curriculum. Gillborn (2006) argued that the language used in anti-racist frameworks can be easily manipulated, permitting the reality of racial inequality to persist.

Mispronunciation of Names

When asked about their names, most participants described similar experiences to those reported in Kohli and Solorzano's (2012) study, which suggested that racialized students find it easier to Westernize their names in order to compensate for the incompetence of their teachers and peers to accurately pronounce them. From a critical race perspective, the mispronunciation and mistreatment of names in other languages continues to reinforce the dominance of the English language that further perpetuates colonial sentiments (Patrick, 2017). In Ka Wei's experience, her Chinese name became a barrier for her in class because her name was mispronounced and forgotten frequently. She felt that it undermined and devalued her identity. As a result, she tried to assimilate by changing her name to a Western name. However, she did not personally identify with the Western name; she describes:

I have tried changing my name to a Western name, but it did not stick. It just did not feel right because my Chinese name aligns with my identity, my culture, and my background. It just did not feel the same with an English name.

Philip also reported going by a Westernized name because he knew people might not learn the correct pronunciation of his ethnic name. He described:

I have a Westernized name; the Chinese name follows a different pronunciation table and for people to call you correctly, they would have to learn Chinese. It's too unrealistic.

Charlie expressed stronger feelings related to his name and stated that it is frustrating and disrespectful when he sees people mispronounce names in other languages. He described it as

upsetting when racialized people allow others to mispronounce their non-Westernized names because he believes that names preserve so much of an individual's ethnic identity. He stated:

It is so frustrating to see people purposefully butcher names that are not even hard to pronounce. They pronounce it something entirely different; it is so disrespectful. Also, it is sad to see that the person is not correcting them because their names carry so much of their ethnic identities.

It is problematic that racialized students feel the need to create English versions of their names to avoid mistreatment and mispronunciation of their names. Kohli and Solorzano's (2012) proposed that the mispronunciation of names has racial undertones that can be categorized under racial microaggression. The constant mispronunciation of names can result in self-esteem and identity development issues in racialized students. From a critical race perspective, the mistreatment of names in other languages continues to reinforce the dominance of the English language that further perpetuates colonial sentiments.

The Impacts of Racial Microaggression

Mental and Emotional Impacts. Some of the physical consequences of racial microaggression detailed in the literature include "headaches, high blood pressure, digestive issues, fatigue, and sleep problems" (Martin, 2008, p.104). Fortunately, all participants in this study indicated that they do not believe these incidents of racial microaggression had any impact on them physically. However, when asked about the emotional impact of racial microaggression, most participants said that they did experience negative emotional consequences from these incidents. Charlie stated that he felt most impacted when he was the only Asian in leadership

positions; he felt isolated. He was not able to relate to other Resident Assistants as they do not share the same cultural experiences. He described:

Mentally and emotionally, probably, at times, when you feel like you are the only Asian in these positions, it feels a bit different and strange because there are not many of you in these positions. In this kind of environment, I think there is a degree of isolation. For example, I have a much different cultural experience than the other RAs growing up, and it can be isolating because they might click on certain levels, where I don't understand things.

Charlie's experience can be considered an act of "othering" (Kohli & Solorzano, 2012). The act of "othering" sends the message that racialized students do not belong in the space, which leads to exclusion. Andrew also suggested that racial microaggressive incidents took an emotional toll and made him feel unmotivated and hopeless:

Emotionally, it is draining. It is a mood killer, where you do not want to do anything afterwards. It sucked.

Andrew's description of his emotions aligns with Huynh's (2012) study on the depressive symptoms that are found more in racialized students who have experienced recurring racial discrimination.

Phoebe attested to experiencing emotions such as shock and anger. When recalling the incident of the man who generalized her and her friends as all Chinese, she felt a wave of shock initially because she could not process what had happened. However, once the shock subsided, the

emotion of anger came up. It was not a short-term consequence but a long-term emotion that lingers, which she described as follows:

I think emotionally, that [anger] builds up, you become angry. You start to constantly think about it to get yourself prepared if anything happens again next time, how would I act. Then you are angry at yourself emotionally. Why didn't I say anything to him and let him insult all of us?

Ka Wei described incidents of racial microaggression as “uncomfortable” but, in contrast to other participants, neither she nor Philip reported that such incidents left any noticeable emotional impact.

Academic and Professional Impacts. When asked about their perceived academic and/or professional consequences from incidents of racial microaggression, Phoebe found that the emotional and mental toll of racial microaggression indirectly influenced her academic performance. She claimed that the lack of diversity and cultural understanding among faculty and staff compromised her academic experience. For example, the administrators were not able to identify the appropriate supports for her because they did not take into account the cultural barriers she faced at the university. She also stated that her language barrier had a significantly negative impact on her academic journey:

Language is a huge thing, but unfortunately for many professors and TAs, when they grade your paper, they do not think of that as a factor. There should be more programs and services to help students improve their reading by eliminating the language barrier.

Andrew and Ka Wei also felt that some academic and professional opportunities were impeded by their race. Specifically, Andrew questioned how his race and cultural identity played a factor in his academic awards opportunities:

I feel like, at times, there may have been favouritism in awards opportunities. If I think of the majority of times I was passed for an award or position, etc., chances are they were probably white. It's definitely disheartening.

Ka Wei described a similar experience with regards to her Chinese name:

I have an uncommon name — Ka Wei. Sometimes I question if my name prevented me from more job opportunities than a name like Olivia or Ashley would. I do notice professors and students often have a hard time remembering my name or pronouncing it correctly. That's where my thinking comes from, and I don't think anything happened where a job application or a student opportunity rejected me because of my name. But there might be a chance they chose someone with a more common name over me.

The feelings that Andrew and Ka Wei described are not unsupported in the related research literature. When examining the environmental and systemic microaggressions East Asian students face, Kim and Kim (2010) found that there was preferential treatment given to American students for assistantships and other academic opportunities.

Overall, the students' experiences with racial microaggression on campus space revealed the need for structural change at the university. In particular, this study highlighted the existence of racial microaggression against East Asians in Canadian higher educational institutions. Their experiences unmasked the Whiteness and White supremacy that operate within their educational

structures. The findings from this study echo Housemand et al.'s (2014) contention that higher educational institutions in Canada are still breeding grounds for racial intolerance.

Students' Perspectives on Anti-discrimination Policies and Initiatives on Campus

A Lack of Visibility and Efficacy

After discussing their experiences at the university, participants were asked to share their thoughts on the university's efforts in protecting students against racism and racial microaggression. When asked about the perceived effectiveness of the university's policies, most participants were aware that there were anti-discrimination policies in place at the university, but they believed that simply having these policy statements is not effective on its own. They pointed out that it is important for the university to increase the accessibility and visibility of its anti-discrimination policies. Charlie recalled the policies being inaccessible and invisible during his time at the university:

I was never made aware by the university of where to find them, and I am concerned that other students might not be aware of it as well. It was up to the students to research these policies through the university's websites, which can be difficult.

Similar to findings discussed in Ahmed (2006) and Aveling (2007), Andrew argued that, although it is essential for universities to have their regulations and objectives in text form, the effectiveness of the policies is contingent on the organization and individuals in power addressing racism and racial microaggression in concrete ways. Andrew expressed that the delivery of these policies is not clearly presented:

It is hard to measure the progress of the school [in its anti-racism effort]. The statements have a lack of action items and create no accountability or meaning.

Ka Wei similarly expressed the opinion that the university's anti-racism policies are falling short by not gaining the visibility needed:

I know these documents exist, but I have never read them [...] It is not well known; it is accessible on their website, but it is not promoted.

Based on her experiences with racial microaggression on campus, Ka Wei concluded the policies and statements are insufficient. Phoebe also contended that just having policy statements in textual form is not enough and stated that she wants to see more effort, especially an ongoing, long-term effort to materialize the policies in students' lives:

I would like to look into the new policies implemented since Covid-19. Based on my knowledge, the university was able to identify and protect people from overt attacks. But when it comes to microaggression or unbalanced dynamics in the class, where East Asian students are being more silenced and isolated, I do not think the university is progressive [enough] yet to help racialized students with [university] policies.

Sharing the model minority concerns proposed by Lee (1994), Phoebe feared that the model minority myth would discourage universities from focusing on their anti-Asian racism efforts. Furthermore, Charlie suggested that the university places its priority on academics which neglects the social and cultural issues that affect racialized students. In addition, Andrew shared that from his time at the university, he did not see many anti-racism initiatives from the school. He described:

I did not see many anti-racism initiatives. Although there were anti-racism workshops at the university, they were not commonly promoted, and racial factors are seen as silenced factors at the school.

Overall, when asked about the university's anti-racism efforts, Charlie, Andrew, and Phoebe observed that, while there was increased advocacy by the university to a certain degree, they hoped for more efforts in dismantling anti-Asian racism.

Desired Action

When asked what kind of actions they would like to see from the university, Phoebe hoped that there can be physical spaces available for Asian students to share their stories. She said that seeing the real faces and voices of students and their stories would be extremely helpful in anti-racism initiatives and promoting cultural diversity. In particular, she explained:

Especially in the midst of Covid-related anti-Asian sentiments, it is important to make East Asians' stories and experiences public and visible.

Similarly, Philip suggested that a dedicated platform for East Asian students to share their stories would create a safe and inclusive space for students to reclaim their cultural identities.

Furthermore, Andrew proposed that the most effective way of raising awareness is to include anti-racism and racial microaggression workshops in the university's orientation programs for first-year students:

From what I recall when I was involved in orientation, there were a lot of workshops and programming on consent and safe sex, and I feel that microaggression would be a great topic for orientation week events.

The purpose of orientation is to welcome students by engaging them in events that are reflective of the university's values and commitments. Furthermore, these orientation events address issues on campus to help their students feel safe and supported on the campus space. The lack of educational workshops on topics of race is indicative of the colonial history of the institution, where the existence of systemic racism and its effects on students are ignored. The implementation and effectiveness of policies rely on the deliverers' interpretations and deliveries. Subsequently, these workshops should be extended as professional development for staff, faculty, and administrators to ensure they have the appropriate training on racial microaggression. It could be argued that the inclusion of racial microaggression workshops for students, staff and administrators would push the university to admit that racism and racial microaggression exist on campus and, further, that the university contributes to it by allowing these incidents to happen. However, Kai Wei and Andrew highlighted the neutrality the school maintains on race and race-related issues. Ka Wei stated that "the university is neutral and silent on topics of race", which coincides with Andrew's feeling that "racial factors are silent factors at the university". From a critical race perspective, the university's neutrality is a denial of the fact that the university's colonial structure is a systemically racist structure, which allows and enables racism to continue (Hiraldo, 2010). There is a certain level of responsibility and accountability the university must take to address the systemic racism that still exists in these colonial structures at the school. To this end, Ka Wei urged universities to include social justice courses in all university departments:

I think the university only has courses on social justice, equity, diversity and inclusion offered in one or two departments, which makes it hard to increase awareness. Going forward, I would like to see the university add more courses across all disciplines.

Ka Wei believes that all students should have access to social justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion courses and that it is the university's responsibility to ensure their students are educated on these topics.

Summary of Chapter

This chapter provided an overview of the key findings from my research. These findings highlighted the embedded racial microaggression in East Asian students' day-to-day experiences on campus space. In particular, the findings revealed how model minority stereotypes, English language proficiency, cultural difference, and East Asian's perpetual foreigner status affected East Asian students' interactions with peers, administrators, and professors. Participants provided valuable insights on the multifaceted nature of their experiences and how Whiteness and White supremacy operated in their day-to-day lives (e.g., mispronunciation of names and Eurocentric references at the university that continue to promote Whiteness and White supremacy). Furthermore, the students' perceptions of the university's approach to anti-racism unpacked a view on the effectiveness of the university's policies on campus space.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

This final chapter provides an overview of my research with a summary of the key findings and a discussion of the limitations of this research. Recommendations are proposed based on the implications of the findings. The contributions and significance of this research are discussed with future directions provided.

Overview of the Research

The purpose of this research was to investigate the experiences of East Asian students with racial microaggression. Findings revealed some gaps between the university's policy statements on anti-racism and students' day-to-day experiences with racial microaggression in campus spaces. From a critical race perspective, it was necessary to obtain narratives about East Asian students' experiences on campus directly from those students, as opposed to the narratives provided by the White dominant group (Minikel-Lcocque, 2013). To this end, I conducted semi-structured interviews with five East Asian (Chinese) students who attended or are attending a university located in Ontario. I interviewed three males and two females who were between the ages of 21 and 24. Participants were recruited through the non-probability/non-random sampling method (Mauldin, 2020) and interviews took place between January 2021 to February 2021. All participants have basic knowledge and understanding of racial microaggression.

Critical Race Theory (CRT), Anti-Racist Education, and Intersectional Studies shaped the foundation of this study, which examined the role of race in East Asian students' experience in higher education. Critical Race Theory challenges the popular discourse that focuses mainly on the voices of the dominant group by centering racialized voices (Minikel-Lacocque, 2013).

Universities have stated the need for ongoing efforts in dismantling racism and racial discriminations on campus space. In particular, this study recognized and acknowledged the unique struggles East Asian students face with a focus on how model minority stereotypes, social categories, and power imbalances informed their experiences. The model minority narrative added a layer of complexity when examining East Asian students' experiences. In some cases, these positive stereotypes (e.g., diligence, ambition, intelligence, self-discipline, and high socioeconomic status) discourage the dominant group from recognizing East Asians as victims of discrimination (Lee, 1994, 2009). Within the field of education, these positive stereotypes prevent "educators and policymakers from seriously exploring or adding the specific needs and concerns of Asian students" (Vo, 2019, p. 12). Additionally, this research considered how East Asians' different social categories might affect their unique experiences. There is diversity and hierarchy among various East Asians groups; however, the dominant group often assumes East Asian homogeneity (Vo, 2019). Furthermore, this study critically examined the power relationships between the dominant racial group and racialized minorities and the impact of racism on East Asian students' experiences in educational settings. Students' experiences revealed Whiteness and White supremacy in education structures, the existence of racial microaggression, and a lack of effort by the university in implementing anti-racism policies. East Asians' experiences with race in higher education are understudied by scholars. This research was designed to fill the gap in the literature on the experiences of East Asians with racial microaggression in the educational context.

Summary and Discussion

Whiteness and White Supremacy in Educational Structures

At the university, the participants' interactions with peers, professors, and administrators revealed a normalized Whiteness related to the Eurocentric standards in education. The participants gave examples of how Whiteness and White supremacy operate in historically colonial educational structures. For example, several students described how their cultural values and identities were undervalued because they did not mimic Whiteness. Those who did not speak English proficiently or had accents faced more barriers when interacting with the dominant group in campus space. The English language was both demanded and praised by individuals from the dominant group through curriculums and social interactions. Furthermore, participants faced social exclusion when they were not able to relate to Western childhood experiences, jokes, or mannerisms. Subsequently, racialized students became aware of the hidden social consequences of not participating in Whiteness. Some participants suggested that they or their racialized peers felt the need to negate their cultural identities in order to be included in social contexts. However, this resulted in a false sense of inclusion and the continued promotion of Whiteness. Additionally, participants reported a blatant social divide between East Asian students and White students. This social divide manifested in social exclusion and avoidance. One participant described that the long history of colonialism made it difficult for racialized students to rethink the colonial racial hierarchy (i.e., Whites as the superior race). Consequently, some East Asian students were uncomfortable interacting with their White peers due to the 'colonial racial rank' mentioned by the participants. Moreover, several participants expressed the belief that Whiteness and White supremacy are embedded in the university's colonial structure

(e.g., hiring practices). They described a lack of diversity in faculty, staff, and administrators. This lack of diverse representation resulted in some misunderstandings and compromised accessibility and utility of services for racialized students.

Students' Experiences with Racial Microaggression

Model Minority Stereotypes. Most students in the study experienced various forms of racial microaggression at the university; the model minority stereotype emerged as a common theme. For instance, several students stated that they had been subjected to assumptions from the dominant group about them being good at mathematics, despite there being no legitimate reasoning for this. Furthermore, they reported that White peers often perceived all East Asian students and their families to be members of a higher socioeconomic status. These stereotypes and generalizations convey an assumption of homogeneity within East Asian groups that neglects East Asians' own personal and cultural identities (Kim & Kim, 2010; Lee, 1994). Most students believed that model minority stereotypes can have damaging effects on East Asians, especially those who do not possess the stereotypical traits. Moreover, in educational settings, the model minority stereotype can prevent East Asian students from being recognized as victims of racial discrimination (Delucchi & Do, 1996; Lee, 1994). Overall, participants believe the model minority stereotypes to be untrue.

Pathologizing Cultural Values. In addition to model minority stereotyping, most participants recalled having experience with Whites pathologizing their own cultural values. For example, participants described how their food choices were often seen as “problematic” and reported commonly receiving uninvited questions and attention from the dominant group about what they were eating and how. Consequently, judgments from the dominant group resulted in a

degree of assimilation into the dominant culture, for example by eating Western foods to avoid negative consequences and judgments. The effort to be accepted by members of the dominant group revealed the power imbalance in these interactions between the racialized group and the dominant group (Lee, 1994).

Lack of Diverse Representation. Participants also noticed that there was a lack of diversity in the curriculum and a strong focus on Eurocentric perspectives. Several participants found that their courses focused mainly on Eurocentric references and invalidated international and non-White perspectives. They noted that some professors made the assumption that students would understand Western biblical references, such as those contained in Catholicism and Christianity, thereby ignoring the diversity of their students. Participants found that non-Western references were not valued or mentioned in the curriculum or the classroom. Moreover, only European and Western thinkers were promoted in the courses, which sent a message about what and whose knowledge is legitimate in an institution rooted in colonialism and White supremacy (Rezai-Rashti, 1995; Sue et al., 2007). Overall, participants found it difficult to use their own cultural references without compromising their grades due to the Eurocentric curriculum. This highlights the false claim to meritocracy at the university.

Mispronunciation of Names. Participants found it to be frustrating and disrespectful when people from the dominant group mispronounced their Chinese names. One participant expressed the concern that her Chinese name might prevent her from equal job opportunities because people often mispronounce and forget her name. The mistreatment of names in other languages reinforces colonial sentiments that privilege Western, English names. Participants believed that names preserve much of an individual's ethnic identity and should not be overlooked or undervalued. The frequent mispronunciation of names suggests that racialized

students are foreigners in that space, which can cause self-esteem and identity development issues (Kohli & Solorzano, 2012; Sue et al., 2007).

In general, participants described incidents of racial microaggression as “frustrating” and “tiring”, which invoked emotions such as “anger”, “demotivation” and “hopelessness” in some. Although participants did not recall any incidents of explicit racism, it is apparent that racial microaggressions affected their experiences at the university. In light of these findings, universities should be urged to pay close attention to racial microaggressions on campus space.

The Effectiveness of the University’s Anti-Racism Initiatives

Several East Asian students expressed the belief that although the anti-racism policies at the university may be enough to prevent explicit forms of racism on campus, they are not enough to protect East Asian students against the more implicit form of racism—racial microaggression. Most participants were aware of the existence of anti-racism policies on campus; however, when asked about the visibility of these documents, most claimed that the policies were not visible or easily accessible. Furthermore, participants expressed a desire for more anti-racism efforts by the university.

Institutions must acknowledge the existence of systemic racism and its effects on students; racism must be recognized as an institutional matter, otherwise, anti-racism efforts will not solve the roots of the problem (Ahmed, 2006). Several participants described the university to be neutral on topics of race and this neutrality enables systemic racism to continue (Hiraldo, 2010). Participants indicated that they hoped to see more sustainable efforts by the university that do not rely on performative activism and the denial of systemic racism.

Limitations

There are potential reflexivity issues surrounding the researcher's own positionality in the social world. Researchers are part of the social world they are researching and these social worlds have been pre-interpreted and constructed by various actors (Cohen et al., 2018). Specifically, when considering anti-racist education, it is important for researchers to become aware of their own positionality in society and the way they interact with the social constructs around them (Rezai-Rashti, 1995). Accordingly, I recognize my own biography and life experiences may have influenced the partiality of my research due to potential biases from my lived experiences (Cohen et al., 2018).

Additionally, all the participants in this study identified as Chinese. Consequently, the homogeneity of the study pool posed limitations in generating knowledge that can adequately represent East Asian students from diverse ethnic backgrounds.

Finally, this study relied heavily on participants' interpretations and memories. Some participants found it difficult to recall incidents of racial microaggression due to their implicit and subtle nature. Moreover, the interviews questions were personal and could have been uncomfortable for some participants. Consequently, participants might not accurately recall and narrate events due to emotional discomfort. Due to these factors, the accuracy of participants' memories poses an additional limitation to the study.

Recommendations

The implications of participants' experiences inform the following recommendations for universities to better protect East Asian students against racial microaggression on campus space.

These recommendations address my third research question: “How can Ontario universities better protect racialized students from racial microaggression on campus space?” The recommendations are as follows:

- Create dedicated spaces for East Asians to share their stories and experiences
- Increase public visibility of anti-racism policies
- Increase awareness of racial microaggression
- Increase diversity hires
- Decolonize Eurocentric curriculum.

It is important to note that these recommendations cannot be successfully implemented without universities acknowledging the systemically racist structures, colonial practices, and power relationships that exist in educational settings (Ahmed, 2006; Gillborn, 2006; Rezai-Rashti, 1995). Without such acknowledgement, anti-racism efforts risk becoming no more than rhetorical tactics that are performative and meaningless (Gillborn, 2006).

Creating Dedicated Spaces

Dedicated spaces where East Asian students can share their stories and experiences provides opportunities for these students to reclaim their own cultural identities, especially in light of the generalizations and expectations associated with the model minority stereotype that these students are commonly subjected to (Alvarez et al., 2006; Lee, 1994). Contrary to the model minority myth, East Asian students continue to experience racial injustice and discrimination on campus. Such spaces will legitimize East Asian voices and allow these students to share their

hardships. The dialogues that take place will hopefully help to soften and debunk the generalizations and stereotypes East Asian students frequently face.

Increasing Public Visibility of Anti-Racism Policies

Interview data from this study suggests that policies on anti-racism should be both accessible and promoted in campus spaces. The nature of these policies should be clearly communicated to students to ensure they are aware of the boundaries around their conduct. Greater visibility and accessibility will help protect racialized student from acts of racial discrimination and microaggression. There should be an ongoing effort to promote these policies. Universities can increase the visibility of their policies through their faculty. It should be mandatory for professors to outline these anti-racism policies and initiatives on the first day of class. Although some anti-racism policies are listed in the syllabi, most often, the policies that are printed and communicated to students are academic-related. For example, participants in this study indicated that policies on attendance, academic integrity, late work, and communication are most apparent on syllabi, while policies on racial discrimination, gender discrimination, and other anti-discriminatory policies are not clearly presented. This study's findings highlight the need for universities to prioritize the visibility of these policies.

Implementing Anti-Racism Workshops

Because as Sue et al. (2007) suggest "racial microaggression is difficult to detect and identify", it can be difficult for universities to raise awareness of this subtler form of racism. However, it is evident from this study that East Asian students do face racial microaggression on campus space. I propose that anti-racism and racial microaggression workshops be included in

universities' orientation programs to ensure all first-year students are educated on the topic. Moreover, the university should offer courses on social justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion topics in all departments. Currently, most social justice-related courses are concentrated in only one or two departments and are less accessible to students from other faculties or areas of specialization. However, I argue that these courses are fundamental to students' development in all subject areas. It is necessary to combat racial microaggression on campus through education across all disciplines.

Diversity Hiring

A focus on diversity in hiring practices leads to better cultural understanding, cultural competency, and representations in higher education (Haynes, 2008). Study participants pointed out the lack of diversity in current faculty members, administrators, and staff, and described how this lack of representation risks compromising racialized students' experiences at university. English language proficiency was a significant barrier for non-native English-speaking students. Diverse hires who speak multiple languages can be beneficial for students who are non-native English speakers. I suggest that universities must undergo more initiatives in hiring diverse talents and make it their priority. However, the current university structures still pose many barriers for racialized employees post-hire (Ahmed, 2006). Therefore, it is important to recognize that just having diverse hires is not enough, universities must provide the necessary tools to retain and support their racialized hires.

Decolonizing Curriculum

Universities must de-colonize existing Eurocentric curriculums and invite racialized perspectives. Currently, there is a strong promotion of Whiteness and White supremacy through the university's Eurocentric curriculum. Participants in this study reported a predominant exclusion of non-Western knowledge and perspectives. In curriculums, only Western knowledge is valued and privileged; non-Western knowledge is devalued and de-legitimized (Peters, 2015). Consequently, racialized students' lived experiences and cultural knowledge are silenced by the dominant perspective. Therefore, it is crucial for universities to include international and racialized perspectives in their curriculum if they are to dismantle White supremacy in education.

Research Implications and Significance

This research rejects the top-down approach in policy implementation that prioritizes policymakers. Instead, this study focuses on the enactment of policies by faculty members and administrators to students at the ground level. Policymakers and decision-makers often neglect the narratives of racialized groups and force their own ideologies in solving race-related issues (Kelly, 2012; Sue et al., 2007). With respect to students' experiences, the findings of this study suggest that faculty members and administrators are not adequately promoting anti-racism policies. The insufficient enactment of these policies negatively affects their effectiveness and outcomes. This study highlights that "policy is both text and action, words and deeds, it is what is enacted as well as what is intended" (Ball, 1994, p.10). As a result, this study urges the need for faculty members and administrators to recognize their responsibility and influence as deliverers of these policy directives.

Overall, this study provided an overview of the racial discrimination East Asians face in higher educational settings with a particular focus on racial microaggression. The participants' experiences further debunked the model minority myth and positioned Asian students as racialized beings that do experience racial discrimination. East Asians report facing immense pressure to assimilate into White culture, while simultaneously experiencing the pathologizing of their culture values. Furthermore, they described experiences that typify the common experience of being perpetually identified as foreigners in White dominant spaces. These findings contribute to the literature on education and critical race studies - fields in which East Asians are historically under-researched.

Future Directions

At the time of this study, universities had not returned to on-campus learning and participants had not yet had in-person interactions since the emergence of Covid-19. As a result, participants were not able to provide insights on Covid-19 related anti-Asian racism or racial microaggression on campus space. For future directions, researchers should examine how Covid-19 and Covid-19 related anti-Asian hate might affect East Asian students' experiences with racial microaggression in higher educational spaces. More generally, future research in this field should prioritize examining how colonialism and Whiteness and White supremacy continue to compromise the effectiveness of university-level anti-racism policies and initiatives, specifically in under-researched East Asian student populations.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Ethics Approval



Date: 18 January 2021

To: Prof. Goli Rezai-Rashti

Project ID: 116801

Study Title: Combating Racial Microaggression in Higher Education: a case study of East Asians experiences on campus space

Short Title: Combating Racial Microaggression in Higher Education

Application Type: NMREB Initial Application

Review Type: Delegated

Full Board Reporting Date: 05/Feb/2021

Date Approval Issued: 18/Jan/2021 13:12

REB Approval Expiry Date: 18/Jan/2022

Dear Prof. Goli Rezai-Rashti

The Western University Non-Medical Research Ethics Board (NMREB) has reviewed and approved the WREM application form for the above mentioned study, as of the date noted above. NMREB approval for this study remains valid until the expiry date noted above, conditional to timely submission and acceptance of NMREB Continuing Ethics Review.

This research study is to be conducted by the investigator noted above. All other required institutional approvals must also be obtained prior to the conduct of the study.

Documents Approved:

Document Name	Document Type	Document Date	Document Version
Email Script	Recruitment Materials	11/Jan/2021	CLEAN
Interview Guide	Interview Guide	11/Jan/2021	CLEAN
Recruitment Flyer	Recruitment Materials	11/Jan/2021	CLEAN
Letter of Information and Consent Form	Written Consent/Assent	11/Jan/2021	CLEAN

Documents Acknowledged:

Document Name	Document Type	Document Date	Document Version
Masters Thesis Proposal	Protocol		

No deviations from, or changes to the protocol should be initiated without prior written approval from the NMREB, except when necessary to eliminate immediate hazard(s) to study participants or when the change(s) involves only administrative or logistical aspects of the trial.

The Western University NMREB operates in compliance with the Tri-Council Policy Statement Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans (TCPS2), the Ontario Personal Health Information Protection Act (PHIPA, 2004), and the applicable laws and regulations of Ontario. Members of the NMREB who are named as Investigators in research studies do not participate in discussions related to, nor vote on such studies when they are presented to the REB. The NMREB is registered with the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services under the IRB registration number IRB 00000941.

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Ms. Katelyn Harris, Research Ethics Officer on behalf of Dr. Randal Graham, NMREB Chair

Note: This correspondence includes an electronic signature (validation and approval via an online system that is compliant with all regulations).

Appendix B: Letter of Information



LETTER OF INFORMATION

Project Title: Combating Racial Microaggression in Higher Education: a case study of East Asian students experiences on campus space

Introduction

My name is Vivian Leung. I am a Master of Education student at the Faculty of Education, the University of Western Ontario. I am conducting research that will investigate the potential gaps between the universities' policies objectives, such as the anti-racist initiatives, and the lived experience of their students.

Invitation to Participate

You are being invited to participate in this research study regarding your experience at post-secondary schools in Ontario. You are asked to participate because your experience is valuable and will provide insights into the experience of racialized students in post-secondary education in Ontario.

Purpose

The purpose of this study is to recognize and acknowledge the experience of East Asian students in higher education. Currently, most of the existing work on racial microaggression focuses primarily on the experience of African American students, and limited to no research study has been conducted on the experiences of Asian Americans and racism within educational context. In particular, East Asians have been linked to the "model minority" narrative, high socioeconomic status and "positive" stereotypes, which prevent them from being recognized as victims of racial discrimination. After this consideration, East Asians will be the primary study group for this research. This research aims to encourage and inform the development of new and improved policies that can better serve racialized students, specifically East Asian students.

Study Procedure and Length of Study

This research will recruit five to fifteen participants. Participant selection will be based on their eligibility to the inclusion criteria. Participants must identify as **East Asian** (i.e., Chinese, Korean, Japanese, Cantonese and Taiwanese), **upper-year students** (year 3, 4 & 5) or **recent graduates** at the university, and have **basic knowledge of racial microaggression**. If you agree

to participate in the study, you can expect to attend three study sessions. All study sessions will run for approximately 45 minutes to an hour each.

The first study session will be an introduction session. The introduction session can be scheduled for any date of your convenience between January and February of 2021. The introduction session will include a brief introduction of the researcher and an overview of the research. The information will also be provided in a Letter of Information format. At the end of the session, you are welcome to ask any questions you may have regarding the research and your participation. Please note, a consent form will be sent to you electronically after the introduction session. Due to Covid-19, all signed documents will be exchanged via email. Signatures will be obtained via the DocuSign app for security purposes. Participation in this study is completely voluntary. Participants may choose to withdraw at any point of the research procedure. A subsequent second meeting will be the actual interview, where interviews will be semi-structured and facilitated by an interview guide. The interview will be completely confidential and you will be assigned a pseudonym to protect your identity and your data. The third meeting will be a follow-up session. During the follow-up session, researcher will share interview transcripts and ask each participant if they would like to change any information they provided.

All study sessions will be facilitated by the Zoom Meeting Platform. Please note, the interviews will be digitally recorded. However, you can still participate if you do not wish to be recorded. The audio and/or video recording will be kept in a safe and secure place by the researcher who alone will have access to the information. The interviews will be transcribed solely by the researcher. Direct quotes used from the interview may be used in the study using pseudonyms. The study participants' data will be reported in the dissemination of results by de-identification and direct quotes from participants.

Inclusion Criteria

Potential participants must identify as

- i. East Asian (i.e., East Asian students from China, Korea, Japan, Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Macau) to study the model minority narrative and stereotypes that associate specifically with East Asians
- ii. Upper year students (Year 3,4 & recent graduates) who have attended post-secondary education for more than two years at the university
- iii. participants should have basic knowledge of racial microaggression
- Iv. between the ages of 18 to 25

Risks and Harms

There are no known or anticipated risks associated with participating in this study. However, this study may touch on sensitive topics that can be uncomfortable and emotional. If you feel any discomfort during the interview, you may withdraw your participation at any point of the process. In addition, if you wish to not answer certain questions, you may do so as well.

Benefits

Depending on your interpretation, there may not be any direct benefit from participating in this study. However, the information you provide may improve the current educational practices. In addition, the intention of this research is to encourage and inform the development of new and improved policies for racialized students using students' lived experience.

Confidentiality and Identity Protection

The research recognizes that anonymity and confidentiality are important factors to consider. As a result, this study will provide pseudonyms for each participant to conceal their identities throughout the research for identity protection. There are interview questions that may require personal information from participants, participants can decide what they wish to share during the interview and have their personal information presented in the study.

Please note, the master list linking the pseudonym with the name and contact information will be kept by the researcher and the primary investigators in a secure place, separate from the study file. On the master list, the participants' names, contact information, age, background information, location and any interview notes associated with the participant will be kept secured on the researcher's password protected computer. The assigned pseudonyms will be the only identifiable information on the research record.

Important declaration, delegated institutional representatives of Western University and its Non-Medical Research Ethics Board may also require access to the study-related records to monitor the conduct of the research in accordance with regulatory requirements. The study records, excluding identifiable information, will be retained by the Principal Investigator for a minimum of seven years after project completion in accordance with the Western University's Faculty Collective Agreement.

Rights of Participants

Your participation in this study is voluntary. You may decide not to be in this study. Even if you consent to participate you have the right to not answer individual questions or to withdraw from the study at any time. If you choose not to participate or to leave the study at any time it will not affect the study.

If you choose to withdraw from the study, you have the right to request via email to the primary investigator or the study investigator that you wish to withdraw all or part of any information collected about you. Once the request to withdraw has been received, your information will be removed and destroyed by following the data destruction procedures of Western University. Interview data will be stored in a secure and confidential location for seven years and all other study data will be deleted from storage devices such as USB and hard drives of computers. Any hard copies of data will be shredded and disposed of, by following the data destruction procedures of Western University.

Compensation

There will not be any compensation for your participation in this research.

Questions & Additional Information

If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant or the conduct of this study, you may contact The Office of Human Research Ethics (519) 661-3036, 1-844- 720-9816, email: ethics@uwo.ca. This office oversees the ethical conduct of research studies and is not part of the study team. Everything that you discuss will be kept confidential.

This letter is yours to keep for future reference.

Sincerely,

Vivian Leung,
MA Candidate,
Faculty of Education,
Western University

Appendix C: Consent Form



Project Title: Combating Racial Microaggression in Higher Education: a case study of East Asian students experiences on campus space

I have read the Letter of Information, I have had the nature of the study explained to me and I agree to participate in this study. YES NO

I agree to be audio recorded in this research. YES NO

I agree to be video recorded in this research. YES NO

I consent to the use of unidentified quotes obtained during the study in the dissemination of this research. YES NO

Print Name of Participant

Signature

Date (DD-MM-YYYY)

My signature means that I have explained the study to the participant named above. I have answered all of their questions.

Print Name of Person

Signature

Date (DD-MM-YYY)

Obtaining Consent

Appendix D: Interview Guide



General Questions

- 1) Please describe any personal information you may wish to share about yourself such as your background, gender, ethnicity.
- 2) Please describe for me your experience as a student at the university.
- 3) How would you describe the interactions between you and (i) professors? (ii) other students? (iii) administrative staff?
- 4) Please describe your experience with student services provided at the university.

Questions on Racism and Racial Microaggressions on Campus

- 5) Can you describe any incident where racism happened on campus?
- 6) Could you give any examples of racial microaggression you experienced on campus?
- 7) How did the incidents of racial microaggression impact you?
- 8) To what extent do you perceive your race to be a barrier for you in your time at the university? Explain.
- 9) Given the university's declared commitment to its anti-racism initiatives, how would you describe the university's effort in anti-racism based on your experience? Please provide some examples.
- 10) How would you describe the faculty members and students' knowledge on racism?
- 11) Sue (2007) suggested in her study that "racial microaggression is difficult to detect and identify", what do you think universities can do to raise awareness on racial microaggression?
- 12) Do you think the statements and policies placed at the university are enough to protect students against racial microaggressions on campus space?



- 13) How would you describe your overall experience at the university?
- 14) The novel coronavirus (Covid-19) has sparked some anti-Chinese sentiments in the community. Does covid-related xenophobia affect your experience at the university? Explain.
- 15) Overall, do you feel like there is anything the university can do to improve East Asian students' experience on campus space?

Curriculum Vitae

Name: Vivian Leung

Post-secondary Education and Degrees: Master of Education
The University of Western Ontario
London, Ontario, Canada
2019- 2021

Bachelor of Kinesiology
The University of Toronto
Toronto, Ontario, Canada
2015-2019

Honours and Awards: Graduate Western Research Scholarship
2021

Related Work Experience: Research Assistant
The University of Western Ontario
2020