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**(Re)imagining mindfulness in workplace settings: an exploration
of the lived experiences of black, indigenous, person of color
(BIPOC) mindfulness professionals**

Bemi Fasalojo

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(RE)IMAGINING MINDFULNESS IN WORKPLACE SETTINGS: AN EXPLORATION OF
THE LIVED EXPERIENCES OF BLACK, INDIGENOUS, PERSON OF COLOR (BIPOC)
MINDFULNESS PROFESSIONALS

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Education in Organizational Leadership

by

Bemi Fasalojo

August, 2023

Ebony Cain, Ph.D. – Dissertation Chairperson

This dissertation, written by

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under the guidance of a Faculty Committee and approved by its members, has been submitted to and accepted by the Graduate Faculty in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

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DEDICATION

To love. May you always surround me.

To my angel, Grandma Victoria, may your soul rest in power and peace. I feel you dancing in heaven, and it brings me joy.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First, thank you Lord for carrying me through this journey and keeping your arms wrapped around me. I could not have done this without you. To my family - Dunni, Ayo, Demi, Grandpapa Dosu, and my love Jesse - thank you for pushing me, being my biggest cheerleaders, and constantly encouraging me. Thank you for your prayers and for always reminding me who I am. Thank you for your unconditional love and support. My love for you has no bounds. Thank you to all the participants who I had the pleasure of interviewing and getting to know. I appreciate your time and the wisdom you shared. Last but definitely not least, to my esteemed dissertation committee, I have deep gratitude for each of you. Thank you, thank you, thank you! How lucky am I to have the experts I am quoting on my committee? I realize how special this is and do not take it for granted. I was very intentional when choosing my committee and I manifested exactly what I wanted – my absolute dream team. Dr. Cain, you have been my biggest advocate and rock throughout this journey. Thank you for leading me through this process, for your encouragement and patience, and for trusting me. Dr. Thema, you were the first supervisor who held my hand to pray with and for me. Our path was destined to cross. Thank you for being a powerful source of inspiration for me. Dr. Harrell, thank you for constantly showing me how to “walk the talk” and embody my practice. Your SOUL-centered framework first opened my eyes to the difference of culturally infused contemplative practices.

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ABSTRACT

Work and racial discrimination are common causes of stress for Americans (American Psychological Association, 2019). Stress is even more prominent among adults since the COVID pandemic, civil unrest, and social justice uprising that occurred in the summer of 2020. Businesses have responded to stress by incorporating mindfulness practices. As the concept of mindfulness gains popularity in the workplace, there is a need to understand how mindfulness implemented in workplace settings can be modified to integrate culture and diversity-related themes to cultivate inclusion for BIPOC employees. Few studies have examined culturally attuned mindfulness programs in the workplace. There is also limited understanding of the experiences of BIPOC mindfulness professionals. This qualitative phenomenological study aimed to disrupt the systemic whiteness in mindfulness by exploring BIPOC mindfulness professionals' lived experiences and perceptions of implementing mindfulness in workplace settings to identify recommendations for best practices. Semi-structured interviews were utilized with 12 BIPOC mindfulness professionals to understand their experience of implementing mindfulness in workplace settings, their perspectives of BIPOC employee inclusion within mindfulness curriculums in workplaces, and their recommendations to ensure diversity and culture are incorporated. A snowball sampling method was utilized to recruit participants. Three research questions guided this study and Color-Blind Racist Ideology (CBRI) was expounded upon as the theoretical foundation. The data was triangulated and analyzed using coding procedures to generate common themes.

Chapter One: The Problem

This chapter begins by acknowledging the general rise of stress amongst Americans and the two leading causes of this surge. It will then identify the heightened stressors professionals who identify as Black, Indigenous, and/or People of Color (BIPOC) experience and the shift towards mindfulness techniques that organizations have begun making to address workplace stress. By highlighting the current gap in the literature regarding mindfulness in workplace settings, particularly regarding BIPOC employee inclusion, this chapter reveals the need for a study on the experiences of BIPOC mindfulness professionals and their perceptions of BIPOC employee inclusion within mindfulness programs implemented in workplace settings. After this discussion, I will present the problem statement guiding my research, the general purpose of the research, and my overall research questions. The assumptions, limitations, and delimitations of the study will also be reviewed. Lastly, in an effort to ensure clarity throughout the document, key terms used throughout the study will be clearly defined.

Stress, a National Epidemic

The rising rate of stress in America is alarming. The pandemic further exploded the high level of stress faced by most Americans. Today, Americans also report experiencing higher levels of general stress related to COVID-19 than in previous years (APA, 2020). The COVID-19 epidemic disrupted multiple aspects of people's lives, including healthcare, education, and work. Even before the pandemic, Americans reported the highest levels of anger, worry, and stress than in the last ten years (Ray, 2019). As such, stress is considered a national health epidemic (Fink, 2017) that affects all genders, races, and age groups; however, stress impacts Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) at higher rates (Djuric et al., 2010; Mezuk et al., 2010; Warnecke et al., 2008; Williams & Mohammed, 2009). The pandemic has also

disproportionately affected communities of color. BIPOC are more likely to experience higher stress due to COVID-19 (APA, 2020).

Stress, defined as a "physical, mental, or emotional strain or tension," is mainly experienced when facing adversity or challenges (American Institute of Stress [AIS], 2017, para. 2). Prolonged and relentless stress, called chronic stress, can interfere with everyday functioning (Connolly & Slade, 2019). When stress is persistent and excessive, it can distort thinking, affect peoples' moods, and harm personal and professional relationships. Chronic stress occurs when stress builds up instead of going away and is combined with the person's belief that they cannot control the stressful situation. Overbearing feelings of powerlessness, despair, or past traumatic experiences derive from chronic stress (APA, 2011). Outside of our current global pandemic, racial discrimination and work stress are considered the leading causes of chronic stress for Americans (American Psychological Association [APA], 2019a). Racial discrimination and work stress create economic and social challenges for both employers and employees.

Discrimination

Since 2007, the American Psychological Association (APA) has conducted an annual "Stress in America" study to assess the rate of stress and the primary stressors for Americans. The 2019a APA "Stress in America" survey found discrimination is one of the most common stressors and hindered most BIPOC (63%) from having full and productive lives. The survey indicated that BIPOC experienced a progressive increase in identifying discrimination as a source of stress over the past five years. These numbers demonstrate a gradual increase. The last time these questions were asked, in 2015, less than half (49%) of BIPOC reported that discrimination impeded their ability to be productive and live their lives to their fullest potential.

The effects of discrimination cause racial stress and trauma. This type of racial stress has been identified by Mental Health America (n.d), which defines racist-based-traumatic stress (RBTS) as the mental and emotional stress triggered by experiences of racial and ethnic prejudice, discrimination, and hate crimes. It is no surprise that BIPOC individuals also encounter a myriad of barriers and racial stressors in the workplace. Research shows that BIPOC employees often encounter discrimination, inequality, and hostile environments at work (Emerson & Murphy, 2014; Plaut et al., 2014; Offermann et al., 2014). Unlike white individuals, who are dominant group members, BIPOC employees are more vulnerable to stereotype threat, unconscious bias, impostor syndrome, and the fear of appearing incompetent (Eagly & Chin, 2010; Sue et al., 2007). Discrimination and racial stressors within the workplace can result in lower productivity, burnout, and BIPOC employees feeling excluded (Mental Health America, 2019; Scandura, 2018).

Workplace Stress

The same “Stress in America” survey showed that work (64%) is another leading personal stressor for Americans (APA, 2019a). When job demands are high, and pressure reaches an uncontrollable level, a sense of contentment becomes fatigued, ultimately leading to work-related stress. Workplace stress, commonly called job or occupational stress, is the psychological strain or discomfort from work pressures (World Health Organization, 2020). Employees can expect a certain amount of stress at work; however, chronic stress stemming from work-related stressors negatively affects individual and organizational demands.

This type of chronic stress is prevalent and has risen in the workplace over the past five years (Scandura, 2018). Some of the causes of this type of chronic stress are greater psychological job demands combined with lower job control, which harms employees' health and

well-being (Karasek, 1979). Mental health problems such as depression, anxiety, and sleep deprivation result from job stress (Mental Health America, 2019). This type of job strain also reduces productivity and may result in job burnout (Scandura, 2018). Burnout is the feeling of severe stress caused by a surge in workplace demands and increased risk factors (Demerouti et al., 2001; Finney et al., 2013).

Mind-Body Contemplative Practices for Stress Management and Support

As a result of the increased reports of discrimination and work stress among Americans, stress management interventions are becoming more popular within workplace settings as employers attempt to find ways to address the issues of productivity and burnout within their companies. Organizations are shifting to mind-body contemplative practices, hoping to improve stress management and promote employees' well-being (van der Klink et al., 2001). Mind-body contemplative practices include methods such as thinking, questioning, and focusing on one's self – mind and body – to enhance awareness (McGarrigle & Walsh, 2011).

Mind-body contemplative practices were initially conducted in healthcare settings or a clinical context with patients experiencing health issues such as stress, pain, anxiety, or depression (Benson & Proctor, 2010; Kabat-Zinn, 2013). However, over the past decade, many businesses recognized the benefits of employees learning about relaxation techniques, meditation, and yoga (Lamontagne et al., 2007; Spangler et al., 2012). While there are many mind-body contemplative practices, mindfulness is one approach commonly implemented in workplace settings that help enhance employee well-being and cultivate resilience (Slutsky et al., 2019), cope with work-related emotions (Michel et al., 2014), and promote an increased regulation of stress (Brown et al., 2007).

What is Mindfulness?

Mindfulness is a concept that describes a state of mind where an individual has "awareness that emerges through paying attention on purpose, in the present moment, and nonjudgmentally to the unfolding of experience moment by moment" (Kabat-Zinn, 2003, p. 145). Mindfulness consists of two elements. The first component entails intentionally keeping one's attention focused on the present moment (and bringing one's attention back to the present moment whenever it gets drawn away) by noticing thoughts, feelings, and sensations (Bishop et al., 2004; Kabat-Zinn, 2013). The second factor embraces accepting the present moment without judgment or any expectations.

Traditionally, Buddhism is associated with mindfulness. However, there has been a transition over the last 40 years as modern and secular mindfulness training has deviated from these traditional practices (Adams et al., 2016). Mindfulness practice includes various methods, such as meditation and yoga, with most approaches emphasizing the intention to remain present and maintain an open mind. Mindfulness has been described as mental training to reduce emotional distress, maladaptive behavior, and other psychological problems (Bishop et al., 2004; Kabat-Zinn, 2005). Mindfulness training empowers individuals to respond differently to unexpected difficulties and be resilient when confronted with challenges (Brown & Ryan, 2003; Gärtner, 2011). Mindfulness is also known to alleviate stress. As a result, businesses have been employing mindfulness programs and training as workplace stress-management interventions (Klatt et al., 2009).

Why Mindfulness?

Mindfulness is a mind-body contemplative approach that improves one's ability to self-regulate thoughts and emotions, influencing behavioral and physiological responses to stress

(Brown & Ryan, 2003; Brown et al., 2007). Mindfulness has the potential to cultivate resilience in the workplace by decreasing emotional and physiological reactivity after adverse events, enhancing an employee's ability to recover from toxic events, and through growth following adversity (Slutsky et al., 2019). Mindfulness practices produce emotional and psychological benefits, making them uniquely suited to enhance well-being and minimize stress.

Mindfulness research and implementation in workplace settings have become popular over the past two decades. In recent years the benefits of mindfulness have been heavily explored, and many organizations have started offering contemplative practices to employees. The Center for Contemplative Mind in Society conducted a study that found that 135 corporate organizations offer contemplative programs to their staff (Duerr, 2004). More recently, a survey by the National Business Group on Health (2019) found that about 60% of American businesses offered their employees mindfulness, yoga, or meditation classes. Aetna, Google, Mayo Clinic, Ford Motor Company, Goldman Sachs, and the US Army are a few organizations that provide contemplative practices to employees.

It is not surprising that businesses have turned to mind-body contemplative techniques as an intervention to support employees, considering studies have shown that these practices enhance psychological resources (van der Klink et al., 2001), improve mental well-being (Kersemakers et al., 2018), and reduces stress (Good et al., 2015).

Mindfulness and BIPOC

Prior literature has indicates that mindfulness can be a liberating and empowering practice for BIPOC, particularly when cultural themes are integrated into the program (Alston, 2012; Harrell, 2019; Magee, 2016; Watson et al., 2016; Woods-Giscombé & Black, 2010). Unfortunately, the Westernized approach to mindfulness might not align well with BIPOC

perspectives, making it potentially difficult to present its practical uses to BIPOC communities (Harrell, 2018). Researchers have begun to discuss and examine how to decolonize and culturally attune mindfulness for the BIPOC community (Alston, 2012; Proulx et al., 2018; Sobczak & West, 2013; Spears et al., 2017; Watson et al., 2016; Woods-Giscombé & Black, 2010).

Mindfulness, Diversity and Inclusion, and Social Justice

Creating a diverse and inclusive working environment is among the highest priorities for many organizations (Khattab et al., 2020). Yet, discrimination is systemic and demonstrated in work settings. The intersection of mindfulness and social justice involves using mindfulness to promote greater awareness, empathy, and action towards creating a more just and equitable society (Berilla 2016; Griffin, 2015). Mindfulness can help individuals cultivate empathy, compassion, and self-awareness, which are essential components of social justice work. By developing a deeper understanding of the interconnectedness of all things, individuals can better recognize and respond to social injustices. Furthermore, practicing mindfulness can facilitate personal transformation and critical self-reflection (Berilla 2016; Griffin, 2015), which may be necessary for promoting social justice. With mindfulness, individuals can become more aware of their own biases and privilege (Lueke & Gibson, 2015) , and work towards challenging systemic inequalities.

Where is the Void?

Prior research demonstrates the positive benefits of mindfulness in multiple work domains, such as stress reduction and well-being (Bostock et al., 2018; Duerr, 2004; Good et al., 2015; Jamieson & Tuckey, 2007; Jha et al., 2015; Michel et al., 2014; Slutsky et al., 2019). Yet, there are limited studies that specifically explore the benefit of mindfulness practices for BIPOC

employees in workplace settings. Although mindfulness curriculums focusing on sociocultural themes are starting to be developed in community and clinical settings, there is a void in workplaces. There is existing scholarly literature on culturally relevant mindfulness for BIPOC regarding stress, discrimination, and well-being (Harrell, 2020; Spears et al., 2017; Watson-Singleton et al., 2019; Woods-Giscombé & Gaylord, 2014), though not within the context of work. Mindfulness programs implemented in workplace settings integrating cultural themes, values, and insights are limited.

To help effectively manage work stress and discrimination, mindfulness programs and training implemented in the workplace should be modified to address cultural and societal issues prevalent in the BIPOC community. The importance of modifying mindfulness programs and research to incorporate culture has been endorsed by the psychology field (Harrell et al., 2020). However, the significance of integrating cultural considerations into mindfulness programs within corporate settings has not been translated. Developing and implementing culturally attuned mindfulness programs that focus on the influence of work stress and discrimination on BIPOC well-being is necessary. This paper theorizes that mindfulness, a type of mind-body contemplative practice is an important, appropriate, and relevant protective measure in the link between workplace stress, discrimination, and racial stressors for BIPOC.

Problem Statement

Although the research on mindfulness in organizations has expanded tremendously, not much is known about how mindfulness programs in workplace settings are attuned to address relevant issues specific to BIPOC employees, such as discrimination and racial stress. Current mindfulness programs implemented at work have not attended to the cultural and socio-political

context of BIPOC employees. In fact, relatively few studies about culturally attuned mindfulness programs have been conducted within workplace settings, leaving a critical gap in the literature.

Additionally, as mindfulness has gained popularity in America, BIPOC's unique perspectives have generally been excluded from the conversation. BIPOC are often left out of mindfulness pedagogy and research. Hence, there is a limited understanding of the experiences of BIPOC mindfulness professionals. As such, there is an overall need to understand the experiences of BIPOC mindfulness professionals and how mindfulness training can be culturally attuned to help BIPOC feel included. To ensure BIPOC inclusion and effectively manage work stress and discrimination, I hypothesize that mindfulness programs implemented in workplace settings should incorporate cultural values relevant to BIPOC and address historical and societal issues BIPOC employees encounter.

Purpose of Research

The unique voices and stories of BIPOC mindfulness professionals are generally left unheard. Therefore, this study utilized a qualitative phenomenological method to examine the lived experiences and perspectives of BIPOC mindfulness professionals. Phenomenology studies highlight the participants' shared unique experiences (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The commonly shared human experience in this research study is implementing mindfulness programs in workplace settings. I used a snowball sampling method to recruit participants for the study. Semi-structured interviews were used to explore 12 BIPOC mindfulness professionals' experiences and perspectives to understand:

- BIPOC mindfulness professionals' unique experience of implementing mindfulness in workplace settings,

- BIPOC mindfulness professionals' perspectives on BIPOC employee inclusion within mindfulness curriculums in workplaces, and
- BIPOC mindfulness professionals' recommendations to other mindfulness specialists who are interested in incorporating culture.

The data derived from the interviews were analyzed using Creswell's spiral pattern (Creswell, 2014). I examined, identified, and interpreted patterns and themes in the data to determine the relationship to the study's research questions. Additionally, previous scholars' work was considered to develop relevant implications and conclusions to advance the topic. Insights and strategies that can assist workplaces in developing mindfulness programs that include BIPOC cultural themes and experiences will be provided.

Research Questions

The following research questions (RQ) guided this study:

- RQ1: What cultural challenges are experienced by BIPOC mindfulness professionals in their work?
- RQ2: To what extent (if at all) are the experiences of BIPOC employees reflected in the mindfulness curriculums and programs?
- RQ3: What recommendations do BIPOC mindfulness professionals make to other mindfulness specialists who want to incorporate cultural themes in their mindfulness programs?

Theoretical Foundation

Given the absence of BIPOC from mindfulness research, a theoretical foundation was chosen that explores the historical, political, and social absence of BIPOC experiences within America. This study is grounded in Color-Blind Racial Ideology (CBRI), one of five tenets

within Critical Race Theory (CRT) which will be expounded upon in the upcoming chapter.

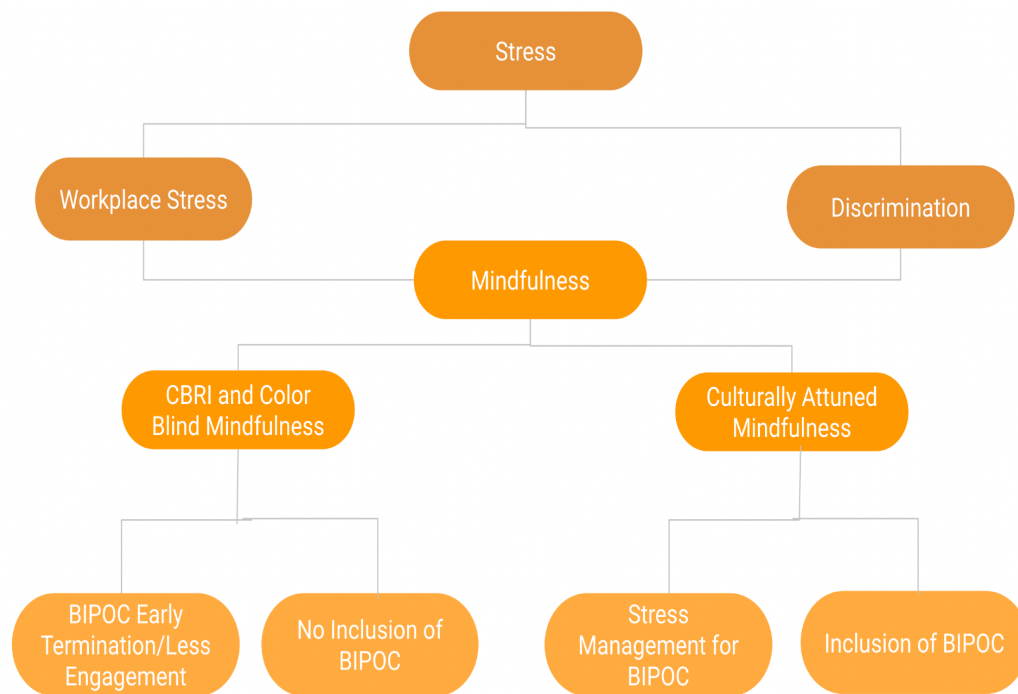
CBRI is used to justify and promote systems, policies, and programs that serve white people and demonstrate the racial inequalities within the structure of America (Bonilla-Silva, 2001). CBRI is indicated when white individuals dismiss the reality of racism and deny the significance of race within society (Neville et al., 2001). This ideology is employed for this research to examine the notion of ignoring or not recognizing race or cultural themes within mindfulness programs. The phenomenon of CBRI within mindfulness, which I call color-blind mindfulness, will also be expounded in the upcoming chapter.

Conceptual Framework

The concepts that framed this research study included stress, workplace stress, discrimination, mindfulness, CBRI, and culturally attuned mindfulness. I created a flowchart to serve as a visual representation of the study's conceptual framework (see Figure 1).

Figure 1

Visual Concept Map



Note. This figure represents a visual representation of the study’s conceptual framework.

Significance of the Study

This study seeks to help better understand the experiences of BIPOC mindfulness professionals, their perceptions of BIPOC employee inclusion within mindfulness curricula, and how mindfulness programs at work can be decolonized to integrate culture. Therefore, this study will inform the mindfulness community, which continues to be dominated by white people and color-blind practices, by highlighting the experiences of BIPOC mindfulness professionals who implement mindfulness within workplace settings. This study also aims to amplify BIPOC experiences and voices, which are often left unheard. Thus, this study adds to the growing body

of research interested in dismantling the systemic whiteness that is pervasive in mindfulness research and practices (Black, 2016; Mindful Staff, 2017).

The research findings of this study will also benefit white mindfulness professionals and businesses that offer mindfulness programs. Mindfulness professionals can use the outcomes of this study to understand how to develop and implement culturally attuned mindfulness training to minimize work stress and create inclusive workplaces for BIPOC employees. These contributions add to our general knowledge and the existing body of literature on mindfulness in the workplace.

Lastly, there is a lack of scholarly literature about organizational behavior related to race and ethnicity (Cox, 2004). Therefore, this study contributes to the field of organizational psychology and behavior by investigating BIPOC inclusion within mindfulness programs. The insights from this study will help organizations choose mindfulness programs that are inclusive of all employees, specifically BIPOC employees who encounter additional stressors at work.

Assumptions of the Study

The study presented the following assumptions:

- I assumed that participants in the study fully understood all of the questions and answered truthfully to the best of their ability.
- It was also assumed that there was sufficient engagement and rapport with participants during the interview process that allowed the content to shape the study's findings.
- I assumed that the study's inclusion criteria would accurately provide a similar experience for all participants included in the research.
- It was also assumed that respondents who participated in the study would follow the protocol.

Limitations of the Study

The following limitations may have affected the outcome of the study:

- I purposely selected participants in the study. As such, the selection process may have impacted the findings by being less generalizable to a larger sample.
- The participant population may not represent all mindfulness professionals, given that participation was optional and voluntary.
- Participant availability may have impacted the study, given the time frame allocated for collecting data which may have prevented specific participants from contributing to the research.
- While participants' personal information and answers remain confidential, privacy issues may have hindered the level of transparency as participants may be worried that what they report will be misconstrued.

Clarification of Terms

Within this study, several terms and concepts are used that can have multiple meanings and understandings, even among experts. Therefore, this section will clarify how terms will be used throughout the document, specifically key concepts and terms around mindfulness, stress, and culture.

Mindful Awareness, Practice, Training

Mindfulness can be broken down into different characteristics, such as mindful awareness, mindful practice, and mindful training. Barbezat and Bush (2013) characterize mindfulness a procedure to follow (mindfulness practice) and also a goal to strive for (mindful awareness). *Mindful awareness* is the intentional act of paying attention to the present moment

with acceptance, curiosity, and openness to what might be (Bishop et al., 2004). Baer et al. (2006) describe mindful awareness as observing experiences and analyzing personal thoughts and feelings without judgment. Mindful awareness is the outcome of practicing mindfulness.

Mindfulness practice is the specific exercise, procedure, or technique that cultivates mindful awareness (Kabat-Zinn, 2013). Mindfulness activities may include meditation, yoga, breathing exercises, body scans, mindful walking, journaling, and other contemplative practices that help bring attention to the present moment. Mindfulness practice is a technique that can evolve and strengthen through repetition.

Mindfulness training is a more gradual approach that involves practicing mindfulness techniques over time (Kabat-Zinn, 2003). Mindfulness training may involve a structured program with instruction, guidance, group support, and consistent practice. Therefore, mindfulness practice and training are avenues to develop and nurture mindfulness awareness, a state of being. In this paper, the general term of mindfulness is used as an umbrella term to encompass all characteristics of mindfulness (awareness, practice, and training) implemented in workplace settings.

Moreover, there are various qualifications and titles for professionals who implement mindfulness programs and training for individuals and organizations, such as mindfulness teachers, consultants, coaches, facilitators, and practitioners. Therefore, mindfulness professional is used as an umbrella term in this paper for consistency. In this study, a mindfulness professional is a professional (coach, facilitator, practitioner, or teacher) who implements mindfulness training or incorporates mindfulness practices within organizational settings.

Culturally Modified Mindfulness

Various terms are associated with the concept of decolonizing and modifying mindfulness practice and pedagogy to include cultural themes, such as cultural adaptation and cultural attunement. Although these terms are different, they are often confused with each other because they all have to do with the awareness and understanding of different cultures, particularly minority community cultures. Although similar in nature, these terms have small nuances that can be distinguished and are essential to note.

Cultural adaptation is conceptualized as the modification of an evidence-based intervention to consider context and language in a way that aligns and is compatible with the customs, patterns, worldviews, and values of an individual's culture (Bernal et al., 2009; Domenech Rodriguez et al., 2011). Cultural adaptation involves altering a systematic method of procedures. Samuels et al. (2009) describe cultural adaptation as the process of "reviewing and changing the structure of a program or practice to more appropriately fit the needs and preferences of a particular cultural group or community" (p. 7).

Lastly, *cultural attunement* involves adding culturally relevant elements to a previously existing protocol to enhance the engagement and retention of individuals from ethically marginalized communities (Falicov, 2009). Compared to cultural adaptation, cultural attunement is closer to the idea of refining an exercise, practice, or program to be more aligned with multiple contexts of BIPOC's culture. The term cultural attunement may be more reflective because including cultural contexts makes programs more accessible by integrating cultural norms, patterns, stressors, and values. Similar to cultural competence, with cultural attunement, it is critical to acknowledge the effects of specific cultural, socioeconomic, and political stressors that individuals from BIPOC communities encounter. Falicov (2009) asserts that cultural attunement

is about being respectful, curious, genuinely wanting to learn, and acknowledging history and oppression. Since this paper revolves around the concept of mindfulness in workplace settings and not a specific evidence-based or clinical intervention of mindfulness, such as Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR), I relied on the term cultural attunement.

Race, Ethnicity, Culture

This current paper focuses on race, ethnicity, and culture. These diverse characteristics are social constructs often used interchangeably despite being different. Although once considered to be fixed through DNA, ethnicity, and race are not biological or genetic classifications (Palermo et al., 2021). Instead, race and ethnicity are a dynamic set of institutionalized beliefs, behaviors, and practices that are historically rooted (Markus, 2008).

Race is passed down generationally through historical perspectives and individual opinions (King, 2018). Markus (2008) thoroughly defines race as “ideas or practices that (1) sorts people into ethnic groups according to perceived physical and behavioral human characteristics; (2) associates differential value, power, and privilege with these characteristics and establishes a social status ranking among the different groups” (p. 654). Race affects how people are viewed and classified and influences the application of various stereotypes (Sewell, 2009).

Ethnicity is the shared sociocultural characteristic of a group that appears to be the most noticeable attribute that determines group members' category (Elsaas & Graves, 1997). Ethnicity refers to various characteristics that identify people based on presumed commonalities such as language, place of origin, skin tone, religion, and cultural customs (Markus, 2008; Sewell, 2009). When describing the difference between race and ethnicity, Sewell (2009) notes that race is determined by an individual's ancestry and characterized by their physical appearance. In

comparison, ethnicity is determined by psychological needs and social pressures and characterized by group identity and a sense of belonging.

On the other hand, *culture* is defined as “the belief systems and value orientations that influence customs, norms, practices, and social institutions, including psychological processes (language, caretaking practices, media, educational systems) and organizations” (APA, 2003 p. 380). Culture is a way of life that is also dynamic. Culture is shared among a community of people with common ancestry, identity, and social location (Harrell, 2019). All people have a cultural lineage and an ethnic identity. Culture is less emotionally and politically charged than race (Sewell, 2009). Therefore, this paper emphasizes culture as the essential characteristic of diversity that should be integrated into mindfulness curriculums and programs. Below are additional definitions of key terms that will help ground the reader in a better understanding of the nature of this work.

Additional Definitions

The following definitions are provided for clarification as they pertain to this study:

- *Burnout* is a psychological response to job stress indicated by emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and diminished feelings of accomplishment (Halbesleben & Buckely, 2004).
- *Contemplative practice* is the act of thinking, questioning, and focusing on oneself to enhance awareness (McGarrigle & Walsh, 2011).
- *Decolonization* refers to the acknowledgment of the effects of colonialism and the process of dismantling political, economic, and social structures and practices that have persisted through colonialism (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013)

- *Discrimination* is the unfair treatment and biased actions towards individuals based on diverse characteristics such as age, gender, race, or sexual orientation (American Psychological Association, 2019b).
- *Diversity* refers to individuals associated with various categories, including ethnicity, gender, age, sexual preference, customs, characteristics, faith, or political affiliations (Nishii, 2013).
- *Inclusion* refers to individuals feeling appreciated, having a sense of belonging, and being part of a common purpose (Giovannini, 2004).
- *Mindfulness* refers to the act of being conscious and alert to the present experience with an open and nonjudgmental state of mind (Bostock et al., 2018).
- *Race-based traumatic stress (RBTS)* is the mental and emotional stress triggered by experiences of racial and ethnic prejudice, discrimination, and hate crimes (Mental Health America, n.d).
- *Stress* is the physiological tension placed on an individual's body when required to adapt or cope (Nevid & Rathus, 2003).
- *Workplace stress*, also known as *job stress*, is the response to stressors in the workplace that threaten an individual's safety or well-being (Finney et al., 2013).

Organization of Study

Chapter One began with a broad overview of the topic under study, including the background, problem, purpose, and significance. Due to the study's complexity, a robust clarification of key terms was also included in Chapter One. Chapter Two provides a thorough review of the literature relevant to this study, including stress in the workplace, discrimination and racial stress, and stressors that impact BIPOC in workplace settings. Chapter Two also

discusses the history and current research surrounding mindfulness, the role of mindfulness in workplace settings, and cultural considerations for mindfulness. This background will create the context for the reader to understand the need for decolonized and culturally attuned mindfulness programs in workplace settings that include BIPOC employee culture. Chapter Three describes the research design and methodology, including details about the participant selection and recruitment, instrumentation, human subjects' considerations, and analysis procedures used to gather data from the study. Chapter Four illustrates the findings of the study, including key themes that emerged from the data analysis. Finally, Chapter Five presents a summary and discussion of the study's significant findings, implications, and limitations. The recommendations for future research studies and real-world applications complete the chapter.

Chapter Two: Review of Literature

This literature review examines the research related to stress, discrimination and racial stress, discriminatory stressors at work, and mindfulness as it applies to BIPOC. This chapter will begin with a short overview of stress. Next, this chapter will discuss stress and discrimination, particularly the effects of discrimination and racial stress. The chapter will then continue to discuss workplace stress, its contributing factors, and its effects on employees and organizations. Next, the chapter will address the impact of discrimination at work and highlight the discriminatory barriers and stressors BIPOC experiences at work. Following this, the chapter will provide a comprehensive overview of mindfulness research, including the definition of mindfulness, its cultural history, characteristics, and outcomes. A focus on the impact of mindfulness on workplace stress and discrimination will be examined and critiqued, leading to the theoretical foundation that framed the lens of this study. Finally, this chapter will discuss the burgeoning interest in decolonizing mindfulness, which includes culturally attuned mindfulness and diversity and inclusion for social justice, ending with the void in the literature and the rationale for the current study.

Stress

There has been a dramatic rise in the number of individuals experiencing stress in America. According to a recent survey conducted by Gallup (2019), Americans are among the most stressed people worldwide. Stress is the discrepancy between the demands placed on an individual and their ability to manage those demands and reach their goals (Quick et al., 2013). Sudden feelings of tension, strain, and discomfort may lead to stress. This tension is a natural reaction when individuals are faced with challenges, placed in threatening situations, or making critical decisions (AIS, 2017). When experiencing stress, people may assume that the challenges

and threats they face outweigh their ability to cope. Although, at times, stress can be positive and even necessary in keeping people alert, intense and persistent stress, like the type that is currently affecting Americans, can be exhausting (APA, 2011).

Effects of Stress

Chronic stress occurs when stress builds up instead of going away and is combined with the person's belief that they cannot control the stressful situation (Connolly & Slade, 2019). This type of stress harms the body and can cause numerous health problems. Chronic stress weakens the immune system, damages neural pathways, and compromises the brain, kidneys, liver, and heart (Connolly & Slade, 2019). Excessive stress exacerbates the risk of heart disease, strokes, ulcers, diabetes, obesity, psychological impairments, and depression (Djuric et al., 2010; Gibbons, 2012). Stress-related inequities disproportionately affect the BIPOC community. Research shows that the effects of stress are heightened for individuals from BIPOC communities (Djuric et al., 2010; Mezuk et al., 2010; Warnecke et al., 2008; Williams & Mohammed, 2009).

BIPOC Disparities

The health effects of stress are a concern, specifically for BIPOC. Just as health disparities vary by race, ethnicity, age, and class (National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities, 2022), health disparities related to chronic stress vary as well, mainly when you include implicit discrimination, environmental stress, and acculturative stress (Djuric et al., 2010). There is a correlation between excessive stress levels and adverse health outcomes within minority communities (Proulx et al., 2018). In fact, research conducted on the effects of social and biological stress on health has shown a link between racial differences and socioeconomic status (Warnecke et al., 2008). One cause of this link is that due to historical and social factors,

BIPOC may have a lack of economic resources, which leads to additional sociocultural stressors, which of course, leads to poorer health outcomes. This vicious cycle perpetuates racial health, stress, and overall wellness disparities.

Stress and Discrimination

A source of stress that has garnered more attention in recent years is discrimination. Discrimination is the unfair or prejudicial treatment of individuals based on characteristics such as race, age, gender, or sexual orientation (APA, 2019b). Research strongly suggests that BIPOC's mental and physical health are at risk due to perceived discrimination (Pascoe & Richman, 2009; Schmitt et al., 2014; Smart Richman et al., 2016). Perceived discrimination – whether it be race, ethnicity, gender, or sexual orientation – plays a significant role in the stress discrepancy among several BIPOC communities (de Castro et al., 2008; Guyll et al., 2001; Meyer et al., 2008; Williams & Mohammed, 2009). Discrimination may lead to race-related stress. Race-related stress, also called racial stress or RBTS, is a multifaceted construct that impacts the health and psychological well-being of BIPOC (Bryant-Davis, 2007; Watson-Singleton et al., 2019).

Racial Stress

The effects of discrimination may lead to racial stress and trauma. Mental Health America (n.d) defines RBTS as the mental and emotional stress triggered by experiences of racial and ethnic prejudice, discrimination, and hate crimes. BIPOC are the most susceptible to RBTS due to the culture of white supremacy within America (Mental Health America, n.d.). Bryant-Davis (2007) conceptualized RBTS to include the following points:

“(a) an emotional injury that is motivated by hate or fear of a person or group of people as a result of their race; (b) a racially motivated stressor that overwhelms a person's

capacity to cope; (c) a racially motivated, interpersonal severe stressor that causes bodily harm or threatens one's life integrity; or (d) a severe interpersonal or institutional stressor motivated by racism that causes fear, helplessness, or horror" (p. 135).

Several factors contribute to the progression and sustainment of BIPOC's racial stress, which has become a prominent indicator of poor health in minority communities (Paradies et al. 2015; Schmitt et al. 2014). Racial stress can impact people across the following three levels. Utsey and Ponterotto (1996) described the following three levels:

1. Individual - experiencing racism firsthand,
2. Institutional - systemic/organizational policies that support racist beliefs, and
3. Cultural - upholding certain values and practices over others.

Effects of Discrimination and Racial Stress

Racial stress leads to detrimental psychological effects on individuals and communities (Mental Health America, n.d.). Perceived discrimination triggers substantially elevated stress responses and is linked to unhealthy behavior and specific physical health issues, including high blood pressure, hypertension, and breast cancer (Guyll et al., 2001; Williams & Mohammed, 2009). Additionally, this type of discrimination increases vulnerability to obesity and drug abuse (Williams & Mohammed, 2009). In fact, BIPOC communities such as Latinx Americans, Native Hawaiians, and African Americans who experience discrimination are often affected by health issues such as diabetes and hypertension (Kaholokula et al., 2010; Williams & Neighbors, 2001). In addition to physical health problems, research has shown that perceived discrimination impacts BIPOC's mental health (Jang et al., 2010; Mezuk et al., 2010; Williams et al., 2003). Evidence shows that discrimination negatively affects various mental health outcomes, including

anxiety, depression, and well-being (Williams et al., 2003). As such, discrimination is harmful to people's physical health and mental wellness.

Similar to discrimination, racial stress has many adverse effects on BIPOC's health. Racial stress has been correlated to adverse physical health throughout one's lifetime (Kwate et al. 2003). For example, the life expectancy of an African American is approximately four years less than the life expectancy of a European American (Cunningham et al. 2017). Research has also shown that individuals from BIPOC communities are more likely to develop dangerous health conditions like diabetes, obesity, and heart disease (Benjamin et al., 2017; Mokdad et al., 2003). Moreover, racial stress is associated with chronic illness and negative cardiovascular consequences (Giscombé & Lobel, 2005; McEwen, 1998). Racial stress has also been linked to increased levels of high blood pressure, depression, emotional distress, and obesity (Brondolo et al., 2008; Mouzon et al., 2017; Paradies et al., 2015).

Overall, these studies show how stress negatively impacts the mental and physical health of BIPOC. It is crucial to identify components that can mitigate the impact that racial stress has on the health of BIPOC because this impact can take many different forms. However, while racial stress may play a significant role in the lives of BIPOC communities, most Americans identify work as a key source of stress. In the following section, I will explore key literature on workplace stress, including the mental and physical impact of work stress, the impact on work productivity and business management, as well as the discriminatory workplace stressors that impact BIPOC.

Stress and Work

In addition to discrimination, research has shown that work has become a significant stressor for more Americans. The statistics surrounding stress at work are staggering. In a 2018

study, 94% of employees reported experiencing stress at work (Wrike, 2018). According to another poll conducted in 2020, 7 in 10 employed adults (70%) say work is a substantial source of stress in their lives (APA, 2020).

Excessive job demands and unmanageable pressure can deplete our sense of satisfaction, ultimately resulting in workplace stress. Workplace stress refers to the mental pressure or unease caused by the demands and challenges of one's job or workplace (WHO, 2020). Work stress can also be thought of as the unhealthy mental, emotional, and physical responses that occur when an employee does not have the knowledge, capability, or resources to handle challenges and pressure at work (National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, 2014; WHO, 2020). This uncertainty, combined with a lack of control over critical issues at work, creates tension in the workplace. Unmanaged workplace stress leads to burnout, or the feeling of severe stress caused by a surge in workplace demands and increased risk factors (Demerouti et al., 2001; Maslach, 2001). In the following sections, I will expand on the risk factors for workplace stress and its effect on the health and wellness of individuals and companies.

Risk Factors for Workplace Stress

Given the modern workplace demands, pressure on the job is inevitable (WHO, 2020). Stress is a personal experience that can look different for each person, even in similar circumstances. Employees view challenges as manageable or unmanageable based on their characteristics, life circumstances, and available resources. An individual's flexibility, ability to make decisions, and ability to cope with expectations from work amount to the stress level they experience (AIS, 2019). Therefore, insufficient resources and high job demands can cause stress at work (Demerouti & Bakker, 2011). Additional risk factors for work stress include insufficient control of work design and policies, poor leadership, inadequate organization, undesirable

working conditions, unsuccessful results, and lack of assistance from colleagues (WHO, 2020).

The most common factors that produce job stress include tight deadlines, an overwhelming amount of work duties, and an inadequate or non-existent relationship between an employee and supervisor. Struggling to accomplish difficult goals and demanding challenges set by supervisors also contribute to chronic workplace stress (Mawritz et al., 2014). Together, these situations lead to greater chances of experiencing workplace stress which can impact the health and wellness of both employees and employers.

Effects of Workplace Stress

Workplace stress can take a toll on employees' health. Heightened levels of work-related stressors combined with high demands and the feeling of having minimal control are associated with chronic health problems (Wolfe, 2004). Job stress contributes to an increased risk of severe health conditions such as heart attacks, respiratory issues, and hypertension (Wolfe, 2004; Mental Health America, 2019). Stressed workers are two-and-a-half times more likely to experience muscle aches, disability, obesity, addiction, and cancer (Wolfe, 2004).

Unaddressed workplace stress also causes depression, fatigue, anxiety, and other psychological problems, such as sleep deprivation (Mental Health America, 2019; National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, 2014). According to Korn Ferry's study about workplace stress (2018), 66% of American workers reported having trouble sleeping due to workplace stress. The literature published on mental health in work settings has acknowledged that sleep deprivation diminishes employee motivation and productivity. Generally, unhealthy workplaces can increase mental exhaustion and medical appointments, leading to increased absenteeism rates (Mental Health America, 2019). As such, stress from work is a hazard to both the staff and businesses.

Effects of Workplace Stress on Businesses

Organizations also experience strains as a result of workplace stress. Workplace stress and burnout can make workers tired, depressed, and anxious. As a result, workers will not perform at their best ability or give their full potential at work, which reduces organizational productivity (Finney et al., 2013; Halbesleben & Buckely, 2004). Stressed workers also cost employers thousands of dollars (Colonial Life, 2019). Studies have shown that stressful working environments are associated with inattentiveness, higher absenteeism, and employees' intentions to terminate their employment, which all harm the bottom line (Gallup, 2019; van der Klink et al., 2001; Wrike, 2018). Specifically, the effects on business can be characterized into two main categories: Productivity and Performance and Absenteeism and Turnover.

Productivity and Performance. Although some individuals are motivated by pressure, stress usually leads to a decline in many employees' productivity. Stress has adverse effects that create workplace challenges impacting performance and productivity (Gallup, 2019; Colonial Life, 2019). According to the 'State of Global Workforce' study published by Gallup in 2017, 87% of workers globally are emotionally withdrawn from their workplace and are less productive due to occupational stress. Gallup's (2019) most recent study regarding the 'State of the American Workplace' found that 51% of American employees are mentally withdrawn at work, resulting in low engagement and productivity due to stress.

Burnout. Workplace stress leads to burnout, described as a decline in productivity (Finney et al., 2013; Halbesleben & Buckley, 2004). Burnout results from chronic job stress characterized by a lack of work-related achievement, cynicism, and emotional exhaustion (Maslach et al., 2001). Traits that increase the chance of developing burnout include demanding work settings (Demerouti et al., 2001; Maslach et al., 2001; Schaufeli & Buunk, 2003),

insufficient resources (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004), and a lack of a sense of community (Demerouti et al., 2001; Halbesleben & Buckley, 2004; Schaufeli & Buunk, 2003). Stress and burnout can harm the health and performance of the employee and the employer.

Absenteeism and Turnover. Due to increased workloads, employees experience psychological and physical health problems, negatively affecting organizations, resulting in higher turnover and increased sick days (van der Klink et al., 2001). Absenteeism as a result of workplace stress significantly affects the economy. An estimated 1 million employed individuals are absent from work every day due to stress (AIS, 2019). Absenteeism and turnover will likely increase as employees flee a hostile work environment. According to Wrike's (2018) research, 60% of employees start to search for new job opportunities when they feel tension, and about 25% quit their current job. While the effects of stress on individuals and businesses are universal, workplace stressors and their impact on BIPOC populations are unique and compounded due to issues of discrimination and racial stressors in the workplace.

Workplace Stressors for BIPOC

BIPOC's racial and ethnic identities are important and prominent in the workplace, where they spend a lot of time. Unfortunately, BIPOC professionals are subjected to a myriad of stressors in the workplace. Research shows that BIPOC employees often encounter discrimination, inequality, and hostile environments at their places of employment (Emerson & Murphy, 2014; Plaut et al., 2014; Offermann et al., 2014). BIPOC employees encounter adverse interactions in the workplace because they are seen as different from the conventionally white, dominant group (Elsaas & Graves, 1997). BIPOC are classified and placed into unfavorable categories because of their minority status. This categorizing process perpetuates biases and unwarranted judgments. BIPOC professionals may experience additional barriers and stressors at

work, such as needing to work harder than their white peers, particularly if they are interested in reaching leadership positions in their industry. Additional forms of stressors associated with institutional discrimination vary from undisguised forms of racism, such as hate crimes, to more disguised forms, such as microaggressions. Outside of blatant discriminatory practices, barriers that can heighten feelings of work stress for BIPOC include Stereotype Threat, Tokenism, Unconscious Bias, Leadership Barriers, Impostor Syndrome, Invisibility Syndrome, and Overachieving Mind Frame. These barriers can contribute to high levels of workplace stress for BIPOC employees, impacting both individuals and businesses alike.

Stereotypes

Stereotypes serve as a simple way to process vast quantities of knowledge quickly by assigning attributes and categorizing individuals based on their ethnic makeup without knowing their background or understanding them (Steele, 1997). When founded on unreliable and insufficient facts or when enforcing group knowledge on particular individuals, stereotypes have a tendency to become counterproductive and maladaptive. Stereotypes may enhance BIPOC employees' stress as additional pressure and judgment is placed on their cultural background.

Stereotype Threat. Once stereotypes persist and spread to become common knowledge, they have an unprecedented influence on the individuals they represent. Stereotype threat occurs when individuals have recurring thoughts of fulfilling a negative stereotype, which causes them to lose focus and ruminate about refuting the stereotype (Steele, 1997). For BIPOC professionals within work settings, stereotype threat occurs when omnipresent derogatory ideologies are spread regarding their cognitive or physical abilities. Stereotype threat can potentially harm an individual's performance when they believe others are judging them.

Tokenism

Tokenism is described as individuals from BIPOC communities who account for a limited proportion of the total workforce (Kanter, 1977). Tokenism illustrates how BIPOC employees face discrimination because they are perceived to be unique or not part of an organization's majority group. As a consequence of their limited representation in the workplace, Kanter's (1977) research also found that:

- Token members are more likely to encounter adversity at work because they are not part of the dominant group.
- Token members' ability to assimilate successfully or unsuccessfully influences opportunities for career advancement as they are seen as different from the dominant group.
- Token members feel constant pressure to prove their ability by having higher productivity rates than dominant group members.
- Token members face heightened levels of criticism by dominant group members over their cultural disparities.

Unconscious Bias

Unconscious bias may influence interactions, workplace culture, and advancement opportunities of BIPOC workers. Unconscious biases, also known as implicit biases, are hidden perceptions and prejudices that exist at the subconscious level and are influenced by our society (Moore, 2018). Unconscious biases are below-the-surface beliefs that people have about other individuals from different communities. The lack of awareness of the prejudicial factors that may drive individuals' thoughts, opinions, feelings, and actions is what makes these biases implicit. Without our awareness, factors such as childhood upbringing, life experiences, and cultural norms impact our decisions, attitudes, and behavior (Moore, 2018; Tate & Page, 2018). Despite

an individual's belief that implicit bias may be easy to change, Moore (2018) acknowledges that actions rooted in unconscious bias are hard to modify and correct. Unconscious biases are persistent and difficult to identify because people are unaware of them. Furthermore, implicit biases are difficult to identify because they are instilled in children when they are young and frequently go against what people instinctively think is accurate.

Leadership Barriers

While the exact percentage of BIPOC in leadership roles varies each year, it is known that BIPOC professionals are still largely invisible in leadership roles in corporate America. While researching the gap in executive roles in 2021, Agovino found that people of Asian descent account for 13% of the American workforce, but only 6% represent executive roles (Agovino, 2021). On the other hand, white people account for 85% of executives but represent only 69% of employees. More recently, in 2022, the US Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) noted that Black individuals make up about 12% of the labor force, yet only 8.6% are in management positions and about 6% in chief executive positions (US BLS, 2022). And while Latinos comprise 18% of the labor force, only about 11% are in management positions, and 7.4% are in chief executive positions.

The majority of leadership positions continue to be occupied by predominantly white professionals, which creates challenges for BIPOC employees seeking leadership positions. White individuals, specifically white men, dominating leadership positions in corporate America is an organizational phenomenon that produces a perception of elevated hierarchical status (Elsaas & Graves, 1997). As a result of this hierarchy of white dominance in organizations, the views and attitudes of white professionals persist. More recently, Khattab et al. (2020) also affirmed that the concept of 'good leadership' is associated with being white and male,

representing the dominant group in organizations. This perception of ‘good leadership’ shapes beliefs and standards that prevent BIPOC from obtaining leadership roles. With the projected rise of BIPOC in the American workforce (US BLS, 2022), the lack of representation of BIPOC leaders is a concern.

Imposter Syndrome

Impostor syndrome, commonly known as impostor phenomenon (IP), is a personal experience that contributes to the feeling of being inadequate or fake, even with proven accomplishments (Clance, 1985). Impostor syndrome can be described as intense feelings experienced by individuals who view themselves as fraudulent and believe their inefficiencies will be exposed. Individuals with impostor syndrome experience persistent insecurity and doubt their abilities, although they are often high-functioning and high-achieving individuals (Hutchins et al., 2018; Vergauwe et al., 2015).

Individuals with impostor syndrome have low self-worthy opinions of their talents, qualities, and achievements, which are often unfounded and incorrect (Vergauwe et al., 2015). Clance (1985) noted that people with impostor syndrome downplay their skills and associate their accomplishments with external influences. Rather than celebrate achievements, people who experience impostor syndrome feel guilty and believe their advancements were either a mistake or by chance. Future research affirmed this attitude of de-emphasizing skills, promotions, and accomplishments. Hutchins et al. (2018) research showed that employees with higher levels of impostor syndrome diminish their valuable skills and use avoidance tactics that contribute to emotional exhaustion and ultimately lead to burnout. Furthermore, impostor syndrome is correlated with low job satisfaction (Vergauwe et al., 2015), low job productivity, and mental health problems (Hutchins et al., 2018).

Invisibility Syndrome

BIPOC may feel undervalued or overlooked in their work environments, leading to a feeling of being invisible. Invisibility syndrome arises from feelings of consistent denial and rejection of one's qualities (Franklin et al., 2006). This syndrome is prompted and sustained by systemic oppression and recurring microaggressions. Harrell and Robbins (2019) note that invisibility syndrome emerges when only specific, often negatively viewed, aspects of one's identity are recognized, while the full representation remains obscured. Instead, a biased projection is typically observed based on other people's limited perspectives and motives. Invisibility syndrome leads to internalized racism (Franklin et al., 2006; Harrell & Robbins, 2019).

Covering. Due to feeling invisible, BIPOC employees might lean heavily into covering or assimilation, attempting to conform to the prevailing culture. Covering, which is often referred to as coerced assimilation, is a method that BIPOC use to scale back their identity in order to blend into the dominant culture (Yoshino, 2002). The act of covering is discriminatory to BIPOC because these individuals face pressure to adjust to dominant societal standards in order to succeed in the workplace. However, Mor Barak (1999) suggests that in covering, BIPOC employees risk compromising their core cultural principles, leading to a tension between their authentic selves and the norms of the organization they are immersed in. This persistent push to conform may strain BIPOC employees' personal integrity, and they may pull back from striving for inclusivity. Feeling undervalued, BIPOC may distance themselves from the dominant culture, leading to diminished morale, lowered engagement, and reduced participation in collaborative tasks (Mor Barak, 1999). This withdrawal can adversely affect BIPOC employees' sense of satisfaction.

Overachieving Mind Frame

In an effort to overcome possible discriminatory beliefs and practices within their workplace, BIPOC employees strive to work harder than their white colleagues because they feel compelled to uphold above-average standards (Eagly & Chin, 2010). These standards may lead to an overachieving mind frame, causing BIPOC employees to overperform at work. The need to overachieve is a result of the fear of appearing incompetent, which is common among BIPOC (Sue et al., 2007). A recent study supported this claim of BIPOC feeling the need to overachieve and overperform, specifically within the Asian community. The IBM Institute for Business Value (2021) reported that more than 60% of Asian American employees feel they must work harder than white professionals to succeed because of their identity. While an overachieving mind frame may cause higher productivity levels in the short term, it contributes to burnout and overall feelings of stress.

Cumulatively, the barriers mentioned that impact BIPOC employees can lead to heightened levels of workplace and racial stress and the negative repercussions of these forms of stress. These discriminatory stressors emphasize the need for organizations to seek mindfulness programs that incorporate BIPOC barriers and additional experiences particular to BIPOC. In the next section, I will argue that mindfulness is an important, appropriate, and relevant protective measure in the link between workplace stress, discrimination, and racial stressors for BIPOC. I will provide a description of mindfulness and discuss its history as a stress-reducing intervention, its cultural background, and its benefits.

Mindfulness

Mindfulness has gained a drastic amount of attention over the last three decades. The scholarly literature published on mindfulness has significantly increased, particularly in the last

ten years. According to data from the American Mindfulness Research Association (2022), over 1,300 mindfulness journal articles have been published since 1980, with more than 60% of the research articles published after 2010.

Mindfulness is a process that teaches people to cultivate attention and awareness of the present moment with an open mind (Dhiman, 2009; Kabat-Zinn, 2003). Mindfulness has two key elements: (a) Paying attention to the current moment by noticing thoughts, feelings, and sensations, and (b) Accepting the present moment without judgment or any expectations (Bishop et al., 2004). Mindfulness is considered a state of conscious knowledge of oneself and others that helps one acknowledge and consider the root of thoughts, feelings, and behaviors, freeing oneself from cognitive and behavioral habits that hinder desirable mental and physical health.

When used interchangeably, mindfulness and meditation lead to confusion; therefore, it is essential to distinguish between the two. Mindfulness is a process and a state of mind that does not require meditation (Brown & Ryan, 2003). Meditation refers to the practice of deliberate techniques to train or control thoughts and attention (Harrell & Robbins, 2019). Individuals utilize meditation as one of many tools to achieve a state of mindfulness. The widespread adoption and popularity of mindfulness in Westernized settings highlight the importance of understanding the historical and cultural roots of mindfulness to value its benefits and comprehend its limitations.

Cultural Background of Mindfulness

Mindfulness, which has been practiced for decades, emerged from South Asian cultural environments (Creswell, 2018). The concept of mindfulness has roots in Buddhism and Taoism, two ancient Eastern philosophical and spiritual traditions (Davidson & Kaszniak, 2015; Kabat-Zinn, 2013). The term "mindfulness" comes from the Pali word *sati*, which means 'to remember,' 'to bring to attention,' or "to recollect" and is one of the seven factors of

enlightenment in Buddhism (Bodhi, 2011). The earliest Buddhist texts mention mindfulness as a path to liberation and overcoming suffering. Mindfulness is grounded in Buddhism's three characteristics of existence, including the nature of impermanence, selflessness, and unreliability and dissatisfaction (King, 2018). Though not often mentioned or acknowledged, forms of mindfulness and other contemplative practices have been found in other cultures, such as African and Indigenous cultural history.

Background of Mindfulness in Other Cultural Contexts

The origins of mindfulness go beyond the traditional Buddhist and Taoist practices that are frequently linked to it. Mindfulness has been adapted and deeply ingrained in many cultures around the world (Kabat-Zinn, 2013), including African, Native American, Hawaiian, and Latino cultures. Despite possible differences from their Buddhist foundations, the practices all revolve around the same concepts of awareness, compassion, and presence. Indigenous cultures, in particular, have adopted mindfulness techniques into their daily life for a long time, stressing the interconnectedness of all things and the value of being present at the moment. (Griffin, 2015). Acknowledging the diverse cultural roots of mindfulness can enhance its accessibility and relevance to a broader range of individuals and communities.

African cultures have historically used mindfulness, often referred to as Ubuntu, which means 'I am because we are' (Kabat-Zinn, 2013). Ubuntu places a strong emphasis on community and interconnectedness, two concepts that are essential to practicing mindfulness (Kabat-Zinn, 2013). Native American cultures have also embraced mindfulness, as seen in the Native American practice of 'wopila,' which translates to 'thank you' and emphasizes appreciation for the present moment (Griffin, 2015). Several elements of Latino culture also align with the idea of mindfulness. For instance, Latino culture typically promotes a sense of

presence and community connection, which is essential to mindfulness (Pérez et al., 2020; Roth & Robbins, 2004). The significance of spiritual and religious rituals, like prayer and developing gratitude in Latino culture, can also be related to concepts of mindfulness. The cultural background of mindfulness has had a significant impact on how it is currently practiced and perceived in the West. Jon Kabat-Zinn, who created the MBSR program, had a significant influence on early Western interpretations of mindfulness.

Stress Reducing Background of Mindfulness

Although the concept of mindfulness goes back to the teachings of Buddhism more than 2500 years ago, contemporary methods of mindfulness started to take form in the early 1980s with the introduction of MBSR (Kabat-Zinn, 1982; Kabat-Zinn, 2003). Kabat-Zinn initially developed MBSR as a non-religious intervention for healthcare patients experiencing pain or stress (Kabat-Zinn, 1982). Generally, MBSR is a stress-management program that combines Buddhist mindfulness techniques with contemporary cognitive and behavioral therapies.

Initially, MBSR was designed as an eight-week program consisting of a once-a-week, 2.5 hours class to cultivate foundational attitudes of mindfulness. Kabat-Zinn identified seven foundations of mindfulness that include: (a) non-judging, (b) patience, (c) having a beginner's mind, (d) trust, (e) non-striving, (f) acceptance, and (g) letting go. A typical MBSR class usually involves Hatha yoga, sitting meditations, body scans, and breathing exercises (Kabat-Zinn, 2013; Shapiro et al., 1998). Participants are encouraged to engage in mindfulness practice for 45 minutes daily between sessions.

Benefits of Mindfulness

Numerous studies have highlighted the physical and mental health benefits of mindfulness practice (Abercrombie et al., 2007; Carmody & Baer, 2008; Grossman et al., 2004).

Given its capacity to lessen the health effects of stress, headaches, disordered eating, and recurrent depression, mindfulness has attracted more attention (Carmody & Baer, 2008; Grossman et al., 2004). Additionally, mindfulness is linked to improved physical and psychological benefits, including better sleep, frequent exercise, and psychological well-being (Abercrombie et al., 2007; Winbush et al., 2007). Mindfulness practice provides non-judgmental awareness of feeling, emotion, and perception and offers a tool for studying the integration of the mind's inner and outer experiences. It fosters a mental state in which individuals detach from their internal distractions (Klatt et al., 2009). Mindfulness promotes a fresh clarity of mind, allowing relaxation and better concentration on releasing stressors. A vital aspect of improving internal stressors is to have an awareness of the emotional reactions that arise to uncontrollable external circumstances. Mindful meditation quiets the brain and replaces worry and rumination with calmness (Institute for Organizational Mindfulness, IOM, n.d.). Mindfulness training involves exercises that aim to help people develop mindful awareness, an outcome of practicing mindfulness.

Mindfulness practices can alter the way the adult brain works. Mindfulness is associated with neuroplasticity – the concept that our brains are plastic and can adjust depending on our experience (Good et al., 2015; IOM, n.d.). Through neuroplasticity, mindfulness physically rewires pathways in the brain linked to awareness, attention, emotion, learning, and memory. Therefore, mindfulness practices enhance attention skills, help individuals have a stronger grasp on their feelings, and expand their ability to think and behave more intentionally (IOM, n.d.; Magee, 2016). As such, mindfulness is a trait that can be practiced to quiet, calm, and focus the mind.

The Organizational Mind-Body Shift

Organizations are starting to offer programs that promote awareness, positive emotions and reduce stress, such as relaxation techniques, meditation, and yoga (Lamontagne et al., 2007; Spangler et al., 2012). Mind-body contemplative practices have been linked to employees' improved perceived quality of work-life balance and enhanced psychological resources (van der Klink et al., 2001). While there are various mind-body contemplative interventions, mindfulness is one type of practice that can help employees achieve positive workplace goals such as enhanced job satisfaction, productivity, psychological resources, and stress management (Davidson et al., 2003; Good et al., 2015). Mindfulness can help regulate one's work and personal life by providing resources to cope with work-related cognitions and emotions (Michel et al., 2014). Additionally, mindfulness aids in cultivating resilience and enhancing employee well-being (Slutsky et al., 2019). In the next section, I will provide discuss the popularity of mindfulness within workplace organizations, its benefits, and its current critiques.

Mindfulness in the Workplace

Mindfulness programs have recently become popular in organizational settings due to the ongoing high levels of stress stemming from work. Although mindfulness interventions began in healthcare, they have expanded and are provided to people in various settings, such as correctional facilities, schools, and businesses (Kabat-Zinn, 2003). Given the significant volume of studies on the beneficial implications of mindfulness on cognitive processes and physiology, research and literature on the benefits of mindfulness at work have expanded, often suggesting positive outcomes (Good et al., 2015). With the growing rates of work-related stress, mindfulness programs have transitioned into the business world. Given the benefits of mindfulness and other contemplative practices to increase productivity and increase worker

satisfaction, corporations have capitalized upon this current trend for executives and employees alike.

While mindfulness programs are still evolving in workplaces, more businesses are providing mindfulness for staff. Many influential organizations, such as Aetna, Blackrock, Ford Motor Company, Goldman Sachs, the Mayo Clinic, and the U.S. Army, have developed and implemented mindfulness programs for their employees to enhance performance and well-being (Good et al., 2015; Jha et al., 2015). Within the last several years, a number of large and small businesses are now even carving out a niche in workplace mindfulness training (Hyland, 2015). Google has created a program based on mindfulness principles called the Search Inside Yourself program that has become famous in work settings.

Benefits of Mindfulness in the Workplace

The benefits of mindfulness for employees and employers have become widely known due to the increased research that has been conducted on mindfulness in workplace settings. In recent years the benefits of mindfulness have been heavily explored, and many organizations have started offering mindfulness programs to employees (Hyland, 2015). Employers increasingly recognize the importance of mindfulness in promoting positive well-being among staff. Research shows that employees who incorporate contemplative practices experience less stress, enhanced job satisfaction, and increased productivity (Davidson et al., 2003). Evidence from research across multiple industries also indicates that mindfulness supports other aspects of well-being at work, such as communication, satisfaction, and performance (Good et al., 2015). Jamieson and Tuckey (2017) analyzed 40 published research studies on workplace mindfulness programs to determine the efficacy and found that "there was a statistically significant benefit of mindfulness training for employee health and well-being" (p. 189). Studies have shown that

mindfulness improves productivity and mental well-being (Kersemaekers et al., 2018), decreases stress (Good et al., 2015), and reduces anxiety (Hoge et al., 2013).

Critiques of Mindfulness in the Workplace

Despite the positive benefits of mindfulness that have been reported in research findings, challenges abound in convincing companies to embrace mindfulness within the workplace. The barriers to implementing mindfulness in workplace settings are multi-faceted and require a range of strategies to overcome. Weick and Putnam (2006) confirmed that "attempts to increase mindfulness in an organizational context are complicated because organizations are established, held together, and made effective largely utilizing concepts" (p. 281). Many organizations do not have formal policies in place to support mindfulness programs and training and may not provide the necessary resources, such as space or time, to facilitate the development of mindfulness. This lack of organizational support can make it difficult for individuals to integrate mindfulness into their workday or to sustain their practice over time. Additional critiques of mindfulness, such as its commodification, time-intensiveness, and lack of inclusivity, are discussed below.

McMindfulness. Mindfulness research and implementation in institutions have become popular over the past two decades. Mindfulness has been commercialized and is now a billion-dollar industry (Kim, 2018). The surge of businesses selling mindfulness programs and the drastic rise of mindfulness in organizations has led to the McMindfulness effect.

"McMindfulness" refers to the commodification of mindfulness, emphasizing convenience and quick results for personal success (Kim, 2018; Purser & Loy, 2013). It has been given the name McMindfulness to describe its bite-sized, fast-paced, pre-packaged delivery. McMindfulness diminishes and undermines the overall meaning and foundation of mindfulness (Purser & Loy, 2013). Instead of emphasizing the happiness, fulfillment, and well-being of individuals,

McMindfulness highlights the benefits of mindfulness for employees at work with an underlying goal of improving business outcomes such as increased productivity and performance.

Skepticism. Another barrier to mindfulness at work is skepticism from both colleagues and leadership. Some employees may view mindfulness as a soft skill or new-age concept and may be skeptical of their effectiveness or relevance in the workplace (Wylson, 2016). This skepticism can create a cultural barrier to implementing mindfulness, which may make it more difficult for individuals to feel comfortable practicing mindfulness at work. There may be a lack of understanding or education about the benefits of mindfulness practices, which can also act as a barrier to adoption. Employees may not fully comprehend the advantages of mindfulness and may be unclear about how to integrate these practices into their workday (Adams et al., 2016; Wylson, 2016). This confusion or misunderstanding can lead to some employees and leaders being resistant to adopting mindfulness (Adams et al., 2016). Subsequently, skepticism and doubt may lead to employees and employers being hesitant to practice mindfulness.

Lack of Time and Resources. Another critique of mindfulness in the workplace is the time and budget requirements. While mindfulness relates to organizational health and performance improvements, mindfulness programs may not always be suitable within work contexts. There is a perception that traditional mindfulness-based interventions take a considerable amount of time out of the workday to yield results and be helpful (Adams et al., 2016; Klatt et al., 2009). Many employees report feeling overwhelmed by the demands of their jobs and may feel that they simply do not have the time to devote to mindfulness practices (Wylson, 2016). Although Kabat-Zinn's MBSR is thought to be the most replicated mindfulness training (Woods-Giscombe & Gaylord, 2014), it is often a challenge to implement in work settings due to the time investment needed to engage. Participants need to commit two-and-a-half

hours weekly to participate in MBSR. Due to the significant time and commitment required for traditional forms of mindfulness training, many people with time restraints (e.g., busy professionals, CEOs, and students) will be prevented from pursuing the practice and reaping its benefits. Additionally, the cost of mindfulness training may be a detriment for businesses. Mindfulness programs may be inaccessible due to the expensive cost of classes (Magee, 2016). According to Watson et al. (2016), the typical MBSR class cost between \$400 to \$500. Employers may not have the budget or resources necessary to implement and sustain mindfulness programming. Although cultural and logistical challenges in implementing mindfulness at work are undeniable, it is important to delve into the significant benefits of mindfulness for BIPOC, particularly in countering the adverse effects of discriminations and racial stress.

Mindfulness for BIPOC Discrimination and Racial Stress

Mindfulness research and other contemplative practices focusing specifically on the BIPOC community are growing. In addition to enhancing focus and awareness, mindfulness has also been found to help mitigate unfavorable health effects of racial stressors for BIPOC (Brown-Iannuzzi et al., 2014). To explore the ways in which mindfulness can address the needs of the BIPOC community, the following section discusses the benefits of mindfulness for BIPOC and the research on mindfulness for discrimination and racial stressors.

Benefits of Mindfulness for BIPOC Discrimination and Stress

Numerous studies have demonstrated the advantages that BIPOC participants can expect to receive in mindfulness and other contemplative practices (Le & Gobert, 2015; Spears et al., 2017; Toomey & Anhalt, 2016; Watson et al., 2016; Woods-Giscombé & Gaylord, 2014). For example, a recent research study was conducted to investigate if past discrimination and race-

related vigilance, two types of race-related stressors, interactively predicted greater depressive symptomatology among Black individuals (Watson-Singleton et al., 2019). Watson-Singleton et al. (2019) gathered data from 190 Black participants and found that mindfulness was associated with lower levels of depression among participants who have experienced racial stressors. Mindfulness has also been successfully proven to minimize bias and other discrimination (Lueke & Gibson, 2015, 2016). Therefore, when modified appropriately, mindfulness may play a role in reducing the discrimination that individuals from BIPOC communities experience.

Research on Mindfulness for Discrimination and Racial Stress

Mindfulness may decrease biases associated with various aspects of diversity and identity, including class, age, and race. Research has demonstrated that mindfulness practices can effectively reduce prejudice and discrimination (Brown-Iannuzzi et al., 2014; Lueke & Gibson, 2015), negativity bias (Kiken & Shook, 2011), and unconscious bias (Lueke & Gibson, 2016; Magee, 2016). These studies suggest that mindfulness can support us by minimizing our unconscious bias toward others. By increasing awareness of our feelings and prejudices, mindfulness practices lead us to think more concisely and rationally before reacting.

Mindfulness contributes to a decrease in implicit bias. Lueke and Gibson's (2015) research examined the effect of mindfulness on implicit age and racial bias, as assessed by implicit association tests (IAT). The IATs results showed that the group who listened to the mindfulness audio developed a state of mindful awareness and showed less implicit race and age bias than participants who listened to the control audio recording. Lueke and Gibson (2016) further expanded their research on brief mindfulness training to examine mindfulness's potential to affect discriminatory behavior. Results from the trust game indicate that a state of mindfulness

significantly alleviates discrimination. White participants who listened to the brief mindfulness recording showed less discriminatory attitudes and behavior toward the Black participants in the trust game than participants in the control group. Through Lueke and Gibson's studies, we now have quantifiable evidence that brief mindfulness training decreased unconscious bias (and discriminatory behavior) against black people and older individuals (Lueke & Gibson, 2015, 2016).

Brown-Iannuzzi et al. (2014) conducted research to determine if mindfulness could help individuals who report symptoms of depression due to the discrimination and prejudices they encounter. The study highlighted the benefits of mindfulness for individuals who feel symptoms of depression as a result of experiencing discriminatory behaviors. The survey results showed that participants who recounted experiencing discrimination had a lower rate of depression if they practiced mindfulness. Thus, mindfulness can serve as an individual protective strategy for people who face discrimination. It is important to note that the majority of participants in this research study were white individuals. The results from these studies offer evidence of mindfulness as a valuable tactic against prejudice. Though these research studies prove that mindfulness can reduce discrimination and negative biases, these studies do not consider perspectives from BIPOC. Specifically, there are relatively few studies about the effect of mindfulness on the racial stressors BIPOC employees experience at work.

Critiques of Mindfulness

Mindfulness, heralded for its potential benefits in reducing stress and promoting mental well-being, faces its own set of criticisms when adopted by BIPOC communities. The widespread popularity of its benefits in Western context often results in cultural barriers, particularly as ancient traditions are adapted to contemporary settings. Yang (2017) observed

that while translating traditional mindfulness practices, essential cultural nuances can sometimes be dismissed, neglected, or misunderstood. This current Westernized approach, marked by a lack of inclusivity, can sometimes alienate BIPOC and might inadvertently leave out the unique cultural and spiritual values integral to BIPOC communities. These barriers can dilute the effectiveness and acceptance of mindfulness in BIPOC communities.

Lack of Representation. Mindfulness programs are not typically designed or tailored for BIPOC. Similar to research in health, individuals from BIPOC communities are traditionally underrepresented, which also applies to mindfulness scholarly research. White nonminority individuals represent most participants in mindfulness research conducted in America (Watson et al., 2016; DeLuca et al., 2018); therefore, mindfulness practices and programs are typically designed for this demographic.

Mindfulness, as it is practiced in America, is strongly infused with a white, upper-middle-class, educated frame of mind (Mindful Staff, 2017; Watson et al., 2016; Yang, 2017). Mindfulness programming often includes white cultural references and perspectives (Magee, 2016; Proulx et al., 2018; Watson et al., 2016), which can hinder how mindfulness is received amongst BIPOC populations. Harrell (2018) highlights that the Westernized cultural presentation of mindfulness may resonate less with BIPOC. As a result, it may be challenging to introduce practical applications of mindfulness to BIPOC communities.

Lack of Connection. Additionally, researchers have raised concerns about the compatibility of mindfulness with individuals from BIPOC communities (DeLuca et al., 2018; Sobczak & West, 2013; Spears et al., 2017; Woods-Giscombé & Black, 2010). Due to a lack of connection, BIPOC participants are not fully 'present' during mindfulness programs (Proulx et al., 2018). BIPOC are also more prone to terminate mindfulness programs and training if they do not

believe there is a cultural connection between the practices and their own cultural beliefs (Blum, 2014). Usually, the disconnect can be significant between white mindfulness professionals and BIPOC participants if the mindfulness professional is unaware of the systemic barriers that affect BIPOC employees. Concisely, mindfulness practices and programs within America are Westernized and reflective of the dominant white European culture. This issue of a lack of representation in mindfulness is thoroughly discussed in a sub-section in the theoretical framework portion titled ‘color blind mindfulness.’

Religious Conflict. A prominent concern in the BIPOC community regarding mindfulness is its affiliation with specific religious backgrounds. Mindfulness may not resonate with BIPOC due to its historical link to Buddhism. Due to mindfulness association with Eastern spirituality, participants from various cultural backgrounds may feel that their spiritual or religious views contradict mindfulness (Davis et al., 2019; Woods-Giscombé & Gaylord, 2014). In the following section, I will introduce and expound on a theoretical framework that further explores the limitations of mindfulness and the need for further research on this topic.

Theoretical Foundation – Color-Blind Racial Ideology

CRT is the theoretical foundation used in this research study. CBRI will be expounded upon under the notion that racism is commonplace rather than unordinary or aberrations, which is one of five tenets within CRT. CRT is a lens that examines systems, laws, and educational structures to combat racism on institutional and structural levels (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012). In this study, CBRI will be used to examine the phenomenon of mindfulness in the workplace. This section will begin with an overview and the background and history of CRT, a synopsis of CBRI, and conclude with a discussion of color-blind mindfulness, a term I use to describe how CBRI is displayed in mindfulness.

Overview and History of CRT

CRT explores and examines racial inequities within social, educational, political, and economic contexts. This exploration occurs from minorities' very own stories and perspectives. CRT understands and acknowledges the expertise that BIPOC brings to important discussions. CRT is exceptionally vital as it is rooted in the experiences of BIPOC. It challenges ethnic, gender, and class-based systems of oppression by extracting people of color's expertise to establish equitable societal opportunities (Yosso, 2005). CRT affirms that power discrepancies between minority and white people are maintained and are passed down generationally through racist ideologies (Brown, 2003).

Several multicultural theories were developed after the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s that focused on confronting power issues that minority communities encountered. Derrick Bell and Alan Freeman developed CRT in the 1970s as a result of their frustration with the slow rate of racial reform. Bell and Freeman believed that the Civil Rights Movement did not enhance social structures or offer long-term systemic reform that strengthened individuals and communities encountering injustice and inequality (Ladson-Billings, 1995). Therefore, it was essential to develop policies and theories that were relevant to BIPOC. Consequently, CRT was developed to explore and emphasize BIPOC's perspectives and provide a theoretical framework that supports diversity, equity, and inclusion.

CRT is devoted to deconstructing injustice and oppression (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012; Yosso, 2005). It highlights the inequities individuals from BIPOC communities encounter and addresses intersectional identities, such as gender, sex, sexuality, economic status, religion, and age. While CRT is derived from the legal field and is used to analyze racial inequality on the individual and systemic level, many fields have adopted this approach, including policy, history,

sociology, education, and ethnic and women's studies (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012; Solórzano et al., 2000).

Color Blind Racial Ideology

CBRI is a significant component of CRT related to this study. CBRI argues that culture and race are significant in mitigating the utilization of race-neutral assumptions (Bonilla-Silva, 2001) that are prevalent in our society. Individuals from the dominant group employ CBRI when they debate that a traumatic experience is not really about race or claim that they do not see color when making decisions. However, denouncing race does not eliminate an individual's biases or its impact on the lives of BIPOC.

People who use CBRI notice racial differences but are complicit in denying the race's importance, known as 'nonrecognition' (Gotanda, 1991), eliminating people's cultural identity and heritage. The 'nonrecognition' of race is the "recognition of racial affiliation followed by the deliberate suppression of racial considerations" (Gotanda, 1991, p. 6). This means that individuals who are 'color-blind' acknowledge race and then choose to ignore its impact. The color-blind perspective is harmful and inappropriate because ignoring or denying ethnic differences suggests that race does not have any cultural or social significance (DeCuir-Gunby & Gunby, 2016).

Color Blind Mindfulness

Mindfulness and other contemplative practices generally use a one-size-fits-all approach with participants. This approach can perpetuate discriminatory approaches and embedded biases in mindfulness teachers due to larger structures of racism, such as systemic racism, where stereotypes and biases are constructed (Proulx et al., 2018). While mindfulness professionals may be unaware of its white foundation, mindfulness programs are frequently perceived to be

color-blind (Magee, 2016). When facilitating mindfulness programs, teachers' biases can go unnoticed, which creates an environment that does not allow BIPOC to be completely present in the mindfulness exercise. White mindfulness teachers' inherent biases may appear in the metaphors and stories and how they are addressed. Harrell et al. (2020) thoroughly described this phenomenon, which I call color-blind mindfulness, by stating,

“The language, voice tone, pacing, stories and jokes shared, metaphors or inspirational quotes used, music played, selection of which aspects of mindfulness to emphasize, and atmosphere of the setting may neither resonate universally nor consistently be experienced as positive by individuals who do not come from the societally dominant racial-cultural lens” (p.12).

The foundational attitudes of mindfulness practice can also perpetuate color blindness. For example, the practice of slowing down and taking a moment to reflect on thoughts and feelings may be new, uncomfortable, or even awkward for people from BIPOC communities. Some individuals can even experience mindfulness as oppressive due to its implicit message that intense emotions are unwelcome and should be suppressed (Yang, 2017). Time and space for contemplative practices such as mindfulness may also be seen as a privilege that is not often unavailable to some participants. For BIPOC who work within White-dominant institutions, these recommendations may seem entitled and out of touch with BIPOC's everyday experiences of preserving one's integrity, as well as working tirelessly to support and accommodate the expectations of members of their community. It may be challenging to slow down when BIPOC employees feel they need to remain invisible to survive or when BIPOC employees believe that many others depend on their hard work and labor.

The impact of colonialism still exists in this day and age and can be presented in both subtle and blatant ways. (Enns et al., 2020). Due to laws and policies that established and maintained colonialism, individuals from BIPOC communities have endured historical trauma due to a loss of cultural identity (Proulx et al., 2018). As noted above, white culture directs and influences mindfulness. Mindfulness exists within the context of inequality and power, which is common in colonized societies. Mindfulness programs and practices must be interpreted to include cultural themes such as race, privilege, and intersections of social and demographic identities. The current contemporary and Westernized form of mindfulness may be viewed as another example of color-blind mindfulness by pushing BIPOC to acclimate to the dominant white culture. This can be considered white cultural dominance because rather than investigating how workplaces contribute to BIPOC stress, business leaders may either try to use mindfulness as a ‘fix it all’ medicine or blame the stress on the individual.

Although a facilitator's actions may not be rooted in racism, the teaching method may exclude minority cultural frameworks. To incorporate the mindfulness lesson being taught, BIPOC must constantly reinterpret the instructions into their cultural context (Proulx et al., 2018). Even with mindfulness classes that aim to develop techniques to manage stress, reinterpretation contributes to stress for BIPOC due to the extra work. In contrast, White individuals with similar cultural backgrounds as their teachers are more inclined to share similar social norms, values, and beliefs, making reinterpretation less essential. While mindfulness can lessen the severity of adverse psychological disorders among various populations, its impact and effectiveness amongst BIPOC populations may be less beneficial. Therefore, mindfulness programs and curriculums implemented in workplace settings must be culturally attuned and decolonized. The next portion of the literature review provides a broad overview of the literature

and research on culturally modified psychological interventions and contemplative practices as a way to explore the possible ways to enhance the impact and inclusion of BIPOC populations within mindfulness programming and implementation.

Culturally Attuned and Decolonized Mindfulness

Dismantling color blindness in mindfulness involves decolonizing mindfulness. Decolonization refers to the meaningful process of dismantling the political, economic, social, and cultural structures and practices that were established and maintained through colonialism (Mignolo, 2011; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013). Enns et al. (2020) describe decolonization as identifying and acknowledging the profound outcomes of colonialism and the ways indigenous knowledge, beliefs, and lived experiences have been replaced. The goal of decolonization is to eliminate the effects of colonialism. Decolonization also refers to dismantling inequalities, oppression, and white dominance by replacing them with practices and theories developed in minority communities (Enns et al., 2020; Mignolo, 2011; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013). In addition, decolonization entails examining and eliminating how individuals from minority communities have created coping mechanisms as a result of internalized colonial ideologies. Decolonizing mindfulness includes culturally attuning mindfulness to include historical and societal considerations relevant to BIPOC.

While there is limited research on the topic, there is a growing body of literature aiming to culturally attune psychological interventions and contemplative practices like yoga, mindfulness, and meditation (Alston, 2012; Le & Gobert, 2015; Magee, 2016; Proulx et al., 2018; Tenfelde et al., 2017; Watson et al., 2016; Woods-Giscombé & Gaylord, 2014). Hall et al. (2016) conducted a study to examine the efficacy of culturally adapted interventions compared to the original version of the same intervention. The meta-analysis found that cultural adaptations

of interventions are more effective than un-adapted interventions that do not account for culture and diversity.

The concept of decolonizing and culturally modifying mindfulness programs has become more visible as a result of recent discussions about potential obstacles to practicing mindfulness (DeLuca et al., 2018; Proulx et al., 2018; Sobczak & West, 2013; Spears et al., 2017; Watson et al., 2016; Woods-Giscombé & Black, 2010). For example, Woods-Giscombé and Gaylord (2014) conducted a study that explored the cultural relevance of mindfulness for Black adults. 15 Black individuals were interviewed to understand if mindfulness is accepted and effective in addressing stress that Black people experience. Woods-Giscombé and Gaylord found that mindfulness improved participants' stress management, self-awareness, and purposefulness. The participants stated they would recommend mindfulness meditation to other Black people but admitted that the practice needed to be modified to include culture. They suggested a number of modifications, such as highlighting the health benefits, linking it to familiar spiritual concepts and cultural traditions, substituting the reading material with Black writers, and incorporating more Black teachers and participants.

When mindfulness programs are decolonized and culturally modified, mindfulness has a positive effect on BIPOC's health and well-being. This paper theorizes that when mindfulness programs are decolonized and culturally modified, mindfulness can be a tool for liberation in the workplace. Mindfulness may aid in dismantling institutional and structural racism within organizations. The following section discussed the beneficial intersection of mindfulness for diversity and inclusion (D&I) and social justice.

Culturally Attuned Mindfulness for Diverse and Inclusive Workplaces

Several government establishments emphasize the importance of organizational policies, procedures, resources, and systems that promote effective initiatives for BIPOC (APA, 2003). As the population in America continues to grow to be more multicultural, organizations must adapt to and recruit BIPOC workers (Eagly & Chin, 2010) and create inclusive work environments. The APA Preventing Discrimination and Promoting Diversity Report declared that “it is critical that we radically rethink how we create institutions and communities in which differences flourish, power-based inequities are contested, and democratic participation is encouraged” (APA, 2012, p. 2). Moreover, the United Nations (UN, 2020) declares that all global learning institutions should be devoted to promoting inclusive and equitable education for everyone and opportunities to continue learning. Work may be viewed as an educational institution where knowledge and skills are acquired. Therefore, according to the UN (2020) declaration, businesses should promote diverse and inclusive workplaces for all individuals. In addition, numerous studies indicate that business outcomes are enhanced when companies respect and welcome diverse views, insights, and opinions (Cox, 2004; Thomas & Ely, 1996). Further research indicates that organizations exposed to racially diverse personnel are associated with enhanced creativity and innovation (Forbes, 2011), increased profitability (Wiley-Little, 2013), greater problem-solving skills, and expanded awareness (Phillips et al., 2006). Businesses should strive to create a healthy, mentally focused workforce that provides them with a competitive advantage.

As such, there has been an increase in efforts to attend to these changes within the social, political, and economic landscape, mainly through the work of Diversity and Inclusion (D&I). As an organizational practice, D&I aims to provide access and opportunities for BIPOC. D&I is

embraced to signal that both 'diversity' and 'inclusion' are vital values that an organization or workplace might hold. Within organizational settings, diversity represents a wide range of categories, including age, gender, sexual preference, faith, political affiliation, and ethnicity (Nishii, 2013). Inclusion refers to employees' belief that their unique contributions are appreciated by their employer. Additionally, inclusion is correlated with employees' sense of belonging and level of fulfillment as it relates to their organization (Giovannini, 2004).

Mindfulness can help with supporting D&I initiatives, especially when it comes to supporting BIPOC employees with stress. Mindfulness goes hand in hand with D&I training as it will encourage employees to reflect on what they have learned and develop an understanding of the importance of an inclusive culture. Promoting mindfulness can help minimize biases white individuals hold (Lueke & Gibson, 2015, 2016) and help BIPOC manage race-related stressors (Brown-Iannuzzi et al., 2014). Eliminating prejudices, biases, and stereotypes associated with BIPOC in the workplace will take more than enacting policies or forcing compliance. Individuals must be committed to learning about BIPOC community cultural values and issues. When working with people from different backgrounds, it helps to explore their culture and their unique perspectives (Mayeno, 2007). Rather than merely adapting to diverse cultures, it is vital to spend time discussing deep-rooted systemic injustices based on social and demographic differences such as race, gender, and class. When these issues are ignored or disregarded, mindfulness training may be considered surface-level or insincere and may reinforce inequalities instead of dismantling them. In order to be culturally responsive, professionals should research and understand their own culture and privilege.

Mindfulness and Cultural Competence

Cultural competence is another term used to describe D&I work that seeks to increase the multicultural capacity to successfully work with diverse employees in the workplace (Mayeno, 2007). Cultural competence alludes to the notion of individuals from the dominant culture educating themselves about BIPOC culture and values (Falicov, 2009). Cultural competence is generally about acquiring knowledge and learning facts about cultures different from our own. Understanding BIPOC's cultural values is not merely enough to be considered culturally competent. In addition to recognizing BIPOC's cultural values, cultural competence involves putting a focus on the unique stressors, socioeconomic and political factors that BIPOC face. Mayeno (2007) describes cultural competence as the ability of people in an organization to work respectfully with individuals from different ethnic, cultural, and social backgrounds.

Organizations can develop cultural competence by establishing equitable practices. However, developing culturally responsive practices requires more than adding generic resources and training. It may be complex and multi-faceted. Implementing a decolonized and culturally attuned mindfulness program requires, among other things, deep discussions about diversity, inclusion, and social justice.

Culturally Attuned Mindfulness for Social Justice

Another suggestion for decolonizing and culturally attuning mindfulness for BIPOC is integrating discussions about social justice issues (Berilla, 2016; Hick & Furlotte, 2010). Many mindfulness professionals have acknowledged the notion of color blindness in mindfulness and begun incorporating topics around equity and social justice into their programs (Berilla, 2016; Davis et al., 2019; Magee, 2015; Williams et al., 2016). In addition to awareness of implicit racial bias, mindfulness can facilitate greater awareness of social justice (King, 2018; Magee,

2016). Subsequently, mindfulness can be offered as a tool to transform individuals and communities. Indeed, mindfulness alone will not solve bias, discrimination, and racism. Nonetheless, mindfulness is a great tool to “support us in responding more wisely to racial injustice, both internally and externally” (King, 2018, p. 253). As such, many scholars and activists have increased awareness of the beneficial impact of mindfulness and social justice.

Scholar Magee (2016) suggests that an embodied form of mindfulness can support difficult conversations, organizational transformation, and societal resilience. Mindfulness can set the stage for social justice in organizations by confronting sensitive or complex topics like discrimination and racial stress. Unfortunately, people are often uncomfortable participating in training that includes discussions about reducing racial themes (Lueke & Gibson, 2016), such as oppression, discrimination, and injustices. However, given that mindfulness allows for more human kindness and compassion without explicitly focusing on bias directly, mindfulness training may be more welcoming than specific bias reduction training. Thus, using mindfulness may be exceptionally useful.

Having tough conversations and being mindful of race allows for greater awareness of the “pervasive depth of racial harm and injustice in our immediate lives and throughout the world. The constellations of harm become more vivid” (King, 2018, p. 148). Therefore, through the use of mindfulness as a tool for difficult conversations, people are less inclined to believe that an individual’s personal beliefs are being forced onto them. In fact, mindfulness allows individuals to actively listen and respond from a place of compassion (Magee, 2016).

Relevant Examples of Culturally Attuned and Decolonized Mindfulness

Scholars and activists have recently brought awareness to the beneficial impact of mindfulness training on diversity, inclusion, and social justice work (Black, 2016; King, 2018;

Magee, 2016). Researchers have even begun to develop frameworks for culturally attuned mindfulness practices and guides on utilizing mindfulness to introduce race and social justice (Harrell, 2018; Magee, 2016). Additional examples of appropriate, modified contemplative practices have been developed and can be found online and in mindfulness scholarly journals. Below I highlight several frameworks and approaches adding to the growing intersection between mindfulness, racial and social justice, and culture.

Mindfulness for the People. In response to the systemic whiteness in the mindfulness industry, psychologist Angela Rose Black developed the organization ‘Mindfulness for the People,’ which provides mindfulness training that emphasizes oppression sensitivity and racial awareness processes for white people in the mindfulness industry (Black, 2016). Mindfulness for the People aims to disrupt the systemic whiteness in the mindfulness movement by centering the insights and wisdom of BIPOC in mindfulness practices and research (Black, 2016).

Mindful of Race. Scholar Ruth King discusses how mindfulness can lay the foundation for social justice (because of its outcomes of compassion and kindness) in her renowned book, *Mindful of Race* (King, 2018). In this book, King describes the Racial Inquiry Questionnaire she developed. She suggests that individuals implementing mindfulness use inquiry questions to analyze their own personal beliefs and biases (King, 2018). These questions allow mindfulness facilitators, practitioners, or teachers to better understand how they may contribute and transmit their personal biases to participants. The Racial Inquiry Questions are beneficial as it allows individuals to take a deeper look into their privilege and lived experiences.

The SOUL-Centered Practice. The SOUL-Centered Practice (SCP) framework developed by psychologist Shelly Harrell is an approach to contemplative practices that integrates cultural values (Harrell, 2018). The SCP framework incorporates ‘soulfulness’ as an

orientation to mindfulness and other mind-body practices in order to enhance cultural attunement for BIPOC participants. Soulfulness practices focus on the soul and inner aliveness of individuals. Soulfulness processes include using culturally appropriate metaphors, stories, songs, quotes, and more to enhance soul-level or mindfulness experiences. The ability to identify, resist, and dismantle internalized, interpersonal, and systemic oppression are themes of soulfulness often expressed by participants (Harrell et al., 2020). With the SCP framework as a foundation, soulfulness can foster liberation in the context of racial stress and can inspire action for social justice. This form of mindfulness supports individuals in developing the capacity to endure and persevere when facing oppression (Harrell, 2018).

The Inner Work of Racial Justice. Lawyer and scholar Rhonda Magee discussed the intersection of mindfulness and social justice in her groundbreaking book, *The Inner Work of Racial Justice* (Magee, 2016). In this book, Magee discusses the various frameworks she has developed that help put the restorative powers of mindfulness to practice, such as STOP, WAIT, and the Four Pillars of Flourishing. Within the Four Pillars of Flourishing framework, Magee (2016) describes the following four components of human flourishing:

1. Awareness (internal and external mindfulness),
2. Connection (care and kinship towards others),
3. Insight (self-knowledge and understanding), and
4. Meaning (clarity around purpose and values).

Void in Literature

Though research studies have examined the role of mindfulness within work settings, there is still insufficient evidence on the benefits of mindfulness for BIPOC employees within organizations. Initial research shows that mindfulness training is a beneficial stress-management

intervention for BIPOC (Proulx et al., 2018; Watson-Singleton et al., 2019; Woods-Giscombe & Black, 2010), yet there is a gap in the literature on how mindfulness practices are attuned to address cultural challenges like race-related job stress.

Although mindfulness programs incorporating culture have been developed in community and clinical settings (Harrell et al., 2020; Spears et al., 2017; Woods-Giscombé & Gaylord, 2014), these modifications have not translated into workplace settings. Therefore, it is unknown if mindfulness programs implemented in workplace settings are culturally appropriate for BIPOC inclusion. As such, developing and implementing culturally appropriate mindfulness programs that impact the role of discrimination and racial stress that BIPOC experience is vital.

Mindfulness training and programs offered in business settings do not usually account for employees' race and culture. Therefore, it is necessary to explore how mindfulness practices implemented in work settings can be culturally attuned and decolonized in ways that BIPOC employees feel included. Harrell (2018) firmly declares that mindfulness practices must be “attuned to culture if they are to be optimally effective” (p. 11). Therefore, this study examines the lived experiences of BIPOC individuals who implement mindfulness in organizations.

The mindfulness industry has attempted to be more responsive to issues of inclusivity and diversity. Some mindfulness programs, specifically meditation centers, have even started to offer BIPOC-only specific sessions (Oppenheimer, 2015). Despite the increased efforts to disrupt systemic whiteness within mindfulness, it is still dominated by white European cultural standards. Moreover, only a small percentage of mindfulness teachers and participants are from BIPOC communities (Woods-Giscombé & Gaylord, 2014). Additionally, research on mindfulness has generally focused on behavioral and psychological outcomes as opposed to the personal accounts and unique experiences of BIPOC individuals who implement mindfulness.

Instead of a color-blind approach to mindfulness, whether intentional or unintentional, contemplative practices like mindfulness implemented in workplaces should be decolonized and culturally attuned. As stress continues to be an epidemic and the rates of workplace stress and racial stress keep rising, organizations should continue to utilize mindfulness training as a progressive and effective strategy to help employees manage stress, enhance well-being, and cultivate inclusion. Thus, there is a need to better understand how to implement mindfulness in work settings, particularly for BIPOC populations who are currently absent from the literature and the professional practice of mindfulness.

Chapter Two Summary

Stress impacts organizational performance in a multitude of ways. Overall effects of workplace stress can have significant effects on motivation and productivity in the workplace. Given the global impact and rising cost of workplace stress, it is wise for businesses to start implementing wellness programs that help employees manage stress. However, it is not merely work stress that is causing distress among BIPOC workers. The literature has demonstrated BIPOC professionals encounter unique racial stressors that arise in workplace contexts, such as tokenism, imposter syndrome, and microaggressions. Although researchers have examined the benefits of mindfulness in organizations, research is insufficient regarding culturally attuned mindfulness practices in workplace settings.

By understanding BIPOC mindfulness professionals' experiences and recommendations for integrating culture into programs implemented within workplaces, organizations can take the necessary steps to help BIPOC feel included and minimize diversity-related stressors. The decolonization of mindfulness programs for BIPOC employees is imperative to the success of

the modern workplace. For modern workplaces to succeed, businesses and the stress mediation resources they provide need to be more diverse and inclusive.

Chapter Three: Research Methodology and Design

This study examined the experiences and perspectives of BIPOC mindfulness consultants who implement mindfulness in workplace settings. The purpose of the research was to understand BIPOC mindfulness professionals' unique experience of implementing mindfulness at work, their perspectives of BIPOC employee inclusion within mindfulness curricula, and their recommendations to other mindfulness specialist who wish to integrate culture within their programs. This study aimed to identify best practices (strategies and recommendations) for integrating culture into mindfulness programs for BIPOC inclusion. For the purposes of this study, a mindfulness consultant is defined as a professional who incorporates a minimum of 50% of mindfulness components in their work consultations. Chapter 3 focuses on the research design and methodology that was used to gather and analyze data. First, this chapter describes the qualitative nature of the study along with the phenomenological approach. Second, I discuss the research design which includes the participant selection and data collection process. Next, the interview protocols are detailed, including the specific interview questions that all participants will answer. The chapter then addresses the human subject considerations, as well as the means to ensure the reliability and validity of the study, outlining the peer-review and expert-review process of the interview questions. I also addressed my personal biases and how I remedied them through epoche in this chapter. Finally, the chapter concludes with a discussion of the data analysis procedures, including the interrater reliability and validity process.

Research Approach and Design

This descriptive study employed a qualitative approach in addressing the research questions proposed. I obtained data for the study through semi-structured interviews with 12 participants selected through a purposeful sampling strategy. The descriptive research questions

promoted responses that described the experiences and challenges that BIPOC mindfulness consultants have faced, as well as their recommendations for best practices. This research addressed the following questions (RQ) in this study:

- RQ1: What cultural challenges are experienced by BIPOC mindfulness professionals in their work?
- RQ2: To what extent (if at all) are the experiences of BIPOC employees reflected in the mindfulness curriculums and programs?
- RQ3: What recommendations do BIPOC mindfulness professionals make to other mindfulness specialists who want to incorporate cultural themes in their mindfulness programs?

Qualitative Study

This research study is qualitative in nature because the goal of qualitative research is to describe and understand the meaning that people have attributed to a particular human experience (Creswell, 2014). In this case, the experiences of BIPOC mindfulness consultants. Additionally, a qualitative research design is appropriate for this study because of its systematic, dynamic, and engaging method of research that values context and criticality, which is imperative in understanding the cultural context of mindfulness work (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Lastly, qualitative researchers explore an issue, problem, or perspective from overlooked or silenced individuals (Creswell, 2014; Patton, 2002). Therefore, to best answer the proposed research questions above, a qualitative research approach was necessary to focus on exploring, describing, and understanding the unique perspectives of BIPOC mindfulness consultants and to understand their context specific challenges and recommendations for best practices.

Strengths of Qualitative Studies. Qualitative research boasts many advantages that make this an ideal and unique option for successfully conducting research. An advantage in utilizing a qualitative approach is collecting data in real-world settings instead of other research methods that may use labs or surveys (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Qualitative research is unique to other methods as it does not require controlled environments or conditions and allows for things to occur naturally. In addition to examining documents, qualitative researchers gather data through personal experiences by observing people in their natural habitat or interviewing people who have lived a particular experience (Johnson & Christensen, 2014; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Unlike quantitative research that employs statistical interpretations, qualitative research utilizes interviews and observations. Another strength when employing a qualitative approach is collecting data through verbal and nonverbal avenues. Moreover, as opposed to a written questionnaire or survey, qualitative researchers can identify and distinguish between human communication subtleties such as intonation, inflection, body language, or other nonverbal cues (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

Another advantage of qualitative research is that the interview questions are open-ended, which allows researchers to redirect and expand on questions throughout the interview (Creswell, 2014). Open-ended interviews lessen the impact of researchers-participant hierarchy. It also allows for crucial historical information to be included (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Open-ended questions allow researchers to be flexible and adaptable throughout the data collection process because he or she can follow-up with the interviewee to confirm an answer or get clarification about a statement (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). An additional strength of qualitative research is that the framework can be continuously revised in real-time as the researcher discovers new data and information. However, open-ended questions can also be a disadvantage.

A downside to open-ended questions is that the participant may not understand or respond to the questions in a way that fails to yield high quality data that answers the original research questions (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Johnson & Christensen, 2014). Despite the disadvantages that are present, for the purpose of this study, a qualitative approach is best to capture the lived experiences of BIPOC mindfulness consultants.

Phenomenological Approach

This study will utilize a phenomenological approach to answer the stated research questions through the use of structured interviews. The phenomenology methodology is about understanding the essence of experiences about a commonly shared phenomenon (Creswell, 2013; Moustakas, 1994). Phenomenology studies look for a group of people who have a shared understanding of a phenomenon and search for the meaning of their lived experience by studying their experiences.

For this study's purpose, the commonly shared human experience is that although many employed individuals encounter workplace stress and may even participate in mindfulness practices through the job, BIPOC employees experience stress at higher levels and BIPOC mindfulness consultants experience mindfulness work in very unique ways. Therefore, this study will utilize a phenomenological method to examine the shared experience of BIPOC mindfulness consultants. By interviewing various BIPOC mindfulness consultants, I will identify challenges and practices when implementing mindfulness in workplace settings. Ultimately, this methodology will allow me to create a compilation of best practices and recommendations for implementing culturally attuned mindfulness practices in the workplace for BIPOC.

Participants

There are various types of qualifications and titles for professionals who implement mindfulness programs and training with individuals and organizations (e.g., mindfulness teacher, mindfulness facilitator, mindfulness coach, mindfulness practitioner, etc.). In this study, a mindfulness professional is defined as a professional who has experience implementing mindfulness in workplace settings. Specifically, the participants in this study are mindfulness professionals who identify as BIPOC and feel comfortable discussing their unique experience.

Analysis Unit

The analysis unit in a phenomenological study is a single participant or the specific individual whom one is examining (Merriam, 2002). The unit of analysis in this study is a BIPOC mindfulness consultant who incorporates at least 50% mindfulness components in their workplace consultations.

Population. A collection of all potential participants is called a population. The population of a study encompasses all individuals within a specific group to whom the topic pertains and may possibly be interviewed as a participant (Robinson, 2014). Participation in this study is not limited to a specific geographical location or institution. Participants will be drawn from various regions across the United State of America. The population for this study includes all BIPOC consultants in the United States.

Sample Size

A sample is a subset of the population. This study aims to thoroughly understand the lived experiences of BIPOC mindfulness consultants. There is a gap in the research regarding culturally attuned mindfulness in organizations and not much is known about BIPOC mindfulness consultants' unique experiences. For the sake of this study, the sample size is 10

individuals. This number aligns with the work of Creswell and Poth (2018) who suggest that at least 5-25 people should participate in a phenomenological study. Some researchers have even suggested that a sample size as small as three participants is sufficient (Creswell, 2013; Robinson, 2014). A small sample size allows for individuals' voices to be heard and privileged in the study. To select individuals for a sample, researchers can randomly or purposefully select participants. This study employed purposive sampling.

Sampling Method

Purposive sampling is a widely used qualitative research approach (Creswell, 2013). Purposive sampling, also called purposeful sampling, provides depth, insight, and richness in the data (Richards & Morse, 2012). Purposive sampling allows easy access to willing participants who have time to contribute to the study. Purposeful sampling strives to identify and select participants that can accurately reflect on an experience or have specific knowledge me is interested in (Richards & Morse, 2012).

Purposive sampling requires researchers to collect data from a well-informed sample. In purposive sampling researchers intentionally select individuals to learn or understand the central phenomenon (Creswell, 2013). This sampling technique can help identify exemplary individuals who can directly speak to the experience me is investigating to fulfill the purpose of the study (Merriam, 2002). Given that this study seeks to understand the experience of BIPOC mindfulness consultants, participant selection will be intentional. Therefore, this study employed a purposive sampling method to intentionally select 10 well-informed participants.

Snowball Sampling Schema

I gained access to participants via convenient snowball sampling. Snowball sampling, often described as 'word of mouth,' is the method I utilized to fulfill the requirement for

purposeful sampling and the desire to find participants with specific experiences and knowledge (Cohen et al., 2011). This sampling strategy is useful for this study because the sample is unique and not easily accessible. A snowball sampling schema requires participants to recruit other possible participants from their acquaintances (Cohen et al., 2011). These acquaintances recommend other possible participants that fit the criteria, and the pattern of referrals continues until the prespecified sample size has been met or enough participants have been selected for the study. Snowball sampling is also the most useful method for hard-to-reach populations (Cohen et al., 2011), such as BIPOC mindfulness consultant. Snowball sampling can efficiently locate target participants that fit the demographic and expand the studies' geographical scope. As such, snowball sampling may increase the probability of responses as opposed to traditional methods.

Participant Recruitment and Selection

Given the specific population and their context specific experiences that needed to be sampled, an essential part of this qualitative research project was the participant recruitment and selection process. The search for participants was a multi-step process that included purposeful sampling, convenient snowball schema, compiling a master list, and applying the exclusion criteria. Specifically, the process to recruit participants for this study followed the following steps:

1. First, I used convenient sampling to reach out to her personal and professional network to get recommendations. This is a convenient method because I already had potential participants' contact information and contacted stakeholders who were identified as prominent within the field.
2. Second, I utilized a 'snowball' technique to ask key stakeholders to share the recruitment script with BIPOC mindfulness consultants that they may know. The

script directed interested participants to send me an email or to follow a direct link to the questionnaire on Google form, which was used as a screening tool.

3. Third, I obtained subjects' emails through the Google Form questionnaire, and from that document, form a list of possible participants onto a spreadsheet that includes columns for participants' contact information.
4. Lastly, from this master list, I reached out to participants that fit the criteria via email to schedule an interview time and to send the consent form that requires their signature. I also sent a copy of the interview questions along with the consent form.

Criteria for Inclusion

The selection process for this study filtered mindfulness consultants through the inclusion criteria to find possible matches. Before participating in the interview portion of the study, I verified that prospective participants met the inclusion criteria based on the demographic questionnaire. The criteria for inclusion in this study required the following:

- The participant must identify as Black, Latino, Asian, Native American/American Indian, Middle Eastern, or Arab American.
- The participant must be between the ages of 30 and 80 years.
- The participant currently or has previously worked as a consultant in various organizational settings. A consultant is an individual who utilizes their expertise and knowledge to help organizations solve problems and identify opportunities.
- The participant has more than 2 years of consulting experience. I believe this time frame will allow her to gain wisdom and various perspectives from consultants with enough experience to enrich the findings.

- The participant has had training or education in mindfulness.
- The participant incorporates at least 50% of mindfulness practices in their workplace consultations.
- The participant lives in the United States.
- The participant must consent to be audio-recorded during the interview.

Criteria for Exclusion

Aside from the above inclusion criteria, certain characteristics excluded participants from participating, including those who refused to sign the informed consent form, those who were unavailable within the given time space of the study, and those who expressed limited desire to participate. These specific inclusion and exclusion criteria outlined the key characteristics of prospective participants that were either qualified or disqualified to participate in this research study. Once the inclusion and exclusion criteria are applied to the master list, I sorted the list for maximum variation across, race, gender, consulting experience, and region.

Criteria for Maximum Variation. I developed requirements for maximum variation after applying the inclusion and exclusion criteria. Maximum variation is a selection strategy that accounts for diverse cases and multiple perspectives (Creswell & Poth, 2018). To create the most diverse sample of participants possible, the criteria for maximum variation allowed me to predetermine factors that can set participants apart. After reviewing the initial list of 16 potential participants, I applied the following criteria to secure a broad variety of participants:

- I sought to obtain a balance of gender, age, ethnicity, educational background, distribution of expertise training, and distribution of U.S. geographic locations.
- I sought to select participants with experience consulting in various organizations and industries. These participants also had varied years of experience and work histories.

- I selected consultants whose consultations include 100% mindfulness components.

If the sample is greater than 16 participants after applying the inclusion and exclusion criteria, the criteria for maximum variation will be applied. This criteria for maximum variation will allow for a richness of data and will maximize the chance that the findings reflect different perspectives and strategies of BIPOC mindfulness consultants.

Data Collection Strategies and Procedures

Participants completed the electronic questionnaire and virtual interview at a time that was convenient for them. The questionnaire was available on Google Forms, a secure survey collection site. The interviews were conducted via Zoom, a secure video conferencing site. Zoom was used for its convenience and accessibility to participants in different states. I conducted 45 to 60-minute audio-recorded interviews using the 11 Institutional Review Board (IRB) approved questions. I also obtained signed consent to audio-record the interviews.

Participants were given pseudonyms to protect their confidentiality. Pseudonyms were names of flowers randomly assigned to each participant as data from the demographic survey came in and interview dates were set. I captured the audio recordings on two flash drive recording devices. The audio recordings on the recording devices were stored in a lockbox in my home to mitigate further risk. I had the only copy of the keys that open the safe so no one else had access to the recordings. I also personally transcribed the audio-recordings and stored the transcriptions in a password protected file on the same flash drive to maintain strict confidentiality. According to general data collection practices, the audio files will be destroyed after a three-year waiting period. Specifically, the data collection process of this study followed the following steps:

1. First, I utilized convenient sampling, specifically contacting stakeholders who are identified as prominent in the field. This sampling is convenient because I already has access to these individuals' contact information.
2. Second, I sent the stakeholders and her professional network the IRB-approved recruitment script which utilized a 'snowball' or word-of-mouth technique to kindly ask them to pass it on to other BIPOC mindfulness consultants they may know.
3. Third, the recruitment script directed interested participants to follow a direct link to the questionnaire on Google Forms or to email me.
4. Next, the demographic questionnaire was used as a screening tool. The questionnaire included questions about age, various identities (gender, ethnicity), and professional background and history.
 - a. The demographic questionnaire was administered online through Google Forms, to limit risk and to ensure confidentiality.
5. Fifth, I reached out to participants as data from the questionnaire was collected which allowed me to review the data to make sure participants fit the criteria of the study.
 - a. I obtained subjects' emails through the Google Form questionnaire.
6. Sixth, a list of possible participants was compiled and extracted onto a spreadsheet that includes columns for participants' contact information. From this list, I reached out to participants that fit the criteria via email to schedule an interview time and to send the consent form that requires their signature. I also sent a copy of the interview questions along with the consent form.
7. Next, after scheduling an interview time and signing the informed consent form, the participant took part in a one-time interview lasting about 45-60 minutes.

- a. The interview asked about the following: diversity-related challenges, observations about BIPOC inclusion in the mindfulness curriculum, advice for white mindfulness consultants, as well as pitfalls, barriers, and recommendations to all mindfulness professionals for integrating diversity and culture when implementing mindfulness practices within organizations.
 - b. The interviews were conducted online via Zoom, a secure video conferencing site. I audio-recorded the interviews with a recording device. Those individuals who did not wish to be audio-recorded were not able to participate in the study.
8. Lastly, once the interview was completed I sent a “Thank You” email to express gratitude for providing their time as a participant in the study and transcribed the interview.

Instrumentation

Instrumentation is defined as the method of creating and using a tool or device to gather data from the research participants (Patton, 2002). This study utilized an electronic survey questionnaire and individual semi-structured interviews to collect data, which are the most commonly employed data collection methods in phenomenological research (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Questionnaires produce valid and reliable data (Creswell, 2013; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016), therefore, I initially used a questionnaire survey in this study to collect demographic information. The online questionnaire consisted of questions about participants' various identities and background information. While quantitative in nature, the use of questionnaires within this study was leveraged to impact the qualitative approach to the study. It had a significant impact in helping me understand how an individual might answer questions, and therefore, adjusting the interview questions' wording to be carefully constructed and written (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Patton, 2002) according to the needs of the participant in a semi-structured manner. In the

following section, I will further discuss the interview strategy that was employed and how it is the primary tool for qualitative, phenomenological research.

Strength of Semi-Structured Interviews

There are three approaches when designing qualitative interviews. Qualitative interviews can be full-structured, semi-structured, or unstructured (Corbin & Strauss, 2015; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Full-structured interviews are highly structured and inflexible. Full-structured interviews utilize a pre-decided set of questions presented to each participant without allowing the interviewee options to follow up or rephrase a comment (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Full-structured interviews are an efficient method to collect extensive data; however, it is not effective in providing detailed information. I considered structured interviews for this study, but this interviewing style would not aid in the type of research the study was looking to conduct.

The next type of interview is known as unstructured interviews. Unstructured interviews do not involve collecting data from pre-decided questions; therefore, it offers the most flexibility. Unstructured interviews create an informal environment that gives room for the participant to collaborate with the researcher on the interview's design and flow (Corbin & Strauss, 2015; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Unstructured interviews are usually conducted with participants when the researcher cannot develop questions due to the lack of information about a specific topic (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). I also considered unstructured interviews; however, this interviewing style utilizes a pre-decided questionnaire. It is not as structured, giving the participant freedom to respond comfortably.

If a particular question is required to be further explored and is not clear to the individual, a semi-structured interview allows for more follow-up questions. Semi-structured interviews also permit similar subjects to be discussed with each participant. (Corbin & Strauss, 2015; Merriam

& Tisdell, 2016). This interviewing technique allows the researcher to collect comprehensive and detailed data. It gives the interviewee the flexibility to share the context behind their experiences and includes any other relevant information that they believe is pertinent to the research.

To maintain some topic consistency and ensure that all participants receive the same questions, I chose semi-structured interviews as the data collection strategy for this study. The standardized open-ended interview ensured that I asked all participants identical questions, while giving participants the opportunity to expand upon specific answers and express their true feelings about the subject. Open-ended questions allow for more exploratory data such as additional issues or interesting quotes to be uncovered.

Interview Techniques. When interviewing participants, researchers should first and foremost be well prepared (Seidman, 2012). I began each interview with small talk to ease the situation and break the ice. I then clarified the study's purpose, reiterating the length of time needed to complete the interview, and explained the possible positive impact of mindfulness training on stress management for BIPOC in the future. I then secured verbal consent to audio-record making sure the interviewee was aware that they had the right to stop the interview at any time if they felt uncomfortable or were unable to continue.

I then transitioned the semi-structured interview to more general open-ended questions in order to develop rapport and then proceeded to the pre-prepared topics and questions. Questions were established before the interview, ensuring that the wording of the questions was clear and specific to the participant (Seidman, 2012). I asked follow-up questions to gain additional clarity and depth in the participant's responses. I also employed active listening at all stages during the interview. After concluding the interview, I thanked the participant for their time and asked for

verbal consent to call them back for further questions or clarification. The following Human Subjects' considerations were considered before, during, and after the study.

Human Subjects Considerations

This study used human participants to interview and gather data for the research project. Merriam (2009) explained that painful memories may surface while conducting an interview even if the topic seems innocent. Therefore, the researcher must be aware of the potential risk to research participants (Saldaña, 2011). The Graduate School of Education and Psychology (GSEP) at Pepperdine University has specific ethical and legal guidelines to protect the human subjects who participate in research. Participating in the study should not put participants at a greater risk than they would experience during their everyday lives (Saldaña, 2011). Also, each participant must receive informed consent and be informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any point without any consequences to them or their employment. All of the participants involved in this study were adult professionals and do not meet the standards for an "at-risk" or "vulnerable" population. As such, I took several precautions to ensure this study was ethical and minimized risks to human subjects.

First, a proposal outlining the details and procedures of the study was submitted to the IRB to gain permission to conduct the research. Once the IRB department confirmed that this research study met the requirements under the federal regulations that oversee human subjects' protection (see Appendix A), I solicited all participants through email, using an IRB-approved recruitment script (see Appendix B). The recruitment script assured participants that participation in the research study is voluntary, meaning they can accept or decline the invitation to participate. The recruitment script also reminds participants that their responses will remain confidential. In terms of privacy, although IP addresses were not collected from the electronic

questionnaire and no identifying information was requested during the interview, participants' emails were collected as part of the study to confirm participation and obtain consent.

Informed Consent

I sent prospective participants an informed consent form that asked for their signature and included a copy of the interview questions before the interview. Signed consent forms were required before the interview began. The informed consent form informed participants that their identities would remain confidential before, during, and after the study. Identifiable information such as their name were de-identified and not included in the study. Additionally, to protect the identity of participants, identifiers were stripped so the data cannot be linked to subjects, and confidentiality was protected by using pseudonyms to conceal identifiable information.

The consent form also described information that is pertinent to participants including their right to withdraw voluntarily from the study at any point or can choose not to answer any questions they do not feel comfortable with; the purpose of the study; the procedures that will be used to collect data; the potential risks associated with participation (Creswell & Poth, 2018). An electronic version of the informed consent form was emailed to participants to review, sign, and return electronically and was discussed with participants via a secure video-conferencing app before the interview began.

Protection of Data and Audio

Data management is imperative to a qualitative research study (Creswell & Poth, 2018). As such, given its importance, I took every step to safeguard the data and audio recordings that were collected and managed throughout the study, handling and storing all data in secure ways to protect the integrity and confidentiality of all participants. When using Google forms, the data was extracted as an excel document. I then eliminated participants' names and replaced them

with a code (e.g., Jane Doe is 001). After completing this process, the original Google Form document that had the participant's name was kept for 6 months on a password-encrypted flash drive in a lockbox in my home.

I made a key sheet that contains each participant's name and corresponding pseudonym. The key sheet with participants' names was kept separately from the de-identified data on a drive that was password-protected and only accessible to me. The audio recordings, transcribed interviews, and subsequent data were also de-identified and coded only by the pseudonym randomly assigned to each participant.

In the case that a subject revealed identifiable information during the interview response, I utilized the procedures above to de-identify such data. I also redacted any identifying information when transcribing the interview. Individual responses from the data were not shared, only an aggregate summary of the group data. I was the only one with access to participant responses and destroyed them once it is no longer being utilized for this research study after a minimum of three years. Specifically, data will be destroyed by shredding hardcopy documents and deleting password-encrypted electronic files. Furthermore, my computer trash bin will be emptied after all files have been deleted.

Means to Ensure Validity and Reliability

Qualitative researchers must operate ethically to ensure the study's reliability and validity (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). When a research study is accurate and reliable, the results are credible (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Specifically, a qualitative study's reliability refers to whether other researchers repeated the analysis if they would come to similar conclusions (Creswell, 2013). Therefore, a research study is reliable if the instrument is consistent. To attend to the issue of consistency, this study reviewed the interview questions in a three-step process

before it was presented to participants. I also recorded the interviews by two audio devices and transcribed them to ensure accuracy. Furthermore, I reviewed the data coding using a four-step interrater reliability process. In addition to consistency, a research study has high validity if the results can be verified and accurately capture participants' perceptions and experiences of the phenomenon (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). According to Creswell (2013), internal validity ensures the research findings are contributed to the independent variable in the study. External validity, on the other hand, demonstrates how the results of the study can be generalized. Both external and internal validity concerns were addressed in this study to ensure consistency and accuracy.

Generalizability

When choosing the sample group for this study, the issue of generalizability was strongly considered. Generalizability is also referred to as transferability, which measures the extent in which results from the research study can be transferred to other populations or larger contexts (Creswell, 2013). Generalizability is essential to this research study because the goal of the study is to learn from the sample's lived experiences and deduce the findings to help other populations.

The literature review of this proposal demonstrated that although mindfulness is effective, mindfulness training in workplace settings does not incorporate participants' culture. Instead, mindfulness training and curriculum are predominantly white. Since the sample identifies as BIPOC, they most likely experience similar barriers and stressors such as discrimination and racial stressors in the workplace. The sample in this study also has similar experience implementing and developing mindfulness curriculums. Therefore, the data collected will be relevant and applicable to the overall population. As such, the proposed sample is an adequate representation of the population thereby ensuring greater generalizability.

Triangulation

I utilized a triangulation strategy using multiple resources to ensure the study had high reliability and validity (Creswell, 2013). Triangulation refers to using multiple forms of methods, data sources, and investigators to validate the study's procedures and findings (Patton, 2015). This study is reliable and valid because I reviewed the interview questions in a three-step process before being presented to the participants. The three steps included: 1) prima-facie validity, 2) peer-review validity, and 3) expert review validity. This three-step process helped minimize any personal biases and provide greater reliability of data collected (Creswell, 2013).

Prima-Facie Validity. Prima-facie validity, often called face validity, refers to whether the instrument used in the research study measures what it intended to measure (Creswell, 2013). After the research questions were finalized, I incorporated prima-facie validity by creating a table with the research questions and proposed interview questions that were produced from the literature review (see Appendix C). Interview questions in this study are intended to reveal the essence of the lived experiences of BIPOC mindfulness consultants. The interview questions in this study have prima-facie validity because they were developed from the literature review. Additionally, I made sure every interview question was directly related to the corresponding research questions.

Peer Review Validity. Peer review validity is the process where a researcher invites colleagues to review the data and findings to examine plausibility (Creswell, 2013; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Peer review validity in a study takes place by submitting a validity survey to colleagues to determine if the interview questions measured what I intended to measure. According to Merriam (2009), the more times the study's procedures can be replicated, the more likely the study is reliable.

Before launching the questionnaire and the interview with participants, I carried out a pilot test to increase the study's reliability. As a pilot test, I shared the prima-facie table (see Appendix C) to members of the population and peers/colleagues from the program to determine if the interview questions would lead participants to share their unique experiences, observations, and recommendations. The pilot test aimed to see if participants understood the questions, allowing me to make any needed adjustments. Colleagues shared feedback that helped me understand the essence of the lived experiences of BIPOC mindfulness consultants.

Expert Review Validity. This study also leveraged expert review validity. I utilized three expert reviewers to help ensure that the methodology, research design, and interview questions aligned with the study's purpose. The dissertation committee served as the final expert reviewers and examined the three research questions and the corresponding interview questions on the prima-facie table (see Appendix C). The committee offered guidance and recommendations. Once the committee reviewed the interview questions during the Preliminary Oral Examination, I incorporated modifications into the final interview protocol (see Appendix D).

Interview Protocol

The interview protocol guides the data collection process (Creswell, 2013). The protocol is a form that outlines and lists the interview questions (IQ) that all participants will answer. The interview questions in this study are related to the three main research questions and were developed from the literature review. Through semi-structured interviews, I asked participants a series of 11 interview questions (see Appendix D). During the semi-structured interviews, I utilized specific interviewing techniques that are consistent with the nature of qualitative phenomenological studies.

In addition, I recorded the interviews on two separate audio devices in order to transcribe them for greater accuracy. Furthermore, I reviewed the data and coding using a four-step co-reviewer process. Moreover, to ensure the validity of the study, I reflected on her biases with epoche (bracketing), reflexivity, and a positionality statement. The following section will expand on this process and its usage throughout the study.

Researcher's Personal Bias

Researcher bias can threaten both the validity and reliability of any study (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Personal biases may be inevitable when conducting research. As the instrument is used to gather and analyze data, a researcher cannot entirely remove themselves from the equation. All data is collected, processed, reviewed, and analyzed through the researcher's lens. Biases emerge when a researcher relies on his or her own personal beliefs, assumptions, and preconceptions to analyze data to support his or her own objectives (Creswell & Poth, 2018). To be impartial and open to new perspectives about the phenomenon, I incorporated the process of epoche and reflexivity.

Epoche (Bracketing)

The term epoche is often used interchangeably with 'bracketing'. Epoche is a process used to identify, hold back, or suspend prejudices and preconceived notions about the phenomenon that the researcher may carry into the study (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The process of epoche helps the researcher be present and open to new ideas regarding the phenomenon by suspending any expectations and personal biases (Creswell, 2014). The goal of bracketing is to deter the researcher from knowingly or unknowingly skewing the outcome data. Suspending biases ensures that the research findings accurately reflect the phenomenon's exact characteristics. For researchers to objectively understand participants' experiences, it is

imperative to set aside their assumptions, knowledge, and all other sources of personal biases to accurately understand the phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994). As such, bracketing can be a difficult thing to achieve.

For research studies to successfully incorporate the epoche process, Creswell and Poth (2018) suggest researchers should begin by "describing their own experiences with the phenomenon and bracketing out their views before proceeding with the experiences of others" (p. 80). Therefore, I started this process by implementing a statement of personal biases. Highlighting potential personal biases is a validity strategy executed to assure the credibility of the study. To avoid any complications in this study's results, I carefully reported my biases and make every attempt to eliminate any predetermined ideas regarding the phenomenon.

I also utilized several other strategies to suspend and bracket personal bias. For example, an essential method to bracket biases is by conducting semi-structured interviews, as it helps eliminate all predictions since all interviewees will be asked the same questions in the same exact order (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Merriam, 2002). Open-ended questions entail interviewees can freely answer questions without any motivation from the researcher (Merriam, 2002). Another strategy I used to bracket biases was to maintain a personal journal to record any preconceived notions that are exposed during the research process and report them (Creswell, 2013). While conducting the study, I consistently jotted notes in a journal to address and expose personal views, sensitivities, and interpretations.

Reflexivity

To address the natural bias in the study that may impact the validity, I employed the concept of reflexivity. Reflexivity, also known as positionality, is the researcher's worldview on their study's topic (Malterud, 2001; Maxwell, 2013). Reflexivity is a process utilized to halt

researcher bias by implementing self-awareness checks through every step of the study (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Maxwell, 2013). During the reflexivity process, I positioned myself in the study by disclosing biases and assumptions that may impact her analysis of the study. According to Malterud (2001), “a researcher’s background and position will affect what they choose to investigate, the angle of investigation, the methods judged most adequate for this purpose, the findings considered most appropriate, and the framing and communication of conclusions” (pp. 483–484).

Identifying the researcher's position is one resource used to improve this study's validity (Malterud, 2001). Therefore, I reflected on my biases, including my prior personal and academic experiences with the phenomenon, to help the reader understand my unique lens through which the data was collected and analyzed.

Positionality Statement

As a Black, Nigerian American woman who straddles various cultures, I understand the complexities of being an ethnic minority. I am a mental health educator and coach who often works with individuals who often express their concerns about the professional and personal stressors that have significant impacts on their job performance and physical and psychological health. I am also a mindbody therapy practitioner who has experience facilitating specific contemplative practices such as reflective journaling, expressive arts, and mindfulness meditation in both group and one-on-one settings. I also incorporate these strategies into her own daily life. The literature review has also given me a more in-depth perspective and additional information regarding the phenomenon, thus giving me extensive knowledge on stress (workplace and racial) and mindfulness in multiple areas.

As a professional and full-time student, I have my own personal relationship with the challenges of stress, burnout, and its symptoms. She has also experienced discrimination and racial stress. I have an academic background in psychology, organizational psychology, and leadership, and has experience researching and presenting contemplative practices at conferences, including expressive arts and mindfulness meditation for vulnerable adolescents, children who have experienced violence, and women who have experienced trauma.

I acknowledge that this background may influence her ability to interpret and comprehend the data correctly and as such, utilized specific strategies to mitigate judgments and personal biases from the study's findings. Although I have experience facilitating mindfulness, she is intrigued with the opportunity to gain a wealth of knowledge from mindfulness consultants who implement mindfulness in workplace settings. This study stems from a personal desire to explore BIPOC mindfulness consultants' experiences to understand more about mindfulness implementation and programming in the workplace if the programs implemented in workplaces include BIPOC experiences and recommendations for BIPOC inclusion not only for herself but for all those who have similar experiences and desires.

Data Analysis

One of the main steps in qualitative research is data analysis (Creswell, 2014). Data analysis began by immersing myself in the data (Merriam, 2002) by immediately listening to the interview recordings and transcribing the audio. As such, I listened to the audiotapes immediately to ensure proper recording and determine if any ambiguity was present (Patton, 2002). After listening to the audio recordings, I transcribed the interviews verbatim, so each word a participant says reflects his or her consciousness (Seidman, 2012). I transcribed the interviews herself to ensure a high level of knowledge and familiarity with the data and become

fully immersed in the data. I then examined, identified, and interpreted patterns and themes in the data to determine the relationship to the study's research questions (Creswell 2013). The data analysis process in this research followed a spiral pattern. Creswell (2014) outlined the following four distinct steps to analyzing data that I applied in this study: (a) data management, (b) reading and memoing, (c) describing and coding the data, and (d) representing and visualizing the data. Below is a more detailed description of each level.

Data Management

The first step of the data analysis process involves establishing a system to organize and manage the data consistently (Creswell & Poth, 2018). I managed the data efficiently and methodically throughout the data collection process. This included storing the data in a secure location only accessible to me to ensure confidentiality and protection of original data. I also manually transcribed the audio recordings immediately after each interview into Word documents and saved each interview as a separate file. All files were saved in a specific password-protected digital folder on my computer and subsequently backed up on a portable flash drive. I also took additional steps to store the flash drive in a cool, dry, and safe location. After completing the transcription process, I destroyed all audio recordings.

Reading and Memoing

During the second step, I read all of the transcribed data to extract the bigger picture (Creswell & Poth, 2018). After the data was organized, transcribed, and safely stored, I read the interview transcripts and bracketed passages that she deemed as potentially relevant to the research questions being examined. At this point of the process, it was crucial for me to read the interview transcriptions in great detail multiple times to ensure that the depth of the participant's thoughts and experiences were taken into account. Merriam and Tisdell (2016) suggest

researchers have conversations with the data by asking questions, making comments, and taking notes.

This process of making notations next to relevant passages or concepts that stand out in the data is also called memoing (Creswell, 2014; Saldaña, 2011). Memoing plays a vital role in qualitative research. Memoing includes short phrases, ideas, or key concepts that arise as I reviewed the data. Researchers' use memos to become more deeply engaged with the data and to gain a deeper level of understanding (Birks et al., 2008; Saldaña, 2011).

Memoing is a simple strategy that helps researchers categorize themes and track thoughts and ideas (Birks et al., 2008; Creswell, 2014). As the data was read and reread, I referenced the memos created from the transcripts several times to decipher important notes and identify common and recurring concepts that arose. By promptly noting relevant reflections and insights, I gathered additional implications from the data. The memos were then dated and organized into related categories.

Describing, Classifying, and Interpreting (Coding)

The third step of the data analysis process involves describing, classifying, and interpreting data. During the third step, I analyzed the data and attempted to deduce meaning from the data (Creswell & Poth, 2018). I created formal categories to code the data. Saldaña (2011) defines a code as “a word or short phrase that symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence-capturing, and/or evocative attribute for a portion of language-based or visual data” (p. 3). The coding criteria developed was consistently applied to each interview transcript. The coding process is a significant part of qualitative research (Creswell, 2014) because the coding criteria sets the foundation by which all data will be analyzed. Coding is a chance for qualitative researchers to understand all data gathered, make observations, and build detailed descriptions.

After each interview was coded, I grouped related codes that shared similar concepts into a particular category or theme. Themes produced from qualitative research are “broad units of information that consist of several codes aggregated to form a common idea” (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 186). It is imperative to distinguish a code from a theme. According to Saldaña (2011), a code is something that is overt, while a theme is an “implicit pattern or trend” that must be discovered by the researcher (p. 14). For example, one theme may contain several codes (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Saldaña, 2011). Once the data was coded, I created a table where the themes found during the analysis process were placed in column headings and each column contained the related keywords or phrases in the rows. During this step of the data analysis process, the codes and themes were translated into vital and applicable information (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Unlike quantitative data analysis that relies on statistical tests of significance, qualitative data analysis relies heavily on the researcher’s perception, intelligence, and judgment when determining the significance of the data and how the data is grouped into categories and themes (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Patton, 2015). Therefore, the data interpretation will be grounded in the literature review, particularly within the intersection of mindfulness, workplace stress, discrimination, and diversity-related stressors within the workplace. Also, in order to ensure the accuracy of the categories and themes, I utilized a co-reviewer process to establish interrater reliability (Creswell, 2014), as discussed in the following section.

Representing and Visualizing

During the final step of the data analysis process, the research findings were synthesized and visually represented in a manner that was easy to read and interpret (Creswell & Poth, 2018). It is important to present qualitative data results with as much context and detail as possible to

reflect the subjective nature of findings. The major themes discovered, their descriptions, and sample participant quotes will be reported in Chapter 4.

Once the data was coded, interpreted, and analyzed, I visually displayed the final research findings to provide further validity and descriptions. Qualitative researchers use images, graphs, charts, spreadsheets, or other visual illustrations to depict any correlation (Creswell, 2014). In this study, I visually represented the findings from this study through bar charts to best represent the lived experience of each participant.

Interrater Reliability and Validity. To ensure the accuracy of the categories and themes, I implemented the following four-step process to achieve interrater reliability and validity in this study:

1. First, transcripts were reviewed and independently coded by the principal researcher. This was done by reading three interviews in depth and creating a chart of 25-30 codes. These codes were then developed into larger groups of three to six themes. During the coding process, I identified significant themes that surfaced in the data from memoing.
2. Next, a panel of two reviewers individually reviewed the table and offered suggestions for changes and modification. I then sent the transcripts and coding results to a peer review panel. The panel individually reviewed each transcript and assessed my coding. The co-raters either agreed and confirmed the results or provided suggestions for modifications and I included the recommended revisions.
3. Third, I reviewed the co-reviewer's recommendations with one of the dissertation committee members, thus finalizing the coding process. I also sought expert review from the dissertation committee including the dissertation committee's chairperson who had the final say regarding the process.

4. Finally, once the coding process was approved, I continued coding the remaining 9 interviews. The codes were interpreted into deeper levels of meaning. After completing the coding process, all co-reviewers deleted or properly destroyed the files.

Thus, as indicated throughout this chapter, the data collection and analysis process followed rigorous and well-tested processes that are reflective of the qualitative research method ensuring that the data discussion in the following chapters are valid and reflective of the best practices of the field.

Chapter Three Summary

This chapter outlined the methodology and research design of this study. The qualitative phenomenological approach employed was deemed essential in pinpointing the best practices (strategies and recommendations) for integrating culture into mindfulness programs for BIPOC inclusion. This study used a phenomenological design to capture the human experiences fundamental to understanding the phenomenon of mindfulness in workplaces settings, and work-related stress and discrimination among BIPOC employees. I conducted semi-structured interviews with 12 volunteer participants who met the inclusion and exclusion criteria and administered a series of 11 interview questions to all participants. Data was subsequently transcribed and I followed the standard coding procedures through a four-step interrater process to ensure the study's validity and reliability.

Therefore, the following chapter, Chapter 4 will provide the results of the study in a descriptive format with charts, figures, graphs, and tables. This research will use narrative responses, direct quotes, and noteworthy phrases from the interviews. Chapter 4 will also provide a detailed profile of each participant that will include demographic information.

Chapter Four: Research Findings

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to examine the experiences and perspectives of BIPOC mindfulness professionals who implement mindfulness in workplace settings. In this study, a mindfulness professional is defined as a professional who incorporates a minimum of 50% of mindfulness components in their programming and implementation. This qualitative research aimed to identify the best practices (strategies and recommendations) for integrating culture into mindfulness programs for BIPOC inclusion. In particular, the objective of this study was to establish findings to understand the following:

- BIPOC mindfulness professionals' unique experience of implementing mindfulness in workplace settings,
- BIPOC mindfulness professionals' perspectives of BIPOC employee inclusion within mindfulness curriculums in workplaces, and
- BIPOC mindfulness professionals' recommendations to other mindfulness professionals who are interested in incorporating diversity and culture.

To obtain the information and findings for the purpose of the study, I created the following three research questions:

- RQ1: What cultural challenges are experienced by BIPOC mindfulness professionals in their work?
- RQ2: To what extent (if at all) are the experiences of BIPOC employees reflected in the mindfulness curriculums and programs?
- RQ3: What recommendations do BIPOC mindfulness professionals make to other mindfulness specialists who want to incorporate cultural themes in their mindfulness programs?

To explore the three research questions, I developed an interview protocol that was validated in a three-step process. The protocol posed the following 11 semi-structured, open-ended interview questions:

- IQ 1: Please describe your experience as a Black, Indigenous, and Person of Color (BIPOC) implementing mindfulness in the workplace.
- IQ 2: What have you observed about diversity and race in the workplace?
- IQ 3: Please describe any (cultural and societal) dilemmas (if any) you encountered in this field of work and how you overcame them.
- IQ 4: Please describe any pitfalls or barriers that impact the ability to effectively implement mindfulness in the workplace and how you address those.
- IQ 5: How much attention is given to BIPOC employees within the mindfulness curriculum and program?
- IQ 6: How are mindfulness curriculums and/or programs in workplace settings culturally attuned for BIPOC employees?
- IQ 7: In what ways are diversity, inclusion, and race-related themes (such as racial stress, decolonization, liberation, microaggressions, unconscious bias, etc.) integrated into the curriculum and/or program?
- IQ 8: What wisdom have you gained from implementing mindfulness in the workplace?
- IQ 9: What are your recommendations for ensuring BIPOC employees feel included when going into mindfulness programs?
- IQ 10: What advice would you give a white mindfulness professional interested in working with BIPOC employees around issues of racial stressors?

- IQ 11: How can mindfulness professionals acquire the skill to develop culturally attuned mindfulness for BIPOC?

Utilizing this instrument allowed participants to respond to the 11 interview questions as thoroughly as they wished. The participants answered each question to the best of their knowledge. The data collected from each response was significant to the lived experiences of BIPOC mindfulness professionals. The findings from the interview questions provided the data for this study, resulting in a detailed comprehension of the best practices to culturally attune mindfulness programs to integrate cultural considerations for BIPOC inclusion. This section provides detailed information pertaining to each participant, the data collection and analysis process, and the interrater review procedure. In addition, I present the findings specific to each interview question.

Participants

The findings of this research were revealed through interviews with 12 participants. I identified potential participants via a purposive snowballing method, with the goal of interviewing 10-16 participants. All participants that were interviewed met the study's criteria of inclusion. The ideal participant had the following characteristics: a) identified as BIPOC, which includes Black, Latino, Asian, Native American/American Indian, Middle Eastern, or Arab American; b) had experience implementing mindfulness programs within organizational settings; c) incorporates a minimum of 50% of mindfulness components in their work consultations; d) was between the ages of 30 and 80 years; e) has had training or education in mindfulness; (f) lives within the United States of America; (g) responded and agreed to participate in the study; and (h) agreed to be audio or video recorded. Table 1 provides specific information about each participant such as their age, gender, racial-ethnic group, years of experience incorporating

mindfulness in their consultations, and the percent of mindfulness components incorporated in their consultations.

Table 1

Participant Demographics

Participant Code	Age Range	Gender	Racial-Ethnic Group	Years of Experience incorporating mindfulness in consultations	% of Mindfulness components incorporated in consultations
Peonny	60-69	Female	Black	8-11 years	50%
Rose	50-59	Female	Black	11-14 years	55% or more
Orchid	40-49	Female	East or Southeast Asian	11-14 years	50%
Tulip	40-49	Female	Black	More than 20 years	55% or more
Dahlia	40-49	Female	Black	14-17 years	55% or more
Lavender	50-59	Female	Middle Eastern/Arab descent	2-5 years	55% or more
Iris	50-59	Female	Black	2-5 years	55% or more
Primrose	30-39	Gender Non-Binary/Non-Conforming	Black	5-8 years	55% or more
Lily	50-59	Female	Black	17-20 years	55% or more
Daisy	40-49	Female	Black	17-20 years	55% or more
Loutus	60-69	Female	Black	5-8 years	50%
Poppy	30-39	Female	Black	2-5 years	50%

Note. This table illustrates specific information and details about the participants who contributed their knowledge to this study. The details and demographics confirm each participant met the study's criteria for inclusion.

Data Collection

Outreach to participants was done via email once receiving IRB approval on December 13, 2021. Starting January 4, 2022, after the winter break and holidays, I reached out to two professionals in the mindfulness industry with a recruitment script to send to potential participants to participate in the study, as indicated in the IRB-approved recruitment script (see Appendix B).

Participants were instructed to follow a direct link to the questionnaire on Google Forms or to email me with any questions or concerns. When potential participants filled out the demographic questionnaire, I reviewed the data to make sure the participants fit the criteria of the study. I sent participants who filled out the survey and met the criteria an email with a link to schedule a meeting for the interview. After receiving participants' responses and email addresses, I sent participants an email containing a link to schedule the interview. Within this email, I provided each participant an electronic copy of the informed consent form, that included the objective of the study and interview questions. Participants were asked to sign and return the consent form before the scheduled interview. The consent form also explained how confidentiality would be maintained during the course of the study.

Prior to the start of each interview, I gave an overview of the process and asked each participant if they had any questions. I received verbal consent to audio-record the meeting before each interview was conducted. After I received confirmation that there were no further questions needing to be answered, the recording of the interview started by asking each of the 11 interview questions. The interview questions were semi-structured and open-ended, which provided an opportunity for follow-up questions. Moreover, the interview questions were developed to distinguish the participants' experiences of implementing mindfulness in workplace

settings. The interviews were scheduled for 60 minutes for each. All 12 interviews were conducted virtually via the videoconferencing platform, Zoom.

Data Analysis

I was aware that there may be some preconceived notions regarding the responses from each participant due to my background in mindfulness. However, bracketing, also known as epoché, separates personal biases and preconceived notions from the data analysis process to allow for the true essence of the phenomenological study to emerge (Moustakas, 1994). The responses were obtained from participants utilizing a semi-structured interview format that produced meaning of their lived experiences that were then dissected into thematic schemes. A phenomenology approach to qualitative research highlights a group with similar lived experiences (Creswell, 2013). Therefore, a phenomenology design would validate this study with the use of interviews with BIPOC mindfulness professionals.

The participant interviews initiated the data analysis process. I gave each participant that completed the demographic survey and the full interview process a pseudonym. The pseudonyms were names of flowers randomly assigned to each participant as data from the demographic survey came in. This process allowed me to safeguard that the interviewees were depicted accurately and upheld confidentiality standards. While the interviews were taking place, I took notes that were intriguing or stood out. After each recorded interview concluded, the audio recordings were transcribed, then stored on my password-protected computer. The notes and the recordings were transcribed on a Word document and reread for accuracy. After each interview was transcribed, I highlighted distinct and recurring words. The highlighted words from each participant were transferred to an Excel sheet.

I began by open coding the first three interviews. Open coding leads to selective coding in multiple cycles to ensure validity and reliability. The first cycle of coding involved identifying and color-coding similar or common topics that emerged from the words on the excel sheet. The next coding cycle included grouping the color-coded codes into categories. The third cycle of coding involved the categories being clustered into 2-4 themes that emerged in the data analysis. As the themes became evident, I grouped them to show relation to the research question.

Data Display

After conducting data analysis for each interview question, common themes were clustered and highlighted. This study incorporates data structured starting with research questions associated with related interview questions. All questions will be summarized with a graph outlining the number of occurrences to show an illustration of the outcomes. After each graph, an overview of each theme is explained, along with supporting facts from participants. Recurring words, opinions, phrases, and answers are categorized according to each question. To honor the accuracy of the results, the data is presented precisely as shared by participants, which includes the possibility of incomplete sentences and colloquial language. Within the 11 interview questions, 2-4 prominent themes surfaced within each question.

Research Question One

The first research question (RQ1) inquired what cultural challenges are experienced by BIPOC mindfulness professionals in their work? I posed four interview questions to each participant to obtain answers to RQ1. The four questions corresponding to RQ1 were:

- IQ 1: Please describe your experience as a Black, Indigenous, or Person of Color (BIPOC) implementing mindfulness in the workplace.
- IQ 2: What have you observed about diversity and race in the workplace?

- IQ 3: Please describe any (cultural and societal) dilemmas (if any) you encountered in this field of work and how you overcame them.
- IQ 4: Please describe any pitfalls or barriers that impact the ability to effectively implement mindfulness in the workplace and how you address those.

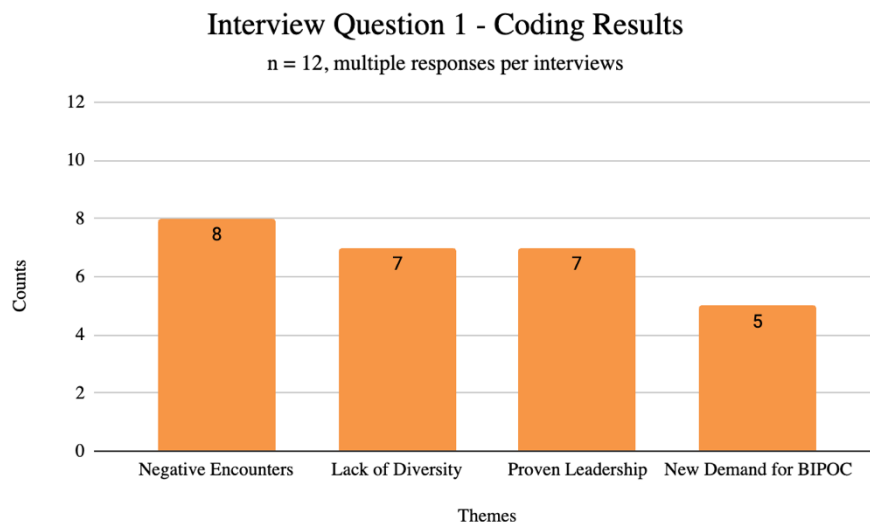
In order to comprehend the cultural challenges BIPOC mindfulness professionals experience in their work, I analyzed replies from the participants and captured frequent themes and parallels in the answers.

Interview Question 1

IQ1 asked participants to describe their experience as a Black, Indigenous, or Person of Color (BIPOC) implementing mindfulness in the workplace. The interview responses to IQ1 were analyzed and derived a total of 27 responses regarding the experiences of BIPOC professionals implementing mindfulness in workplaces. The replies were categorized into four corresponding themes. The themes that emerged were: (a) negative encounters, (b) lack of diversity, (c) proven leadership, and (d) new demand for BIPOC (see Figure 2).

Figure 2

Coding Results for Interview Question 1



Note. This figure demonstrates the most prevalent experiences that BIPOC mindfulness professionals face when implementing mindfulness in workplace settings. This bar chart highlights the four most common themes that emerged from participants' responses to IQ1. The data displayed is in descending order of frequency. Each number in the orange column represents the number of participants that contributed to each theme.

Negative Encounters. The first recurring theme tied to BIPOC professionals' experience implementing mindfulness in workplace settings was negative encounters. Based on the 27 answers offered, eight (30%) responses (67% of participants) described various negative encounters that have been experienced when implementing mindfulness in the workplace. The common phrases and inputs that tied to negative encounters encompassed the following: microaggressions, it's been hard, lots of challenges, deeply saddened, troublesome, initially challenging, struggled silently, ready for negative encounters, and they tell me stuff I can't say.

When describing the negative encounters experienced as BIPOC implementing mindfulness at work, Rose confessed that she has "experienced lots of challenges along the

way." Poppy stated, "I feel like working in a white dominated field, always had me kind of ready for negative encounters." Peonny admitted that she experienced "microaggressions that of course impacted me but didn't deter me." Furthermore, Tulip expressed how the negative experiences made her feel by confessing that she is "deeply saddened and frustrated about how white dominant culture has monetized mindfulness in the way that they have."

Lack of Diversity. Based on the 27 answers offered, seven (26%) of the responses (58% of participants) described the lack of diversity and representation that BIPOC professionals' experience when implementing mindfulness in the workplace. The common phases and inputs that tied to lack of diversity encompassed the following: it's very white, few people of color, male-dominated, still feel othered, still not represented, feels placed into a box, dominated by white people, very white, pretty small community, and many of us.

When describing the lack of diversity of BIPOC mindfulness professionals implementing mindfulness at work, Tulip declared, "these spaces become white spaces." Similarly, Lotus stated, "mainstream mindfulness is so white, so characteristically white. It has many of the same qualities of the dominant culture." Iris, a black woman, stated, "they're not many of us doing it." Furthermore, Orchid, an Asian American woman, expressed that Asian Americans are underrepresented in the mindfulness field, stating, "Asian Americans aren't represented still." Orchid also emphasized how the same white voices dominate the mindfulness industry by asking, "whose voice gets to be heard in these spaces?" She then answered her rhetorical question stating, "it's just interesting because there sort of tends to be the same, few people."

Proven Leadership. 58% of participants also described how proven leadership and previous experience. Based on the 27 answers offered, seven (26%) of the responses tied to participants previous leadership experience with mindfulness reducing the challenges

experienced when implementing mindfulness in workplace settings. The common phrases and inputs that tied to proven leadership encompassed the following: leadership position gives credibility, have seen and experienced a lot, been in the game for a long time, privilege and authority comes with Ph.D., people are more willing to listen, very recently have felt more respected, and resume & CV speaks for itself.

When describing how experience and education lessens challenges, Rose admitted that “because I've been in positions of leadership, it also gives me a little bit of credibility.” Similarly, Lily stated, “I think my resume and my CV speaks for itself. I don't need to go through hoops to prove myself.” Furthermore, Primrose revealed that “there's a distinct privilege that comes with having your PhD, and so there is a way in which that kind of gets my foot into the door to begin with.”

New Demand for BIPOC. The fourth recurring theme tied to BIPOC professionals' experience implementing mindfulness in workplace settings was a new demand for BIPOC. Based on the 27 answers offered, five (19%) of the responses (42% of participants) described the sudden new and greater demand for BIPOC mindfulness consultants. The common phrases and inputs that tied to the new demand for BIPOC encompassed the following: more BIPOC now, more attention to BIPOC voices, nowadays they have DEI committees, now trying to make programs inclusive, and starting to reach out to BIPOC teachers.

When describing the new demand for BIPOC mindfulness professionals at work, Tulip stated, “lately everyone using BIPOC.” Similarly, Lavender acknowledged that “nowadays they're giving BIPOC more of a voice.” Orchid validated this new demand for BIPOC stating, “now it's like ‘oh, we need voices.’” She revealed that there is “much more BIPOC now in just

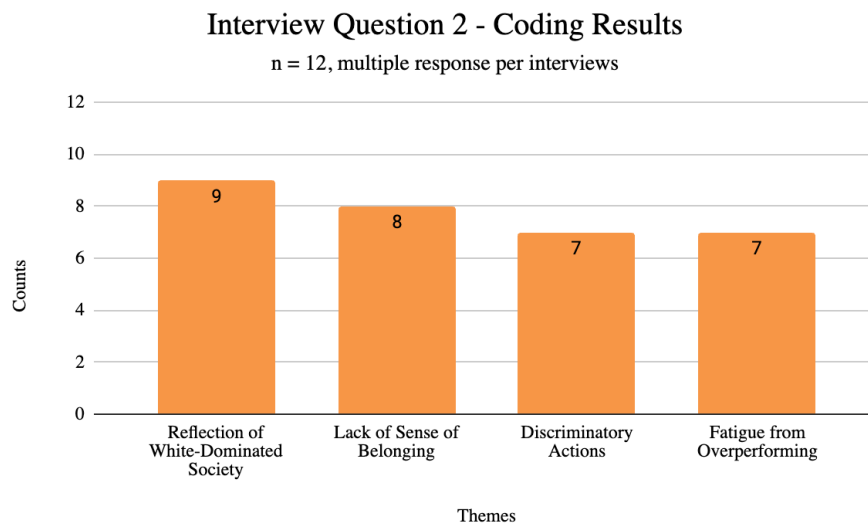
even five years than it was 10 years ago.” Furthermore, Primrose admitted “I’m seeing that there is a much greater demand for a BIPOC talent across all corporate sectors.”

Interview Question 2

IQ2 asked, what have you observed about diversity and race in the workplace as a BIPOC mindfulness professional? The interview responses to IQ2 were analyzed and derived a total of 31 responses regarding consultants’ observations about diversity and race in the workplace. The replies were categorized into four corresponding themes. The themes that emerged were: (a) reflection of white dominated society, (b) lack of sense of belonging, (c) discriminatory actions, and (d) fatigue from overperforming (see Figure 3).

Figure 3

Coding Results for Interview Question 2



Note. This figure demonstrates the most prevalent observations about diversity and race in the workplace that BIPOC mindfulness professionals described. This bar chart highlights the four most common themes that emerged from participants’ responses to IQ2. The data displayed is in descending order of frequency. Each number in the orange column represents the number of participants that contributed to each theme.

Reflection of White Dominated Society. The first recurring theme tied to BIPOC mindfulness professionals' observations about diversity and race in workplace settings was the reflection of the white dominated society and culture that surrounds us. Based on the 31 answers offered, nine (29%) of the responses (75% of participants) referenced the workplace reflecting the white dominated society that we live in as an observation about diversity and race in the workplace. The common phrases and inputs that tied to a reflection of society encompassed the following: the system is systemic, BIPOC paid less, managers and executives mostly white, reflection of white supremacy in our society, corporate sectors were never designed to support BIPOC, most people that hold power are majority white, the world creates different ways of existing for people, highest positions tend not to be BIPOC, cultural standards at work based on white culture, white supremacy shows up, and it's a reflection of what's happening in the world.

When describing the reflection of white-dominated society, Rose said, "it's just a reflection of what's happening outside of work." Daisy stated that "the workplace is a microcosm of the macrocosm that is society and that sort of has all of the elements of our wider world." Primrose describes this theme stating, "it is a reflection of white supremacy in our society." She further states, "the Vice Presidents and the board members the people who are really holding power are still majority white and not just majority white body, but white men and that's across all sectors." Lily also validated this phenomenon stating, "oftentimes the managers, and the directors or executives are white, but the frontline staff had been people of color." Furthermore, Lotus said, "the dominant culture, the policies, practices, procedures, behaviors; there is an interest amongst some to be about diversity and inclusion but they're still in control of that."

Lack of Sense of Belonging. The second recurring theme tied to BIPOC mindfulness professionals' observations about diversity and race in workplace settings was a lack of a sense

of belonging. Based on the 31 answers offered, eight (26%) of the responses (67% of participants) referenced observing a sense of belonging in relation to diversity and race in the workplace. The common phrases and inputs that tied to lack of sense of belonging encompassed the following: BIPOC not affirmed, BIPOC feel safer at home, BIPOC didn't feel seen, tokenism, feel need to adapt to the mainstream, need a sense of belonging, felt othered, didn't feel safe, workplaces are sometimes unsafe, and there's a division between BIPOC and white people.

When describing the lack of belonging, Iris shared that “BIPOC feel different or othered at work.” Primrose acknowledged that “there is a lot of tokenization that is very consistent.” Daisy validated this theme stating, “workplace environments are sometimes really unsafe for BIPOC people.” Similarly, Lily revealed that “BIPOC employees don't necessarily feel safe for a lot of reasons, but when we're in spaces that are predominantly white, viscerally we don't feel safe.”

Discriminatory Actions. Based on the 31 answers offered, seven (23%) of the responses (58% of participants) referenced observing various discriminatory actions in relation to diversity and race in workplace settings. The common phrases and inputs tied to discriminatory actions encompassed the following: stereotypes and stressors, not listened to, ideas not applied, slight comments, abilities negated, treated differently, encounter microaggressions, racism attacks body, racism is a distraction, a lot of microaggressions, explicit biases, rumors if you get ahead, and "angry black woman" trope.

When describing the discriminatory actions she observed, Peonny stated, “just slight comments, walking up and kind of interrupting conversations that were about them, negating their abilities.” Similarly, Tulip expressed that as a BIPOC “our voice is not often respected.”

Poppy revealed, “there's a lot of microaggressions going on, a lot of explicit biases.” She went on to describe her experience sharing, “as a black woman, if you take a stand against something, then it's all ‘she's just another angry black woman’ or ‘she has an attitude.’”

Fatigue from Overperforming. 58% of participants also referenced observing fatigue from overperforming in relation to diversity and race in the workplace. Based on the 31 answers offered, seven (23%) of the responses to IQ2 tied to observing BIPOC experiencing burnout and fatigue from overworking. The common phrases and inputs that are tied to fatigue from overperforming encompassed the following: work in spite of pain, outperform white peers, work harder than white peers, confidence is diminished, diminish and minimize fatigue to perform, emotional labor, required to do more, experienced burnout, considered standoffish if direct, and needed to do the most.

When describing fatigue from overperforming at work, Dahlia acknowledged "BIPOC experience fatigue from racial injustice historically but especially now.” She further stated that BIPOC “diminish and minimize their fatigue to perform which takes an emotional toll." Lily agreed and added that due to this fatigue, “BIPOC usually experienced burnout.” Iris described how the burnout and fatigue that BIPOC experience stems from the fact that "BIPOC are required to do more and be different." Primrose validated this phenomenon admitting that for her voice to be heard or taken seriously as a BIPOC, "I needed to do the most." She declared, “we shouldn't have to go through these hoops in order to be listened to.”

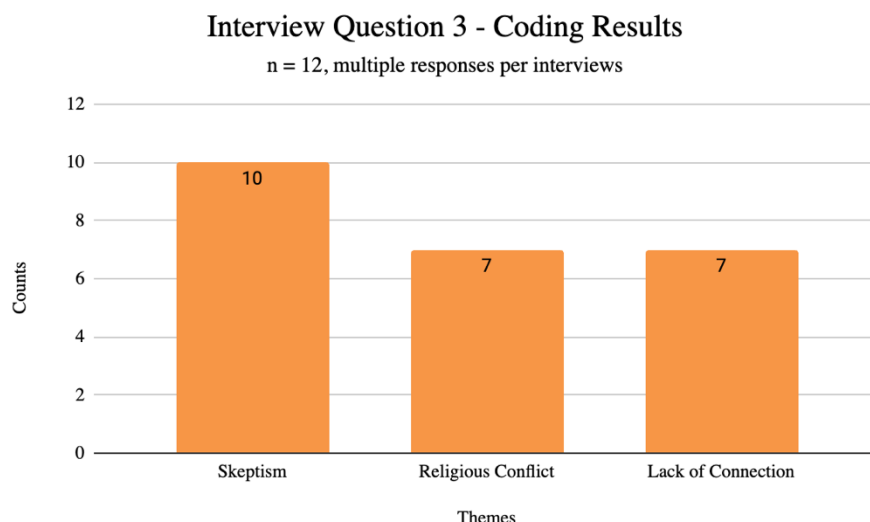
Interview Question 3

IQ3 asked participants to describe any cultural or societal dilemmas (if any) that they have encountered in this field of work. The interview responses to IQ3 were analyzed and derived a total of 24 responses regarding the cultural or societal dilemmas you encountered doing

this work. The replies were categorized into three corresponding themes. The themes that emerged were: (a) skepticism, (b) religious conflict, and (c) lack of connection (see Figure 4).

Figure 4

Coding Results for Interview Question 3



Note. This figure demonstrates the most prevalent cultural or societal dilemmas BIPOC mindfulness professionals encountered doing this work. This bar chart highlights the four most common themes that emerged from participants' responses to IQ3. The data displayed is in descending order of frequency. Each number in the orange column represents the number of participants that contributed to each theme.

Skepticism. Based on the participants' answers to IQ3, the first recurring theme tied to cultural or societal dilemmas encountered was skepticism. Based on the 24 answers offered, 10 (42%) of the responses (83% of participants) described encountering skepticism due to certain misconceptions individuals hold about mindfulness. The common phrases and inputs that tied to skepticism encompassed the following: pushback, resistance, unconventional beliefs, BIPOC feeling it's a contradiction, feeling it doesn't work, perception that black people don't meditate, uncertainty about what it is, and getting people to understand what it is and what it isn't, fear that

it's some kind of mumbo jumbo, something to do without actually practicing, relegated as not serious, and associating it with woo-woo.

When describing skepticism as a cultural or societal dilemma often encountered, Poppy stated that “some people have this misconception that it doesn't work... so what’s the point.” Lily mentioned that some people have a "fear that mindfulness is some kind of mumbo jumbo or woo-woo." ‘Woo-woo’ was described by multiple participants as unconventional beliefs that are thought to have little to no scientific basis, often theories relating to spirituality, mysticism, or mind-body medicine. Iris validated this stating, "people are like “Oh, that's woo-woo" Similarly, Orchid revealed that mindfulness is sometimes "relegated as woo-woo or not serious." She alluded to a myth that mindfulness is a skill that happens overnight, saying “all of a sudden, it's just something to do without actually practicing what it means to practice compassion.”

Religious Conflict. Based on the 24 answers offered, seven (29%) of the responses (58% of participants) described a religious conflict as a cultural and societal dilemma BIPOC mindfulness professionals encountered doing this work. The common phrases and inputs that tied to a fear of religious conflict encompassed the following: BIPOC heavily invested in religion, fear that it counters belief systems, people try to make it religious, afraid it conflicts with religion, associating that with religion, BIPOC feel it's going to violate their religion, and it's a taboo topic in BIPOC community.

When describing a fear of religious conflict as a cultural or societal dilemma often encountered, Iris mentioned that BIPOC think “oh it goes against my Christianity, or it goes against my religion.” Similarly, Lily said, “sometimes there was some kind of fear that mindfulness in some ways ran counter to their Christian or Catholic belief systems.” Lotus also

validated this fear and revealed that she witnessed some BIPOC exclaim, “that’s Buddhist, I can’t do that!” when she first introduces mindfulness. Furthermore, Rose acknowledged this observation and more specifically said, "the Black community is more afraid that it conflicts with religion."

Lack of Connection. 58% of participants also described lack of connection as a dilemma. Based on the 24 answers offered, seven (29%) of the responses were tied to a lack of connection as a cultural and societal dilemma BIPOC mindfulness professionals encountered doing this work. The common phrases and inputs tied to lack of connection encompassed the following: geared towards white people, not valued as much, low attendance for BIPOC, oblivious to BIPOC experience, some people don’t benefit, and only for white people.

When describing unconventional beliefs as a cultural or societal dilemma, Daisy simply said, “there's a lack of connection.” Peonny mentioned that “white people in this field are oblivious to our experience.” She explained how “nobody in this field was really thinking about racial issues. That’s why signups are low for BIPOC.” Lily validated this lack of connection with white mindfulness professionals around the BIPOC experience stating, “white teachers don't have self-awareness.” Rose revealed that she commonly hears “people in our Black Community say “we don't do that that's what White people do. It’s for white people.” When describing the lack of connection, Lavender said, “mindfulness practices are geared towards rich and white people.” And Iris revealed the “messaging around “it's for everybody” causes a lack of connection for BIPOC participants.

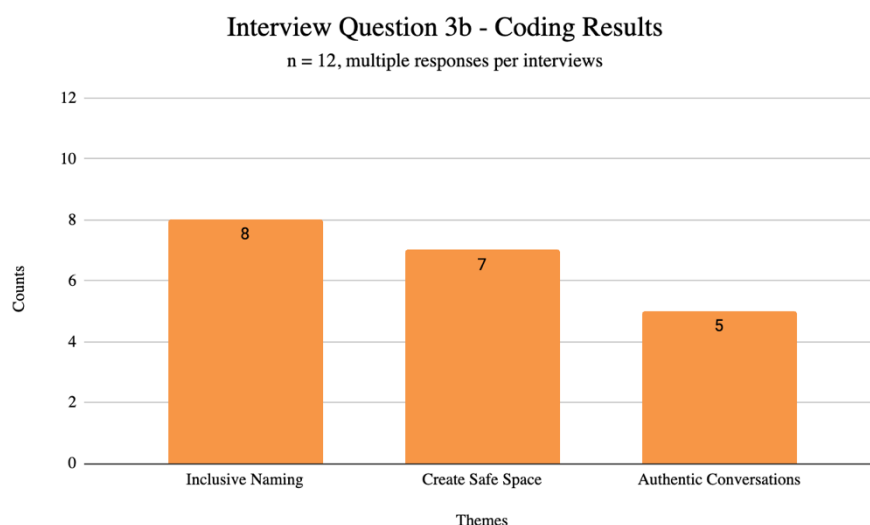
Interview Question 3b

IQ3b was a follow-up question to participants answer for IQ3. IQ3b asked, how did they overcome those dilemmas? The interview responses to IQ3b were analyzed and derived a total of

20 responses regarding how BIPOC mindfulness professionals overcame the dilemmas mentioned. The replies were categorized into three corresponding themes. The themes that emerged were: (a) inclusive naming, (b) create safe space, and (c) authentic conversations (see Figure 5).

Figure 5

Coding Results for Interview Question 3b



Note. This figure demonstrates the most prevalent strategies BIPOC mindfulness professionals utilize to overcome dilemmas. This bar chart highlights the four most common themes that emerged from participants' responses to IQ3b. The data displayed is in descending order of frequency. Each number in the orange column represents the number of participants that contributed to each theme.

Inclusive Naming. Based on the participants' answers to IQ3, the first recurring theme tied to strategies used to overcome dilemmas was inclusive naming. Based on the 20 answers offered, eight (40%) of the responses (67% of participants) referenced using inclusive naming of the mindfulness class and content as a strategy that consultants utilize to overcome dilemmas. The common phrases and inputs that encompassed inclusive naming encompassed the following:

use their language, called it something else, don't use the language of overcoming, change language, adjust the content, what you title it matters, and reframe it.

When describing the need to use inclusive naming of mindfulness classes and programs as a strategy to overcome dilemmas, Peonny stated, “how you say it, what you title it, is going to impact whether or not people of color or Black people are going to want to come. She added, “you got to name it something that's important.” Lotus validated changing the wording, saying she “called mindfulness meditation silent sitting instead, and I recommended that.” Daisy also gave an example of changing the wording saying, “the way that I would frame it is less in the language of overcoming and more in the language of facing or acknowledging.”

Create Safe Space. Based on the participants' answers to IQ3, the second recurring theme tied to strategies used to overcome dilemmas was to create a safe space for participants to be curious. Based on the 20 answers offered, seven (35%) of the responses (58% of participants) referenced creating a safe space for curiosity as a strategy BIPOC mindfulness professionals utilized to overcome dilemmas. The common phrases and inputs tied to creating a safe space encompassed the following: create more safety, give people permission, bring in some compassion, not judging, make a safe environment, space to be corrected, don't tell but explain to them, and meet people where they're at.

When describing the creating a safe space as a strategy to overcome dilemmas, Rose mentioned, “you have to ask more questions than you tell more statements. You have to meet people where they're at.” Orchid said, “you must create that safety... and allow curiosity to enter.” Similarly, Tulip said, “first, you have to make a safe environment.” Furthermore, Daisy stated, “create more safety within the session... and give people lots of permission.”

Authentic Conversations. Based on the participants' answers to IQ3, the third recurring theme tied to strategies used to overcome dilemmas was authentic conversations. Based on the 20 answers offered, five (25%) of the responses (42% of participants) referenced having authentic conversations by being transparent and sharing your own story with mindfulness as a strategy utilized to overcome dilemmas. The common phrases and inputs tied to transparency encompassed the following: give them my personal journey, talk to people who will listen, be honest and open, direct conversations, talk about my own journey, discuss the impact it's had, model it, pose an example, and share point of view.

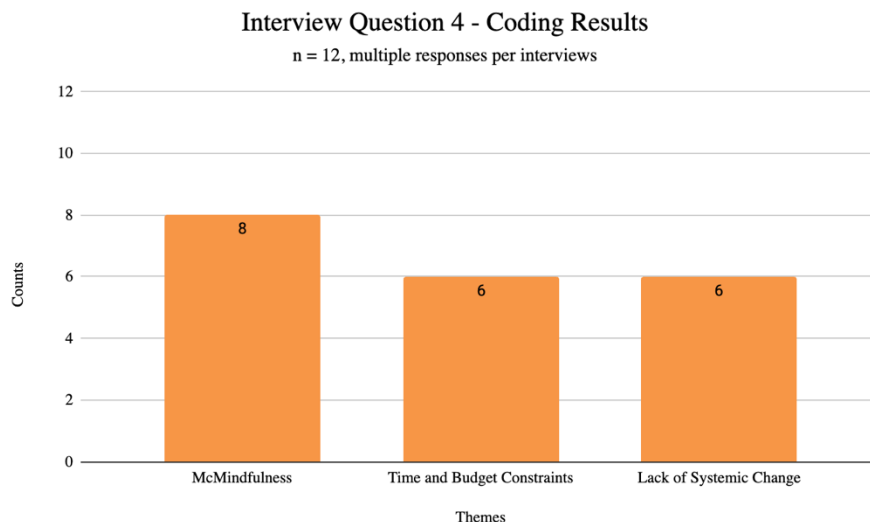
When describing having authentic conversations as a strategy to overcome dilemmas, Peonny advised, "share your point of view. Be part of the conversation... Be honest and open." Iris said, "I will talk about my own journey and discuss the impact it's had." Similarly, Poppy stated, "all I can do is teach them and I can give them my personal journey."

Interview Question 4

IQ4 asked participants to describe any pitfalls or barriers that impact their ability to effectively implement mindfulness in the workplace and how they address those. The interview responses to IQ4 were analyzed and derived a total of 20 responses regarding the pitfalls or barriers that impact BIPOC mindfulness professionals' ability to effectively implement mindfulness at work. The replies were categorized into three corresponding themes. The themes that emerged were: (a) McMindfulness, (b) time and budget constraints, and (c) lack of systemic change (see Figure 6).

Figure 6

Coding Results for Interview Question 4



Note. This figure demonstrates the most prevalent pitfalls or barriers that impact BIPOC mindfulness professionals' ability to implement mindfulness at work. This bar chart highlights the three most common themes that emerged from participants' responses to IQ4. The data displayed is in descending order of frequency. Each number in the orange column represents the number of participants that contributed to each theme.

McMindfulness. Based on the participants' answers to IQ4, the first pitfall or barrier was McMindfulness. McMindfulness describes the commercialized version of mindfulness that prioritizes convenience and fast results for personal success or for improving business outcomes (Kim, 2018; Purser & Loy, 2013). Based on the 20 answers offered, eight (40%) of the responses (67% of participants) referenced McMindfulness as a pitfall or barrier that impacts BIPOC mindfulness professionals' ability to implement mindfulness at work. The common phrases and inputs that tied to McMindfulness encompassed the following: it's become a trend, using it in a way that is counter, used as employee perk, don't see the need for it, businesses act like it's a band aid, only interested for employee productivity, used as a management tool, McMindfulness,

over popularized, making it a fad, not prioritized, only supported if aligns with the bottom line, something that just makes us feel good, businesses trying to check the box, it's not important, nice to have but not needed, looked at as a just wellness program, goal to make people more effective, and perception that class will fix all issues.

When describing McMindfulness as a pitfall or barrier that impacts implementing mindfulness at work, Iris described mindfulness being a popular trend as an issue saying, “now corporations are just making it a fad versus you know sustaining it.” Orchid described the problem of businesses thinking mindfulness is a band aid that will fix all issues, stating “workplaces are sort of relegating or adding that mindfulness is sort of a panacea for everything.” Similarly, Primrose described that some workplaces think that mindfulness is not needed and use it as an incentive, saying, “at work there is a lot more thinking along the lines of ‘as an employee perk, we're going to give you like a free subscription to like headspace or calm or something like that.’”

Moreover, Lavender admitted that mindfulness is often offered in the workplace to meet business goals, stating, “there's a lot of wanting to check off the boxes in workplaces when it comes to mindfulness.” Peonny validated this stating, “you have the companies who are just trying to do it to say that they're doing it, but they're just worried about the bottom-line.” Likewise, Lily said, “directors of organizations that may be interested in hiring me and other mindfulness teachers just out of a motivation to help their employees to be more productive... trying to use mindfulness as a management skill, a management tool, rather than as a as a tool and a resource to support their employees to really be more self-aware, more empowered, more connected, inwardly and outwardly.”

Time and Budget Constraints. Based on the 20 answers offered, six (30%) of the responses (50% of participants) referenced business concerns such as time and budget constraints as a pitfall or barrier that impacts BIPOC mindfulness professionals' ability to implement mindfulness at work. The common phrases and inputs tied to time and budget constraints encompassed the following: don't have time, beneficial but consumed by work demands, people are overworked, concerns about the time it would take, not sure if they can really bring it in, not sure if staff will have time, don't have the budget for it, putting mindfulness into ROI, and don't have money for it.

When describing time and budget constraints as a pitfall or barrier that impacts implementing mindfulness at work, Daisy said, "People feel like they don't have time." Similarly, Lavender said, "sometimes the principle is not sure that they're going to have time to have their staff do that." Rose validated this and said she often hears "people say "I don't have time for this. We have a business to run and we've got to be competitive in the marketplace." Moreover, Lily said, "people would say it was beneficial but then they'd be consumed again by the demands of their workplace, both the employees and the directors. The director... she thought it was a great idea and was really glad that I was willing to do it, but she had concerns about productivity."

Lack of Systemic Change. 50% of participants also referenced a lack of systemic change as a pitfall or barrier that impacts BIPOC mindfulness professionals' ability to implement mindfulness at work. Based on the 20 answers offered, six (30%) of the responses described a lack of systemic change as a pitfall or barrier. The common phrases and inputs tied to lack of systemic change encompassed the following: hard to get desired results, not built within the

culture, not searching for the root cause, not worried about the societal impact, and offer class but no systemic change.

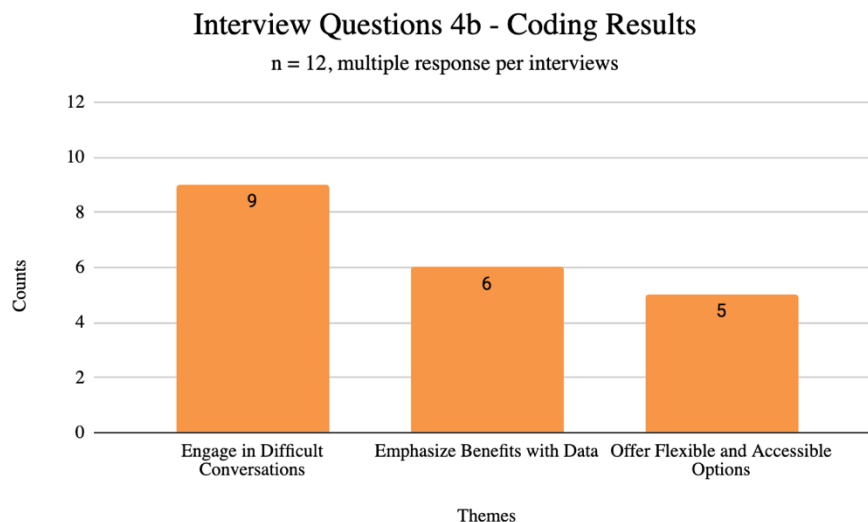
When describing the lack of systematic change as a pitfall or barrier that impacts implementing mindfulness at work, Peonny stated, “there’s starting to be this perception of ‘just send everybody to a mindfulness class and then we don’t have to change these fundamental systemic issues.’” Similarly, Orchid confessed, “we’re still not addressing perhaps some systemic issues that need to be sort of considered.” Rose validated this, revealing that “people aren’t acknowledging the structure and system that we all inherited.” Although mindfulness has undeniable benefits for employees and workplaces, Dahlia admitted, “I don’t really know if that leads to systems change within the organization.”

Interview Question 4b

IQ4b was a follow-up question to participants answer for IQ4. IQ4b asked, how do you address those pitfalls or barriers? The interview responses to IQ4b were analyzed and derived a total of 20 responses regarding the strategies used to address the pitfalls or barriers mentioned. The replies were categorized into three corresponding themes. The themes that emerged were: (a) engage in difficult conversations, (b) emphasize benefits with data, and (c) offer flexible and accessible options (see Figure 7).

Figure 7

Coding Results for Interview Question 4b



Note. This figure demonstrates the most prevalent strategies BIPOC mindfulness professionals used to address the pitfalls or barriers mentioned. This bar chart highlights the four most common themes that emerged from participants' responses to IQ4b. The data displayed is in descending order of frequency. Each number in the orange column represents the number of participants that contributed to each theme.

Engage in Difficult Conversations. Based on the participants' answers to IQ4, the first strategy BIPOC mindfulness professionals used to address the pitfalls or barriers was to engage in difficult conversations. Based on the 20 answers offered, nine (45%) of the responses (75% of participants) referenced having the courage to engage in difficult conversations as a strategy used to address the pitfalls or barriers. The common phrases and inputs that tied to engaging in difficult conversations encompassed the following: tell supervisors they have to be role models, direct conversations, tell them that's not the way it works, ask them what's the impact, help them understand, conversation about why they should really care, ask about systems changes, address

it, being direct, naming it, speaking up, confronting the issue, try to change minds, discuss how the workplace could be revitalized, and tell leaders their actions have a ripple effect.

When describing engaging in difficult discussions as a strategy to address pitfalls or barriers, Tulip advocated for, “being direct and just speaking what you're feeling.” Similarly, Peonny recommended, “just confronting the issue. Ask the company what they will do after class or workshop. Open their mind... get them to think of it beyond a class.” Dahlia suggested, “[say] there's room for improvement... have a conversation about why it's important.” Lily revealed her strategy stating, “what I would often have to repeat is ‘this is not the way mindfulness works.’” Iris admitted, “if I hear something I just don't let it pass. I create a teachable moment out of it.” Primrose said, " Tell them these practices are not just about feeling better."

Emphasize Benefits with Data. Based on the participants' answers to IQ4, the second strategy BIPOC mindfulness professionals used to address the pitfalls or barriers was to emphasize the benefits of mindfulness with data. Based on the 20 answers offered, six (30%) of the responses (50% of participants) referenced highlighting the benefits by showing data as a strategy used to address the pitfalls or barriers. The common phrases and inputs that tied to emphasizing benefits with data encompassed the following: emphasize the good stuff, impress upon them the benefits, use research, show data, reverse engineer it, give examples, challenge how to measure ROI, discuss benefits, show research about the benefits, and surveys for feedback.

When describing emphasizing benefits with data as a strategy to address pitfalls or barriers, Iris confessed, “I talk about the benefits based on the research that I rely on.” Similarly, Rose revealed, “I use a lot of data and research show data that “soft skills” keep employees going

higher.” Dahlia validated this and recommended “doing a lot of surveys for the participants to give their feedback and present the data from surveys to leadership.”

Offer Flexible and Accessible Options. Based on the participants' answers to IQ4, the third strategy BIPOC mindfulness professionals used to address the pitfalls or barriers was to offer flexible and accessible options. Based on the 20 answers offered, five (25%) of the responses (42% of participants) referenced offering flexible and accessible options as a strategy used to address the pitfalls or barriers. The common phrases and inputs that tied to offering flexible and accessible options encompassed the following: give options, offer experiences, online classes, accommodate schedules, offer accessible teachings, allow people to opt out, and offer separately for executives.

When describing offering flexible and accessible options as a strategy to address pitfalls or barriers, Tulip said, “I was always making it optional. That has been huge.” Similarly, Orchid advised “make it accessible for people.” Lavender validated this and recommended to “try to be accommodating w/ scheduling by offering it online. Don't make it mandatory and give the option to opt out.” Daisy agreed stating, “offer accessible teachings and ‘experiences,’ and don't explain so much.” Moreover, Lily suggested mindfulness professionals should “offer it separately just to the executives.”

Summary of Research Question One

Research question one aimed to understand BIPOC mindfulness professionals’ experience implementing mindfulness in workplace settings. A total of 14 core themes were identified by the answers and input provided by participants from IQ1, IQ2, IQ3, and IQ4. The 14 core themes identified were as follows: (a) negative encounters, (b) lack of diversity, (c) proven leadership, (d) new demand for BIPOC, (e) reflection of white dominated society, (f) lack

of safety and sense of belonging, (g) discriminatory actions, (h) fatigue from overperforming, (i) skepticism, (j) religious conflict, (k) lack of connection, (l) McMIndfulness, (m) time and budget constraints, and (n) lack of systemic change. Additionally, a total of six sub-themes were identified by the answers and input provided by participants from sub-questions IQ3b and IQ4b. The six themes identified were as follows: (a) inclusive naming, (b) create safe space, (c) authentic conversations (d) engage in difficult conversations, (e) emphasize benefits with data, and (f) offer flexible and accessible options. Table 2 summarizes the 20 themes derived from research question one.

Table 2*Summary of Themes for Research Question One*

Research Question One What cultural challenges are experienced by BIPOC mindfulness professional in their work?				
IQ1	Negative Encounters	Lack of Diversity	Proven Leadership	New Demand for BIPOC
IQ2	Reflection of White Dominated Society	Lack of Safety and Belonging	Discriminatory Actions	Fatigue from Overperforming
IQ3	Skepticism	Religious Conflict	Lack of Connection	
IQ3b	Inclusive Naming	Create Safe Space	Authentic Conversations	
IQ4	McMindfulness	Time and Budget Constraints	Lack of Systemic Change	
IQ4b	Engage in Difficult Conversations	Emphasize Benefits with Data	Offer Flexible and Accessible Options	
<i>Note.</i> This table represents a summary of the themes derived from Research Question One.				

Research Question Two

The second research question (RQ2) inquired, to what extent (if at all) are the experiences of BIPOC employees reflected in the mindfulness curriculum and program? I posed three interview questions to each participant to obtain answers to RQ2. The three questions corresponding to RQ2 were:

- IQ 5: How much attention is given to BIPOC employees within the mindfulness curriculum and program?
- IQ 6: How are mindfulness curriculums and/or programs in workplace settings culturally attuned for BIPOC employees?
- IQ 7: In what ways are diversity, inclusion, and race-related themes (such as racial stress, decolonization, liberation, etc.) integrated into the curriculum and/or program?

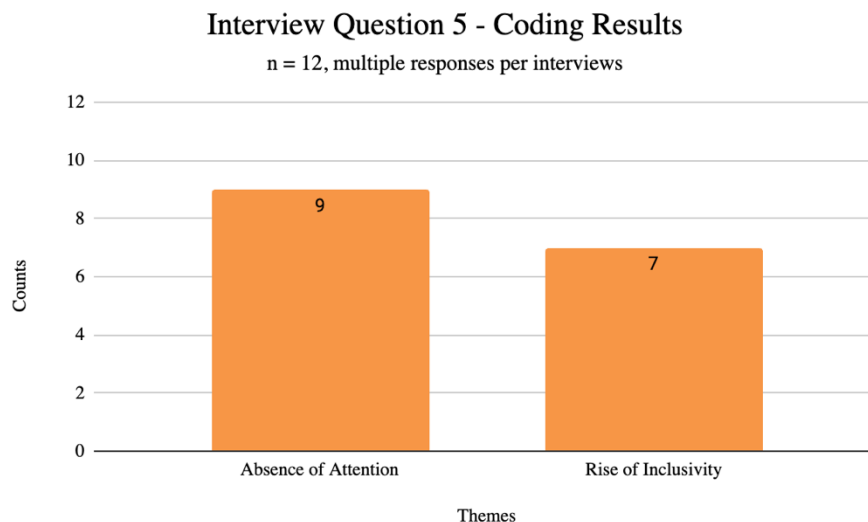
In order to comprehend the extent (if at all) the experiences of BIPOC employees are reflected in the mindfulness curriculum, programming, and implementation, I analyzed replies from the participants and captured frequent themes and parallels in the answers.

Interview Question 5

IQ5 asked, how much attention is given to BIPOC employees within the mindfulness curriculum and program? The interview responses to IQ5 were analyzed and derived a total of 16 responses regarding the attention given to BIPOC employees within mindfulness curriculums and programs. The replies were categorized into two corresponding themes. The themes that emerged were: (a) absence of attention and (b) rise of inclusivity (see Figure 8).

Figure 8

Coding Results for Interview Question 5



Note. This figure demonstrates the most prevalent responses regarding the ways mindfulness curriculums and programs give attention to BIPOC employees. This bar chart highlights the two most common themes that emerged from participants' responses to IQ5. The data displayed is in descending order of frequency. Each number in the orange column represents the number of participants that contributed to each theme.

Absence of Attention. Based on the participants' answers to IQ5, the first perspective regarding the attention given to BIPOC was that there is an absence of attention. Based on the 16 answers offered, nine (56%) of the responses (75% of participants) validated that there is an absence of attention given to BIPOC employees within mindfulness curriculums and programs. The common phrases and inputs that tied to absence of attention encompassed the following: not enough, not much, haven't seen too many, very few, none, I don't see it, not a lot, so little, they aren't, and very little.

When describing the absence of attention given to BIPOC employees within the mindfulness curriculum and program, Iris confessed "Not a lot." While Daisy said, "very little."

Similarly, Orchid said, "very few." Lily admitted that "they don't do enough." Tulip confirmed this saying, "none. There is no reflection of BIPOC in the teaching." Primrose firmly stated, "So little that I almost didn't have anything to say." Furthermore, Rose confirmed, "there are some communities outside of workplace that give them much attention but I'm not seeing that inside of organizations."

Rise of Inclusivity. Based on the participants' answers to IQ5, the second perspective regarding the attention given to BIPOC was that there is a rise of inclusivity. Based on the 16 answers offered, seven (44%) of the responses (58% of participants) described a rise of inclusivity where things are starting to change when it comes to the attention given to BIPOC. The common phrases and inputs that tied to a rise of inclusivity encompassed the following: they're aware something is missing, some are starting to, a little more these days, more sensitivity being included, it's a very slow change, it's increasing, it's happening more and more, and conversations will increase.

When describing how the rise of inclusivity regarding the amount of attention given to BIPOC employees within the mindfulness curriculum and program, Dahlia said she is "more recently seeing attention for BIPOC." Lily validated this stating, "they're starting to change." Peony stated, "they're aware something is missing." Similarly, Lavender admitted, "there's an awareness that folks, you know, you can't just kind of give them this one size fits all and think that it works for everybody." She also acknowledged, "there's a little more of a trauma sensitivity being included in mindfulness these days. Tulip revealed that "people are trying to be more inclusive now so it's like 'we're going to use your picture for the cover of this mindfulness magazine but that's all.'" Moreover, Daisy sounded hopeful and confident stating, "I think it's

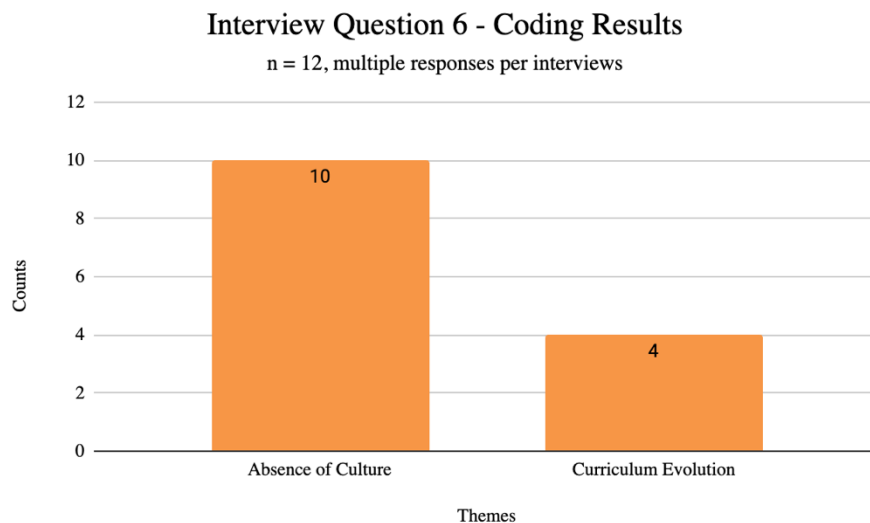
increasing for sure” when discussing more attention being given to BIPOC in mindfulness curriculums and programs.

Interview Question 6

IQ6 asked, how are mindfulness curriculums and/or programs in workplace settings culturally attuned for BIPOC employees? The interview responses to IQ6 were analyzed and derived a total of 14 responses regarding whether mindfulness curriculums and programs are culturally attuned to BIPOC employees. The replies were categorized into two corresponding themes. The themes that emerged were: (a) absence of culture and (b) curriculum evolution (see Figure 9).

Figure 9

Coding Results for Interview Question 6



Note. This figure demonstrates the most prevalent responses regarding the ways mindfulness curriculums and programs in workplace settings are culturally attuned. This bar chart highlights the two most common themes that emerged from participants’ responses to IQ6. The data displayed is in descending order of frequency. Each number in the orange column represents the number of participants that contributed to each theme.

Absence of Culture. Based on majority of the participants perspectives, mindfulness programs implemented in the workplace have an absence of culture. Based on the 14 answers offered, 10 (71%) of the responses (83% of participants) validated that mindfulness programs and curriculums in workplace settings have an absence of culture. The common phrases and inputs that tied to absence of culture encompassed the following: they are not, don't think they are, need to add relevance, haven't seen any, not at all, don't think they are, I don't there are any, don't know that they are, and don't think there's much.

When describing that mindfulness curriculums and/or programs in workplace settings have an absence of culture for BIPOC employees, Orchid confessed, "I haven't seen any." Similarly, Tulip said, "I would say not at all." Lily validated this and admitted, "I don't think they are yet." Similarly, Poppy said, "I don't think they are." Primrose stated, "I don't think any of them are." Dahlia added, "I don't think they are. It's pretty rare if they are designed for BIPOC." Moreover, Daisy admitted that "it depends on the presenter but don't know that they are."

Curriculum Evolution. 33% of participants stated that there is a curriculum evolution regarding culturally attuned mindfulness implemented in the workplace. Based on the 14 answers offered, four (29%) of the responses acknowledged that culturally attuned mindfulness curriculums and programs in workplace settings are evolving. The common phrases and inputs that tied to curriculum evolution encompassed the following: more steps needed, it's a work in progress, companies making modifications and tweaks, they're bringing intentionality to, now asked to consider cultural practices, and they're starting to use BIPOC to help look at the curriculum, lately everyone using BIPOC, and a few more options being given.

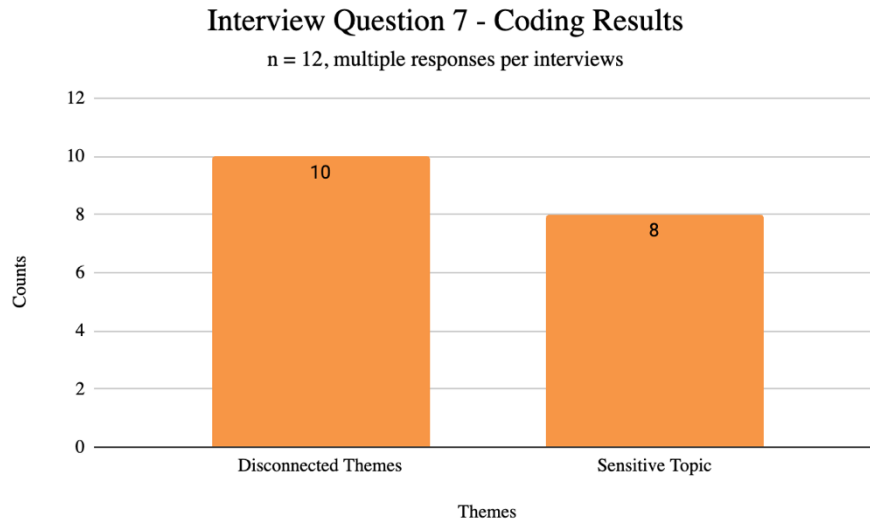
When describing the curriculum evolution happening with culturally attuning mindfulness curriculums and/or programs in workplace settings for BIPOC employees, Lavender admitted “there's a few more options being given.” Iris acknowledged the progress and said, “I know that the curriculum has been making modifications and tweaks.” Lily validated this and sounded hopeful for the future stating, “It's a work in progress.” Moreover, Peonny revealed, “they're starting to... I see that they're using me, they're using other people of color, to try to help with these curricula.”

Interview Question 7

IQ7 asked, in what ways are diversity, inclusion, and race-related themes (such as racial stress, decolonization, liberation, microaggressions, unconscious bias, etc.) integrated into the curriculum and/or program? The interview responses to IQ7 were analyzed and derived a total of 18 responses on whether diversity, inclusion, and race-related themes are integrated into mindfulness curriculums and programs at work. The replies were categorized into two corresponding themes. The themes that emerged were: (a) disconnected themes and (b) sensitive topic (see Figure 10).

Figure 10

Coding Results for Interview Question 7



Note. This figure demonstrates the most prevalent responses regarding the ways diversity, inclusion, and race-related themes are integrated into mindfulness curriculums and programs. This bar chart highlights the two most common themes that emerged from participants' responses to IQ7. The data displayed is in descending order of frequency. Each number in the orange column represents the number of participants that contributed to each theme.

Disconnected Themes. The first prevalent response based on the participants' answers to IQ7 was that diversity, inclusion, and race-related themes are disconnected and not integrated into mindfulness curriculums and programs implemented at work. Based on the 18 answers offered, 10 (56%) of the responses (83% of participants) mentioned the integration of diversity, inclusion, and race-related themes in mindfulness programs is lacking and trainings around those themes are disconnected in workplaces. The common phrases and inputs that validated disconnected themes encompassed the following: very little, haven't seen it, it isn't really, haven't seen much in the workplace, it's not, they're not, not much, not a whole lot, they don't address it, needs to be talked about, not at all, not in workplaces, DEI is insufficient, topics come

up in separate subgroups, only within DEI work, D&I and mindfulness separated, maybe from DEI departments, and they need to come together.

When describing that diversity, inclusion, and race-related themes (such as racial stress, decolonization, liberation, microaggressions, unconscious bias, etc.) are disconnected and not integrated into the curriculum and/or program, Peonny said, “zero or very little of those themes show up.” Poppy admitted, “I don't see those themes.” Similarly, Orchid stated, “I feel like in certain spaces, maybe. But in workplaces, eh... I haven't really seen that so much in the workplace. I have within D&I initiatives but not within mindfulness.” She went on to reveal, “mindfulness and D&I are not really connected in workplaces.” Primrose passionately said, “In general, no not at all, not one bit.” She went on to validate the possible outcomes stating, “Mindfulness and DEI need to come together.” Moreover, Dahlia said, “I’ve only seen it within DEI work. There’s mindfulness and there’s DEI... But they’re not integrated.” Lavender agreed stating “trainings are separated with diversity, inclusion and mindfulness.” In her opinion, “organizations aren't really looking at them to get those type of things, so they're not really incorporated.”

Sensitive Topic. Based on the participants' answers to IQ7, integrating diversity, inclusion, and race-related themes into mindfulness programs and curriculums are sensitive topics for workplace settings. Based on the 18 answers offered, eight (44%) of the responses (67% of participants) said that integrating diversity, inclusion, and race-related themes may be overly complex and too sensitive for some work settings. The common phrases and inputs that validated may be too sensitive encompassed the following: it can be very uncomfortable, big ask for workplaces, discomfort along racial lines, don't know if companies would want that, tricky to topics to work, it can be triggering, white people feel uncomfortable, there's much resistance,

doesn't reach company bottom line so hasn't happened, not really thought of by workplaces, and it taps into vulnerable pieces.

When describing that diversity, inclusion, and race-related themes (such as racial stress, decolonization, liberation, microaggressions, unconscious bias, etc.) may be too sensitive to integrate into the curriculum and/or program, Daisy stated, “some workplaces are less equipped to grapple with diversity issues and this kind of stuff. It's also tricky because this kind of work is vulnerable.” Lotus also alluded to the sensitivity of the topics and said, “they can't hold the complexity of the issues.” Similarly, Tulip declared, “certain people can't be with that, they can't sit with that.” Rose admitted, “it can be very uncomfortable for people. The level of discomfort is very clear along racial lines. It's a very interesting, delicate... important time in our race and diversity relations at work.” Lavender validated this saying, “also it's a tricky time to even bring those topics into the workplace.... it triggers a lot of folks. White people start feeling uncomfortable.” Furthermore, Orchid stated, “there's a range of emotions with D&I” and confessed that “in some spaces that I work in, you can't even use the word privilege.”

Summary of Research Question Two

Research question two aimed to understand BIPOC mindfulness professionals' perspectives of BIPOC employee inclusion within mindfulness curriculums in workplaces. A total of 6 themes were identified by analyzing phrases, viewpoints, or responses from IQ5, IQ6, and IQ7. The 6 themes identified were as follows: (a) absence of attention, (b) rise of inclusivity, (c) absence of culture, (d) curriculum evolution, (e) disconnected themes, and (f) sensitive topic. Table 3 summarizes the 6 themes derived from research question two.

Table 3

Summary of Themes for Research Question Two

Research Question Two To what extent (if at all) are the experiences of BIPOC employees reflected in the mindfulness curriculum, programming, and implementation?		
IQ5	Absence of Attention	Rise of Inclusivity
IQ6	Absence of Culture	Curriculum Evolution
IQ7	Disconnected Themes	Sensitive Topic
<i>Note.</i> This table represents a summary of the themes derived from Research Question Two.		

Research Question Three

The third research question (RQ3) inquired what recommendations do BIPOC mindfulness professionals make to other mindfulness specialist who want to incorporate cultural themes in their mindfulness programs? I posed four interview questions to each participant to obtain answers to RQ3. The four questions corresponding to RQ3 were:

- IQ 8: What wisdom have you gained from implementing mindfulness in the workplace?
- IQ 9: What are your recommendations for ensuring BIPOC employees feel included when going into mindfulness programs?
- IQ 10: What advice would you give a white mindfulness professional interested in working with BIPOC employees around issues of racial stressors?
- IQ 11: How can mindfulness professionals acquire the skill to develop culturally attuned mindfulness for BIPOC?

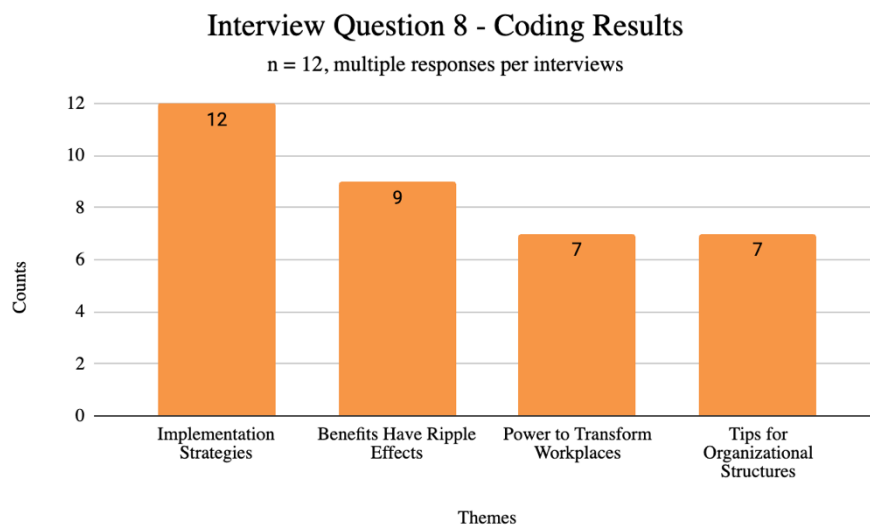
In order to comprehend the recommendations BIPOC mindfulness professionals would make to other mindfulness specialists who want to incorporate cultural themes in their curriculum and programs, I analyzed replies from the participants and captured frequent themes and parallels in the answers.

Interview Question 8

IQ8 asked, what wisdom have you gained from implementing mindfulness in the workplace? The interview responses to IQ8 were analyzed and derived a total of 35 responses regarding the wisdom gained from implementing mindfulness in work settings. The replies were categorized into four corresponding themes. The themes that emerged were: (a) implementation strategies, (b) benefits have ripple effects, (c) power to transform workplaces, and (d) tips for organizational structures (see Figure 11).

Figure 11

Coding Results for Interview Question 8



Note. This figure demonstrates the most prevalent responses regarding the wisdom BIPOC mindfulness professionals have gained from implementing mindfulness at work. This bar chart

highlights the four most common themes that emerged from participants' responses to IQ8. The data displayed is in descending order of frequency. Each number in the orange column represents the number of participants that contributed to each theme.

Implementation Strategies. Regarding the wisdom BIPOC mindfulness professionals gained from implementing mindfulness at work, all participants described useful tips and strategies for implementing mindfulness. Based on the 35 answers offered, 12 (34%) of the responses (100% of participants) shared wisdom tips and strategies for teaching mindfulness programs and workshops that they have gained from implementing mindfulness at work. The common phrases and inputs tied to implementation tips and strategies encompassed the following: can't just do it for one or two days and say it's not working, have to change your perspective, don't get discouraged, present information to show value, it should be embedded in the curriculum, start groups with meditation, important that people in power at work legitimize it, leaders need to make it something that matters, leaders give permission for employees to engage in it, be ethical in how you approach healing spaces, start sessions with a minute to arrive, show up as full self, don't talk about it from an academic way, conversation after is meant to be healing too, take a few minutes at the beginning of a meeting, important to give people space, more effective if conversational, offer practice in session, be intentional about the structures, make it available in a systematic way, must create space for it, starting meetings with it helps, always make it optional, never force it, propose don't impose, create extra time in the day to set an expectation, start class with a mindful practice, and always be curious.

When describing implementation tips and strategies as wisdom gained from implementing mindfulness in workplace settings, Iris described taking a few minutes at the beginning of a meeting, saying that "we start almost every team meeting with a minute to arrive to make sure that we give ourselves that opportunity to what I like to say, 'collect and direct our

attention.”” Dahlia revealed she learned “don't talk about it from an academic or intellectual way. it's much more effective if the way I share mindfulness is two things, conversational, where people can talk about what they're holding and how they're holding it.” Lavender acknowledged she learned “how important it is to legitimize it by those who are sort of more in power in the workplace. It's really important for leaders to make it something that matters.” Poppy said she learned, “not to get discouraged when there is no buy-in. It's a thing that people have to actually see the value of so just present the information.”

Benefits Have Ripple Effects. The second most prevalent response regarding wisdom BIPOC mindfulness professionals gained from implementing mindfulness at work was that the benefits of mindfulness have ripple effects. Based on the 35 answers offered, nine (26%) of the responses (75% of participants) shared how the benefits of mindfulness have ripple effects that have a positive impact as wisdom they have gained from implementing mindfulness at work. The common phrases and inputs tied to benefits have ripple effects encompassed the following: the impact goes beyond the workplace, it's really impactful, it makes us better leaders, it makes us better people, it empowers people to speak with authenticity, it has the power to transform lives, there are so many things that mindfulness can address, it has ripple effects, and it can be huge and powerful.

When describing how the benefit of mindfulness has ripple effects as wisdom gained, Rose learned that “mindfulness happens at the individual level, but the impact is collective.” Similarly, Primrose said, “when implementing healing spaces, the impact goes beyond the workplace.” Lily agreed and learned that “it empowers people to speak with more authenticity about what they need, in terms of life and work balance.” Iris validated this and said, “it makes us better people... we bring those skills to our relationships.” Furthermore, Daisy acknowledged,

"it has the power to transform lives. It has ripple effects. She believes, "the more mindful people, the more compassionate people we have in the world, I think the better off we all are." Similarly, Poppy noted that "if embedded in a curriculum there will be economic stimulation everywhere. there's so many things that mindfulness can address."

Power to Transform Workplaces. Based on the 35 answers offered, seven (20%) of the responses (58% of participants) described how mindfulness has the power to transform workplaces as wisdom they have gained from implementing mindfulness in workplace settings. The common phrases and inputs tied to power to transform workplaces encompassed the following: transformative for the workplace, opportunity to encourage people to be present at work, it's energetic, workplace can be revitalized, it can make a real difference at work, it makes us better at our work, it makes a difference in the workplace, identities have had space to grow, it helps people balance their needs with the demands of work, it's so inspiring to see, bringing it into the workplace makes it more acceptable, initially only middle or lower-level employees supported this, more companies want to do the work, more leaders are buying in, people want access to healing in workplaces, mindfulness at work has shifted, people want to flourish, people want their humanity recognized, and people want opportunities to grow and self-discover at work too.

When describing mindfulness having the power to transform workplaces as wisdom gained, Lily said, "it makes a difference in the workplace. It helps people balance their needs with the demands of work." Dahlia validated this saying, "when people feel seen, validated... honored, they work hard." Similarly, Iris said, "it makes us better leaders. it makes us better at our work." Lavender also reflected on how mindfulness can make a real difference at work saying, "even a little bit of mindfulness, having some skills of that in the workplace... folks start

to say what a difference, it can make for them.” Moreover, Peonny said, "mindfulness can be transformative for the workplace. It's an opportunity encourage people to be present to work. If they brought it into work, the workplace could be revitalized. Workplaces are more creative when people are mindful.”

Tips for Organizational Structures. 58% of participants also shared tips for organizational structures as wisdom they have gained from implementing mindfulness in workplace settings. Based on the participants' answers to IQ8, another prevalent response regarding wisdom gained from implementing mindfulness at work was tips and recommendations for structures within organizations. Out of the 35 answers offered, seven (20%) of the responses shared useful tips for the organizational systems we work in as wisdom they have gained from implementing mindfulness in workplace settings. The common phrases and inputs tied to tips for organizational structures encompassed the following: needs to be offered more consistently, have to be ethical in how you approach healing spaces, make it available, create extra time for it, create space for it, set an expectation, leaders need to legitimize it, do not get discouraged if there is no buy-in, and remember the structures where it is implemented.

When describing wisdom and tips for organizational structures, Lavender acknowledged “how important it is to legitimize it by those who are sort of more in power in the workplace.” She also said, “it’s really important for leaders to make it something that matters.” Tulip stated mindfulness professionals must "be intentional about the structures and systems that we give mindfulness." She added, "you have to make it available in a systematic way. You must create space for it, not just make it available." Poppy learned that you "can't just do it for one or two days and say it's not working." Similarly, Lily stated, "it needs to be offered on a more consistent

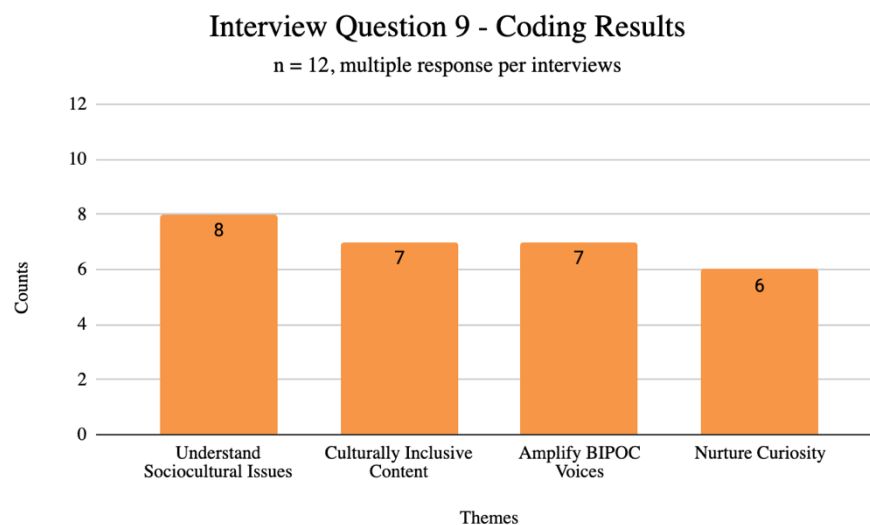
basis... a staff mindfulness retreat once a year isn't enough." Furthermore, Primrose gave a reminder, stating "BIPOC are carrying pain and trauma that they process at work so it's an honor to hold space for this healing to emerge at work."

Interview Question 9

IQ9 asked, what are your recommendations for ensuring BIPOC employees feel included when going into mindfulness programs? The interview responses to IQ9 were analyzed and derived a total of 28 responses regarding the recommendations for ensuring BIPOC employees are included when in mindfulness programs. The replies were categorized into four corresponding themes. The themes that emerged were: (a) understand sociocultural issues, (b) culturally inclusive content, (c) amplify BIPOC voices, and (d) nurture curiosity (see Figure 12).

Figure 12

Coding Results for Interview Question 9



Note. This figure demonstrates the most prevalent responses regarding recommendations BIPOC mindfulness professionals make to ensure BIPOC employees feel included. This bar chart highlights the four most common themes that emerged from participants' responses to IQ9. The

data displayed is in descending order of frequency. Each number in the orange column represents the number of participants that contributed to each theme.

Understand Sociocultural Issues. Based on the participants' answers to IQ9, the first and most prevalent response regarding recommendations BIPOC mindfulness professionals would make was to understand BIPOC sociocultural issues. Based on the 28 answers offered, eight (29%) of the responses (67% of participants) suggested taking the time to understand the racial, social, and historical issues that BIPOC experience as a recommendation they would make to ensure BIPOC employees feel included. The common phrases and inputs tied to understand sociocultural issues encompassed the following: name your identities and the limitations, know the audience, acknowledge that each person has different identities, understand microaggressions, understand common biases, have to honor it, know the historical context of BIPOC, know your audience, understand demographics of group, and learn about racial justice.

When recommending the need to understand sociocultural issues for BIPOC employees to feel included, Iris said, “understand microaggressions. What are some of the common biases that show up? Know and understand them.” Similarly, Poppy recommended, “know the audience and understand the demographics of group.” Moreover, Lotus said “you have to get clear on the historical context, and the narrative of BIPOC, and where we are on the timeline.” She stressed how important it is to “learn about the inner work of racial justice.” Primrose validated this and suggested to “have a lens on social justice.”

Culturally Inclusive Content. Based on the participants' answers to IQ9, the second most prevalent recommendation BIPOC mindfulness professionals would make was to add culturally inclusive content. Based on the 28 answers offered, seven (26%) of the responses (58% of participants) suggested that adding culturally inclusive content was a recommendation they

would make to ensure BIPOC employees feel included. The common phrases and inputs tied to add culturally inclusive content encompassed the following: use things that are relatable, change the title, adapt it, add relevance, tweak the curriculum, consider trauma-informed modifications, modify the content, bring sensitivity forward, talk about psychological safety, have a social justice lens, don't use one size fits all, change the content so it's more sensitive, set the frame for cultural respect, trauma-informed practices, make it accessible, adjust the material, make spaces feel inclusive, elevate differences, and offer suggestions.

When recommending the need to add culturally inclusive content for BIPOC employees to feel included, Tulip suggested, "tweak the curriculum to make it culturally inclusive." Similarly, Poppy recommended, "adjust the material and make it relevant to the group." Lily suggested to, "transform the curriculum so that it's more sensitive to the needs and values and experiences of BIPOC people." Iris validated this saying, "modify the content. See the opportunity to reapply or to bring consideration similar to trauma informed modifications that you might make with practices or how practices are introduced." She also suggested, to "bring sensitivity forward... talk about psychological safety." Moreover, Daisy recommended, "creating a sense of inclusivity as best you can in the workplace." Similarly, Dahlia stated, "make the spaces feel more inclusive and not just inclusive in name but really in spirit." Furthermore, Peonny recommended to "change wording in the curriculum or the title of the class. You've got to name it something important."

Amplify BIPOC Voices. 58% of participants also suggested amplifying BIPOC voices as a recommendation they would make to ensure BIPOC employees feel included. Based on the 28 answers offered, seven (26%) of the responses referenced highlighting and putting an emphasis on BIPOC voices to ensure BIPOC employees feel included. The common phrases and inputs

tied to amplifying BIPOC voices encompassed the following: give BIPOC permission, remember BIPOC voices matter, don't bring in more white teachers, highlight BIPOC mindfulness apps, acknowledge lived experiences BIPOC have in corporations, need more BIPOC teachers, invite comments from BIPOC, pull in the wisdom of BIPOC, explicitly name that experiences are different for BIPOC, and make sure every voice is heard.

When recommending the need to amplify BIPOC voices for BIPOC employees to feel included, Lily said, "there needs to be more BIPOC teachers. I've heard many times when I have offered BIPOC mindfulness classes and retreats, that they feel very different than when they're offered by white teachers." Similarly, Poppy stated, "there needs to be more of a spotlight on Black practitioners to show that it's just not for white people." Daisy agreed and recommended "pulling in like the voice of the wisdom of BIPOC people" as well as "privileging the comments and inviting the comments of people of color." Tulip validated this and suggested to "put BIPOC meditation apps like shine, like liberate, at the top of the list, instead of these other apps."

Nurture Curiosity. Based on the participants' answers to IQ9, another prevalent recommendation BIPOC mindfulness professionals would make to ensure BIPOC employees feel included was to nurture curiosity. Based on the 28 answers offered, six (21%) of the responses (50% of participants) recommended nurturing curiosity by being curious, asking questions, and using the opportunity to learn about BIPOC to ensure BIPOC employees feel included. The common phrases and inputs tied to nurture curiosity encompassed the following: be more engaged with BIPOC, have multiple conversations, change doesn't happen overnight, have to do the work, get awareness, embody the recommendation, don't assume BIPOC are monolith, name your identities and the limitations, try what works for you, don't make assumptions, understand that it's filtered through your body identity, be open to learning from

participants, track your own reactivity, do the work to manage your nervous system, try what works for you, tap into people's strengths and talents, more emphasis on seeing employees, don't try to convince or convert, leadership should engage in difficult conversations, and ask questions.

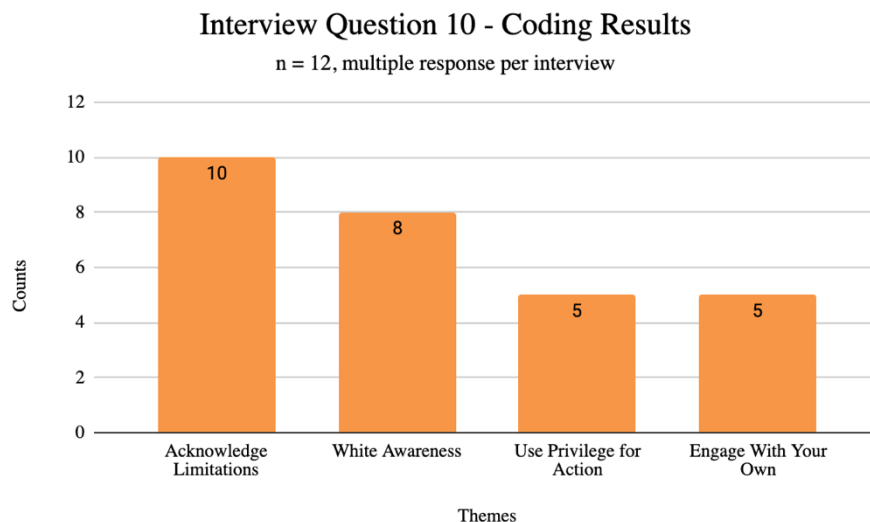
When recommending the need to nurture curiosity for BIPOC employees to feel included, Lavender simply stated, "don't make assumptions." Iris agreed and suggested to "be open to learning from participants." Similarly, Peonny recommended, "ask questions. Be more engaged with BIPOC to find out about them." Similarly, Dahlia acknowledged, " leadership needs to ask questions" and said, "don't assume employees are a monolith." Furthermore, Rose suggested, "don't try to command an outcome" and recommended to "use discernment and not judgment... curiosity and not certainty."

Interview Question 10

IQ10 asked, what advice would you give a white mindfulness professional interested in working with BIPOC employees around issues of racial stressors? The interview responses to IQ10 were analyzed and derived a total of 28 responses regarding the advice BIPOC mindfulness professionals would give to white mindfulness professionals working around issues of racial stress. The replies were categorized into four corresponding themes. The themes that emerged were: (a) acknowledge limitations, (b) white awareness, (c) use privilege for action, and (d) engage with your own (see Figure 13).

Figure 13

Coding Results for Interview Question 10



Note. This figure demonstrates the most prevalent responses for the advice BIPOC mindfulness professionals would give to white professionals working with BIPOC employees around racial stress. This bar chart highlights the four most common themes that emerged from participants' responses to IQ10. The data displayed is in descending order of frequency. Each number in the orange column represents the number of participants that contributed to each theme.

Acknowledge Limitations. Based on the participants' answers to IQ10, the first and most prevalent response regarding the advice BIPOC mindfulness professionals would give to white professionals working with BIPOC employees around racial stress was to acknowledge your limitations. Based on the 28 answers offered, 10 (36%) of the responses (83% of participants) said that understanding and acknowledging your identity and limitations was advice they would give to white mindfulness professionals. The common phrases and inputs tied to acknowledge limitations encompassed the following: acknowledge that you don't understand, understand you don't know racial stressors, can't expect a white person with no understanding of BIPOC history to help, don't do the work if you're not equipped, be mindful of your intentions, you don't have

the lived experience, acknowledge the absurdity, recognize it will be incomplete, it's something you don't have, be honest about what you don't know, and understand you don't have their experience.

When describing the need to acknowledge limitations as advice she would give a white mindfulness professional interested in working with BIPOC employees around issues of racial stressors, Poppy said, “they need to acknowledge that they don't understand” and suggested to “just understanding that you don't know or you don't understand racial stressors.” Primrose said, “you are not equipped to. You don't have the lived experience.” Similarly, Lotus stated, “white people don't know the history, so they have no context... part of it is knowing what is yours to do and do that, and letting other people do what they do.” Lavender advised “being really aware of what they don't know... actually, take time to acknowledge the absurdity of being in the position.” Furthermore, Dahlia recommended to “recognize that what you offer can be helpful, but it will be incomplete, because you don't live in a black body.”

White Awareness. Based on the participants' answers to IQ10, the second most prevalent advice BIPOC mindfulness professionals would give to white professionals working with BIPOC employees around racial stress was to become aware and understand your whiteness instead. Based on the 28 answers offered, eight (29%) of the responses (67% of participants) said that learning about your whiteness and history of privilege was advice they would give to white mindfulness professionals. The common phrases and inputs tied to white awareness encompassed the following: BIPOC teachers shouldn't have to tell you what to do, you need to grow yourself, learn about racialized trauma, be conscious of white privilege, be aware impact on BIPOC, understand the history of whiteness, understand how BIPOC have been oppressed, be aware shame or guilt about racism, look at the ways they manifest white fragility, commit to

ongoing training that's sensitive to BIPOC, consider any resistance that arise, work on regulating your own body and heart, opportunity to learn, investigate your biases, do your own learning, and do personal work.

When describing white awareness and the need to understand your whiteness as advice she would give a white mindfulness professional, Iris suggested to "be open to learning. Consider what resistance or questions may arise." Lotus said, "start with education. Learn what you can do from a genuine authentic place. You need to learn about racialized trauma." Similarly, Primrose recommended "learn and understand racialized trauma because it's white people that created it." Tulip validated this saying, "do your own learning. Unpack how your people create racial stress." Furthermore, Lily advised, "understand the history of whiteness and how they benefit from it. Understand how BIPOC have been oppressed and marginalized. She explained that she would "encourage them to use their mindfulness skills to bring awareness to the ways in which shame, and denial, and guilt about racism is living within them" as well as "encourage them to take a 'wide awake' or one of these other trainings in white awareness and white privilege."

Use Privilege for Action. Based on the participants' answers to IQ10, the third most prevalent response regarding the advice BIPOC mindfulness professionals would give to white professionals working with BIPOC employees around racial stress was to use your privilege for action instead. Based on the 28 answers offered, five (18%) of the responses, 42% of participants said that using your privilege for action was advice they would give to white mindfulness professionals. The common phrases and inputs tied to using privilege for action encompassed the following: do the work of dismantling white supremacy, own your privilege, ask how to be an ally, build trust, dismantle the privilege, help transform systems, bring issues to the surface, tell

whoever put them in the position to find a BIPOC facilitator, challenge your worldview, learn what you can do from a genuine authentic place, refer out, uplift the BIPOC colleagues, contract it out, make the space for BIPOC, and collaborate with BIPOC teachers.

When describing the need to use privilege for action as advice she would give a white mindfulness professional, Iris said, "take some other action instead. You need to challenge your worldview... develop a BIPOC sensitivity lens." Rose advised white mindfulness professionals to "use your privilege to dismantle the privilege, that's what you can do... help to transform systems and structures." Similarly, Primrose said, "do the work of dismantling white supremacy and white supremacy culture and the intergenerational trauma of whiteness inside of their bodies." She gave an example of using privilege to take action saying, "make the space for BIPOC to do this work instead... uplift the work of your BIPOC colleagues." Orchid also advised white mindfulness professionals to "celebrate and amplify BIPOC voices you've heard." Lavender validated this suggestion saying, "tell whoever put them in the position to find a BIPOC facilitator."

Engage With Your Own. 42% of participants also mentioned that they would advise white professionals working with BIPOC employees around racial stress is to engage with your own people instead. Based on the 28 answers offered, five (18%) of the responses mentioned that engaging and talking to other white people about racial stress instead of BIPOC would be advice that they would give to white mindfulness professionals. The common phrases and inputs tied to engage with your own encompassed the following: they need to be in community among themselves, do work with other white people, develop practices for white people to come together, they should help other white people, that work is actually for all white people do

together, it's not my job to educate you, discuss it with other white people, and talk to people who look like you.

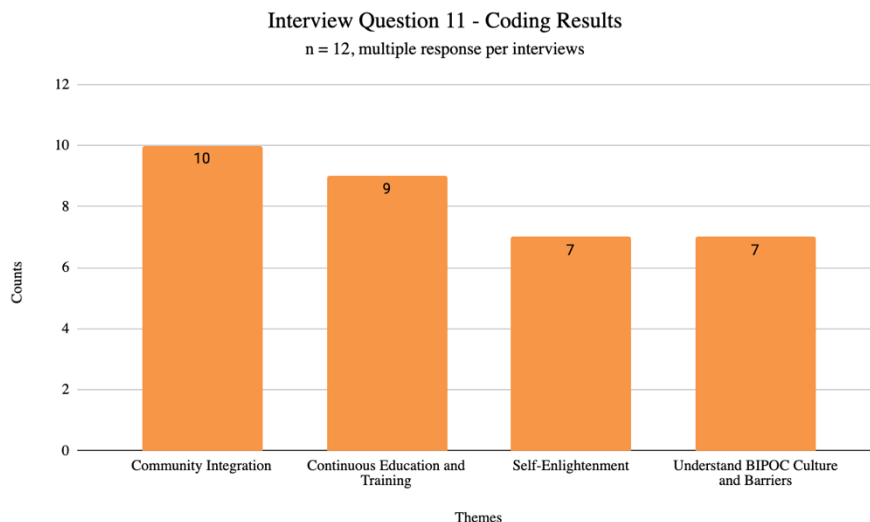
When describing the need to engage with your own as advice she would give a white mindfulness professional, Dahlia stated, “you can help your people... that work is actually for all of you to do.” Similarly, Rose said, “you need to be talking to people who look like you and helping to transform the privilege.” Lily alluded to this and recommended that white mindfulness professionals “need to be in community among themselves.” Tulip validated this saying, “they should discuss it with other white people.” Furthermore, Primrose suggested, “you can do work with other white people... develop practices for white people to come together.”

Interview Question 11

IQ11 asked, how can mindfulness professionals acquire the skill to develop culturally attuned mindfulness for BIPOC? The interview responses to IQ11 were analyzed and derived a total of 33 responses regarding the skills mindfulness professionals can acquire to develop culturally attuned mindfulness curriculums and programs. The replies were categorized into four corresponding themes. The themes that emerged were: (a) community integration, (b) continuous education and training, (c) self-enlightenment, and (d) understand BIPOC culture and barriers (see Figure 14).

Figure 14

Coding Results for Interview Question 11



Note. This figure demonstrates the most prevalent responses regarding the skills BIPOC mindfulness professionals can acquire to develop culturally attuned mindfulness for BIPOC employees. This bar chart highlights the four most common themes that emerged from participants' responses to IQ11. The data displayed is in descending order of frequency. Each number in the orange column represents the number of participants that contributed to each theme.

Community Integration. The most prevalent response regarding the skills needed to begin to culturally attune mindfulness for BIPOC employees was to engage in community integration. Based on the 33 answers offered, 10 (30%) of the responses (83% of participants) referenced community integration and having immersive experiences with BIPOC would be the skills mindfulness professionals needed. The common phrases and inputs tied to community integration encompassed the following: sessions for BIPOC practitioners to come together, have conversations, proximity to someone with experience, share among ourselves, talk and help each other, get to know BIPOC, be in community with other BIPOC, come together, follow

researchers and uplift their work, get better insight and allow that to inform how you show up, and ask other BIPOC.

When describing community integration as a skill needed to develop culturally attuned mindfulness for BIPOC, Daisy said mindfulness professional should, “Collaborate with your BIPOC colleagues” to learn the necessary skills. Tulip validated this saying, “there’s much work to do. You should collaborate with a BIPOC.” Orchid recommended, “you have to make an effort and take time to get to know BIPOC people, getting to hear their stories.” Similarly, Lotus advised, “you have to engage and take in BIPOC people and the culture and the process of being.” Moreover, Dahlia stated, “find BIPOC doing this work and link up with them.” Primrose agreed saying, “it's important to be in a community of other BIPOC practitioners who are asking the same question because there is no one answer to this question.” She also recommended mindfulness professionals “be led by leaders in the space, who have been doing this work.” Peonny validated this stating, “proximity. You want proximity to someone that has the experience or is at the next level.”

Continuous Education and Training. Based on the participants' answers to IQ11, the second most prevalent skill needed to culturally attune mindfulness for BIPOC employees was to participate in continuous education and training. Based on the 33 answers offered, nine (27%) of the responses (75% of participants) referenced acquiring continuous education and training as a necessary skill needed to culturally attune mindfulness. The common phrases and inputs tied to continuous education and training encompassed the following: develop and build on analysis, constant education, do research, understand definitions, create different ways to introduce it, take all the courses you can, do extra research, look for decolonizing classes, study, read detailed

books on mindfulness and philosophy, develop cultural competence, find trainings, dig to find resources, cultural competency training, find spaces to learn, and get educated.

When describing continuous education and training as a skill needed to develop culturally attuned mindfulness for BIPOC, Poppy stated, "take classes where you can. Develop and keep building on analysis." Orchid validated this saying, "You have to take time to study. Find root sources and go from there." Similarly, Iris said, "do research. Learn to create different ways to introduce it." Moreover, Dahlia advised, "take all the courses you can. Look for decolonizing classes. Find trainings." She admitted, "I'm always looking for a mindfulness class for black people, mindfulness classes for people of color, decolonizing therapy classes." Daisy agreed and added, "attend trainings. You have to have developed some degree of cultural competence." Furthermore, Rose advised, "I think it's important for mindfulness teachers to also go through cultural competency training."

Self-Enlightenment. Based on the participants' answers to IQ11, the third most prevalent skill needed to culturally attune mindfulness for BIPOC employees was self-enlightenment. Based on the 33 answers offered, seven (21%) of the responses (58% of participants) referenced self-enlightenment as skill mindfulness professionals constantly need to culturally attune mindfulness. The common phrases and inputs tied to self-enlightenment encompassed the following: do the personal work, develop the mindset that it's a way of being, embody their practice, use your practice in your own self-development, stay humble, it's a lifelong practice, be patient, develop self-awareness, develop a commitment to this, it requires constant self-study, be skillful, try your best, find your niche, be authentic, expand your consciousness, and do your own deep work.

When describing self-enlightenment as a skill needed to develop culturally attuned mindfulness for BIPOC, Lotus stated, “you have to find that lane from an authentic and humble place.” Iris validated this and recommended that mindfulness professionals should “work to bring your authenticity forward.” Tulip agreed stating, “There’s much work to do internally. You have to do your deep work.” Moreover, Daisy advised mindfulness professionals to “do your personal work. Expand your consciousness and get aware.” Similarly, Lily said, “develop awareness of self with all of its myriad facets, including class identity, racial identity, cultural life identity, etcetera.” She admitted, “I would want mindfulness teachers to be developing a commitment to this being a way of being and not a tool that they're using; but a way of being.” Furthermore, Primrose said, “it requires constant self-study. It requires practice. We actually have to feel our way through this in our own bodies.”

Understand BIPOC Culture and Barriers. 58% of participants also mentioned understanding BIPOC culture and barriers were skills needed to culturally attune mindfulness for BIPOC employees. Based on the 33 answers offered, seven (21%) of the responses referenced understanding BIPOC culture and the barriers BIPOC encounter would also be a necessary skill that mindfulness professionals need. The common phrases and inputs tied to understanding barriers encompassed the following: BIPOC don't have the same experience, don't assume you know, include current events related to them, understand systems of oppression, relate to your population, learn about different cultures, speak about experiences, be mindful of who you're serving, align it with ancestral ways of practicing, and filter to make it meaningful.

When explaining that mindfulness professionals need to understand BIPOC culture and barriers to develop culturally attuned mindfulness for BIPOC, Poppy said, "understand the different types of people within a race. BIPOC don't all have the same experience." Orchid stated

they should "know what gets in certain people's way. Understand how mindfulness can support certain people. Understand how they conceptualize it." Similarly, Daisy advised, "have access to an understanding of the way systems of oppression conspire to keep people down and lift others up." Moreover, Peonny recommended, "always be mindful of who you're serving. Use what is going on to relate to your population." Rose validated this saying, "speak about experiences to inform... to help shed light on what they are. Sprinkle examples of BIPOC experiences throughout." Lavender acknowledged this and recommended, "consider current events related to them. Also consider that BIPOC historical experiences have been traumatic."

Summary of Research Question Three

Research question three aimed to understand BIPOC consultants' recommendations to other mindfulness professionals who are interested in incorporating diversity and culture. A total of 16 themes were identified by analyzing phrases, viewpoints, or responses from IQ8, IQ9, IQ10, and IQ11. The 16 themes identified were as follows: (a) implementation strategies, (b) benefits have ripple effects, (c) power to transform workplaces, (d) tips for organizational structures, (e) understand sociocultural issues, (f) culturally inclusive content, (g) amplify BIPOC voices, (h) nurture curiosity, (i) acknowledge limitations, (j) white awareness, (k) use privilege for action, (l) engage with your own, (m) community integration, (n) continuous education and training, (o) self-enlightenment, and (p) understand BIPOC culture and barriers. Table 4 summarizes the 16 themes derived from research question 3.

Table 4*Summary of Themes for Research Question Three*

Research Question Three What recommendations do BIPOC mindfulness consultants make to other mindfulness professionals who want to incorporate diversity-related themes in their mindfulness consultations?				
IQ8	Implementation Strategies	Benefits Have Ripple Effects	Power to Transform Workplaces	Tips for Organizational Structures
IQ9	Understand Sociocultural Issues	Culturally Inclusive Content	Amplify BIPOC Voices	Nurture Curiosity
IQ10	Acknowledge Limitations	White Awareness	Use Privilege for Action	Engage With Your Own
IQ11	Community Integration	Continuous Education and Training	Self-Enlightenment	Understand BIPOC Culture and Barriers
<i>Note.</i> This table represents a summary of the themes derived from Research Question Three.				

Chapter Four Summary

This study examined the experiences and perspectives of BIPOC mindfulness consultants who implement mindfulness in workplace settings. The aim of the research was to understand BIPOC mindfulness consultants' unique experience of implementing mindfulness at work, their perspectives of BIPOC employee inclusion within mindfulness curricula, and their recommendations to ensure diversity and culture are incorporated within mindfulness programs in the workplace. The purpose of the study was achieved by recruiting 12 participants who have experience implementing mindfulness in workplace settings. The participants were asked 11 open-ended questions with the goal of exploring the following three research questions:

- RQ1: What cultural challenges are experienced by BIPOC mindfulness professionals in their work?
- RQ2: To what extent (if at all) are the experiences of BIPOC employees reflected in the mindfulness curriculums and programs?
- RQ3: What recommendations do BIPOC mindfulness professionals make to other mindfulness specialists who want to incorporate cultural themes in their mindfulness programs?

The data for this study was gathered by utilizing 11 semi-structured interview questions. I used the interview questions to facilitate interviews with participants. After completing each interview, I transcribed and coded the data. Each interview question was then categorized into themes. I relied on an inter-rater review process to validate the results of the codes and themes. Moreover, the data analysis process utilized the phenomenological approach noted in Chapter 3. The data yielded a total of 42 themes. Table 5 summarizes the themes derived from the data analysis process. Chapter 5 elaborates on the themes with a discussion of the results associated with each research question. Furthermore, Chapter 5 includes the implications of the study, recommendations, and conclusion on the study.

Table 5*Summary of Themes for Three Research Questions*

RQ1 What diversity-related challenges are experienced by BIPOC mindfulness consultants in their work?	RQ2 To what extent (if at all) are the experiences of BIPOC employees reflected in the mindfulness curriculum and program?	RQ3 What recommendations do BIPOC mindfulness consultants make to other mindfulness professionals who want to incorporate diversity-related themes in their mindfulness consultations?
Negative Encounters	Absence of Attention	Implementation Strategies
Lack of Diversity	Rise of Inclusivity	Benefits Have Ripple Effects
Proven Leadership	Absence of Culture	Power to Transform Workplaces
New Demand for BIPOC	Curriculum Evolution	Tips for Organizational Structures
Reflection of White Dominated Society	Disconnected Themes	Understand Sociocultural Issues
Lack of Sense of Belonging	Sensitive Topic	Modify Program to Be Inclusive
Discriminatory Actions		Amplify BIPOC Voices
Fatigue from Overperforming		Nurture Curiosity
Skepticism		Acknowledge Limitations
Religious Conflict		White Awareness
Lack of Connection		Use Privilege for Action

RQ1 What diversity-related challenges are experienced by BIPOC mindfulness consultants in their work?	RQ2 To what extent (if at all) are the experiences of BIPOC employees reflected in the mindfulness curriculum and program?	RQ3 What recommendations do BIPOC mindfulness consultants make to other mindfulness professionals who want to incorporate diversity-related themes in their mindfulness consultations?
Inclusive Naming		Engage With Your Own
Create Safe Space		Community Integration
Authentic Conversations		Continuous Education and Training
McMindfulness		Self-Enlightenment
Time and Budget Constraints		Understand BIPOC Culture and Barriers
Lack of Systemic Change		
Engage in Difficult Conversations		
Emphasize Benefits with Data		
Offer Flexible and Accessible Options		
<i>Note.</i> This table represents a summary of all the themes derived through the data analysis process.		

Chapter Five: Conclusions and Recommendations

This study addressed the need to decolonize and integrate culture into mindfulness curriculums and programs in workplace settings. The purpose of this study was to understand BIPOC mindfulness professionals' unique experience of implementing mindfulness in workplace settings, their perspectives on BIPOC employee inclusion within mindfulness curriculums in workplaces, and their recommendations to ensure cultural themes are incorporated. The outcome of this study provides insights and strategies that can assist in developing mindfulness programs for workplaces that include BIPOC culture and experiences. The insights derived from the study describe the challenges and wisdom mindfulness professionals should understand when working with BIPOC in organizations.

Summary of the Study

This qualitative, phenomenological study examined BIPOC mindfulness professionals' experience of implementing mindfulness in workplace settings, their perspectives of BIPOC employee inclusion within mindfulness curricula and programming in workplaces, and their recommendations to ensure culture and diversity-related themes are incorporated. The study examined the lived experiences of BIPOC mindfulness professionals who implement mindfulness in workplace settings. In this study, a mindfulness professional is defined as a professional who incorporates a minimum of 50% of mindfulness components in their work consultations. The research methods implemented in this study were utilized to achieve the objectives of this qualitative phenomenological study, which was to answer the following three research questions:

- RQ1: What cultural challenges are experienced by BIPOC mindfulness professionals in their work?
- RQ2: To what extent (if at all) are the experiences of BIPOC employees reflected in the mindfulness curriculums and programs?
- RQ3: What recommendations do BIPOC mindfulness professionals make to other mindfulness specialists who want to incorporate cultural themes in their mindfulness programs?

The recruitment of participants for this study occurred via email through a snowballing method. The study sample consisted of 12 mindfulness professionals who identify as BIPOC and have experience implementing mindfulness in workplace settings. The participants for this study met the following criteria: identified as BIPOC, which includes Black, Latino, Asian, Native American/American Indian, Middle Eastern, or Arab American; had experience implementing mindfulness programs within organizational settings; incorporates a minimum of 50% of mindfulness components in their work consultation; was between the ages of 30 and 80 years; has had training or education in mindfulness; lives within the United States of America; responded and agreed to participate in the study; and agreed to be audio or video recorded.

A semi-structured interview protocol was used for this research study, where 11 interview questions were open-ended to allow me to explore responses further. Each interview question was associated with each of the research questions. To confirm the accuracy of this qualitative study, the following three-step validation process was utilized: *prima facie* validity, peer-review validity, and expert review. Additionally, a pilot interview was conducted to support reliability. All the interviews were audio recorded and transcribed using Microsoft Word. Once the interviews were transcribed, the data was analyzed, coded into categories, and placed into

recurring themes. As outlined in Chapter 3, an interrater review process where two graduate students evaluated the codes and themes was also utilized to ensure the reliability and validity of the results. Following the coding of each interview and the evaluation of themes using the interrater review process, I concluded the findings by creating 11 bar graphs that outlined the reoccurring and most prevalent responses.

Summary of Research Findings

The findings of this study sought to identify the pitfalls, barriers, recommendations, and most effective strategies for implementing culturally attuned mindfulness in workplace settings that enhance BIPOC employee inclusion. It was evident the BIPOC mindfulness professionals who participated in this study had a passion for mindfulness and a willingness to help enhance BIPOC inclusion within mindfulness research, pedagogy, and practice. All participants were engaged and provided meaningful responses that contributed to the data by answering the 11 semi-structured interview questions corresponding to each research question. The data analysis resulted in a total of 42 themes. This section provides a summary of the findings that emerged after analyzing the data from the interview questions. An explanation with key findings related to the three research questions will be presented. The findings will also be linked to the scholarly literature to determine if the results align with and contribute to the existing literature on mindfulness in the workplace, specifically for BIPOC.

Discussion of Key Findings

The findings from this research seek to contribute a greater understanding and knowledge of decolonizing mindfulness curriculums and programs to be more culturally attuned. The section below offers a comprehensive evaluation of the themes developed from the interview questions associated with each research question. The data was cross-referenced with existing

literature on mindfulness and racial stressors at work to determine if there is alignment or contradictions with existing literature.

Results for RQ1

The first research question (RQ1) asked, what cultural challenges are experienced by BIPOC mindfulness professionals in their work? An evaluation of the themes from IQ1 through IQ4 indicated the challenges experienced by BIPOC mindfulness professionals when implementing mindfulness programs in the workplace and concluded the following:

- Although there is a lack of diversity, there has been a new and sudden demand for BIPOC mindfulness professionals.
- BIPOC employees encounter a handful of challenges when implementing mindfulness in workplace settings, including negative encounters, discriminatory actions, a reflection of a white-dominated society, fatigue from overperforming, and a lack of a sense of belonging in workplaces.
- BIPOC mindfulness professionals have encountered religious conflict, skepticism, and a lack of connection. They overcome these cultural and societal dilemmas by using inclusive naming, creating a safe space, and having authentic conversations.
- McMindfulness, time and budget constraints, and a lack of systemic change impact BIPOC mindfulness professionals' ability to effectively implement mindfulness at work. They address these pitfalls and barriers by offering flexible and accessible options, emphasizing benefits with data, and engaging in difficult conversations.

Discussion of RQ1

The results of RQ1 conclude that there is a lack of diversity among mindfulness professionals. Participants described the field as being dominated by white people, very white,

and male-dominated. Participants mentioned that there are not many BIPOC mindfulness professionals and even fewer who implement mindfulness within workplaces. The participants said the community of BIPOC mindfulness professionals is pretty small. Participants stated that all of their training was by white people, the teachers were primarily white, and the training was missing things from their experience. This theme is aligned with existing literature that demonstrates that the mindfulness industry is predominantly white (Proulx et al., 2018; Woods-Giscombé & Black, 2010). White people are often the majority of participants in mindfulness research, and practices are geared toward white European ideologies (DeLuca et al., 2018; Watson et al., 2016).

The workplace is unsafe for BIPOC professionals due to the myriad of stressors they often encounter. BIPOC mindfulness professionals have observed and experienced many challenges, dilemmas, and pitfalls when implementing mindfulness in workplace settings. Individuals from the BIPOC community often encounter harmful and discriminatory actions and many stressors and stereotypes in the workplace. These findings are consistent with research that shows BIPOC professionals often face discrimination, inequality, and hostile environments at work (Emerson & Murphy, 2014; Plaut et al., 2014; Offermann et al., 2014). Participants described observing microaggressions, implicit and explicit biases, and tokenism. This agrees with the literature on the impact of discrimination at work, stating BIPOC experience additional stressors at work, including microaggressions and unconscious bias. Unconscious biases are assumptions people hold about members of other communities that are hidden under the surface (Moore, 2018). Unconscious biases may have an impact on BIPOC workers' interactions, workplace culture, and opportunities for growth. A participant disclosed observing BIPOC being labeled as standoffish if they are direct instead of passive. This participant described how this

label led to people at work categorizing a woman who identifies as BIPOC as the ‘angry black woman.’ Stereotype threat occurs when people have persistent thoughts of living up to a bad stereotype, and as a result, they become obsessed with disproving the stereotype (Steele, 1997). This threat arises when pervasive negative misconceptions about a person's mental or physical capabilities are spread. Stereotype threat may harm BIPOC’s performance if they feel others judge them (Steele, 1997).

BIPOC employees often work in spite of their pain and heavy emotional labor. Participants mentioned BIPOC experiencing burnout and fatigue because they often work harder than their white peers, but they diminish and minimize their fatigue to still overperform. The results are aligned with existing literature that rationalizes BIPOC employees' striving to work harder to avoid or overcome possible discriminatory beliefs (Eagly & Chin, 2010; Sue et al., 2007). BIPOC professionals often feel compelled to overachieve at work to uphold high standards because they fear appearing unqualified or incapable (Eagly & Chin, 2010; Sue et al., 2007).

Participants described observing a sense of belonging for BIPOC in workplaces. Participants mentioned that individuals from the BIPOC community feel the workplace can sometimes be an unsafe place because they believe their abilities are being negated. Participants state BIPOC employees are often not listened to, and their ideas are not applied. This agrees with the literature on BIPOC invisibility in the workplace stating BIPOC may feel undervalued or overlooked in their work environments (Franklin et al., 2006). According to Franklin et al. (2006), invisibility syndrome emerges from constantly feeling overlooked or rejected.

Multiple participants stated BIPOC employees do not feel seen and often feel the need to adapt to the mainstream, which diminishes their confidence. These findings align with the

research on covering, stating BIPOC employees tend to mask or conform to align with the dominant culture. Covering, sometimes described as assimilation, represents BIPOC individuals toning down their identity to blend in with the white American culture (Yoshino, 2002). According to Mor Barak (1999), BIPOC employees compromise their values and authenticity when covering.

BIPOC mindfulness professionals described the workplace as a representation of the white-dominated society we live in and a reflection of white supremacy in our society. The participants plainly stated that the system is systemic, corporate sectors were never designed to support BIPOC, and the policies and procedures are still controlled by the white culture.

In addition, participants observed that managers and executives are primarily white, most people that hold power are still majority white men, and the highest positions in corporations tend not to be BIPOC. These findings are in agreement with research that shows BIPOC employees remain invisible in corporate leadership roles in America (Agovino, 2021; US BLS, 2022). Participants described seeing a lot of favoritism for white people, white people trying to gate-keep BIPOC from reaching higher-level positions. This also relates to the literature on leadership discrepancies between white individuals and BIPOC professionals discussed in Chapter Two. It is noted that white people continue to occupy leadership positions at staggering rates. White individuals dominating leadership positions is an organizational phenomenon that creates hierarchies within workplaces (Elsaas & Graves, 1997). The notion of ‘good leadership’ is associated with being white (Khattab et al., 2020), which represents the dominant group within organizations. Khattab et al. (2020) note that this concept of ‘good leadership’ prevents BIPOC from obtaining higher-level leadership positions.

The cultural and societal dilemmas that BIPOC mindfulness professionals have encountered include a fear of religious conflict, skepticism, and a lack of connection. Regarding fear of religious conflict, participants mentioned that people try to make it religious or associate it with a specific religion. Participants stated that there is a fear that mindfulness goes against or runs counter to people's belief systems. According to a few participants, the BIPOC community is heavily invested in religion therefore, mindfulness is a taboo topic with BIPOC. This aligns with research stating mindfulness may not resonate with BIPOC due to its association with Buddhism and the perception that it conflicts with their religious beliefs. BIPOC may believe mindfulness is similar to worshipping a false god (Davis et al., 2019; Woods-Giscombé & Gaylord, 2014).

Regarding skepticism around mindfulness in BIPOC communities as a dilemma, participants mentioned that there is some resistance and hesitation due to misconceptions in the BIPOC community. This agrees with the literature stating some employees may be reluctant to practice mindfulness due to their skepticism. Wylson (2016) notes some employees perceive mindfulness as a vague or new-age skill, leading to skepticism about its workplace relevance. Such reservations can pose cultural barriers, making employees hesitant to practice mindfulness during work hours. This skepticism, combined with a lack of clarity about its benefits and integration (Adams et al., 2016; Wylson, 2016), may cause resistance among both staff and leaders to adopt mindfulness practices.

Regarding the lack of connection as a barrier, participants mentioned individuals from the BIPOC community often feel a lack of connection to the mindfulness content and teacher. This aligns with research stating mindfulness programs and practices in America are Westernized and representative of the predominately white European culture and colonized society we live in.

Scholars have started conversations regarding concerns about the compatibility and relevance of mindfulness with BIPOC (DeLuca et al., 2018; Sobczak & West, 2013; Spears et al., 2017; Woods-Giscombé & Black, 2010). BIPOC participants in mindfulness programs are not quite "present" due to a lack of connection (Prolx et al., 2018). Blum (2014) insists that if a white mindfulness teacher is unaware of the systemic injustices BIPOC employees face, there may be a significant disconnect between the teacher and BIPOC participants. Moreover, if BIPOC do not think there is a cultural connection between mindfulness practices and their own cultural beliefs, they are more likely to discontinue or withdraw from mindfulness programs and training (Blum, 2014).

BIPOC professionals overcome these dilemmas by creating a safe space and having authentic conversations and transparency by sharing their personal journey and using inclusive naming by changing the wording. Regarding inclusive naming, multiple participants suggested mindfulness professionals should change the language and use language familiar to the group. It was stressed that what you title the mindfulness program impacts BIPOC attendance. For example, a few participants recommend calling it “silent sitting” instead.

Participants noted McMindfulness as the main pitfall or barrier they encounter when implementing mindfulness in corporations. The McMindfulness effect describes how mindfulness has been commercialized (Kim, 2018) and is now a trend. They described how businesses often use mindfulness as a goal to make employees more effective, how they are only interested so employees are more productive, and how corporations use mindfulness as a management tool rather than a resource for employees' healing. These results align with the literature discussed in the critiques of mindfulness on McMindfulness. Instead of promoting the individual fulfillment and healing that mindfulness leads to, McMindfulness emphasizes the

benefits of mindfulness for employees at work (Purser & Loy, 2013). The majority of participants reported that businesses only support mindfulness at work only if it aligns with the bottom line. With McMindfulness, corporations have an underlying goal of increasing employee productivity and ultimately improving the business's bottom line (Purser & Loy, 2013). The McMindfulness effect causes organizations to look at mindfulness as just a wellness program or as a panacea for everything.

BIPOC mindfulness participants also described time and budget constraints as barriers that impact their ability to effectively implement mindfulness at work. Participants described business concerns such as organizations not having the budget for it, putting mindfulness into an ROI, and corporations being concerned about the time mindfulness programs would take. These results relate to the literature on the time intensiveness that some mindfulness programs require. Mindfulness programs may not always be suitable for the workplace. People often believe mindfulness programs take a substantial amount of time (Klatt et al., 2009). Woods-Giscombe and Gaylord (2014) acknowledged that MBSR is often the most replicated mindfulness training. Unfortunately, MBSR requires significant time and commitment. Moreover, these findings align with the literature stating the cost of mindfulness programs and training may deter businesses interested in implementing mindfulness. Magee (2016) explains that mindfulness programs may be inaccessible due to the expensive cost of classes.

The final conclusion from RQ1 is that the lack of systemic change happening within corporations after implementing mindfulness programs is a pitfall BIPOC mindfulness professionals encounter. Participants described offering a mindfulness class but being unsure if it leads to systems change within the organization. Multiple participants discussed how people are not searching for the root cause or acknowledging the structure and system we live in.

Unfortunately, many participants believe that systemic issues within workplaces are still not being addressed.

BIPOC mindfulness professionals address these pitfalls and barriers by offering flexible and accessible options, reframing people's minds by emphasizing the benefits of mindfulness with data and articulating their feelings by engaging in difficult conversations.

Results for RQ2

The second research question (RQ2) inquired, to what extent (if at all) are the experiences of BIPOC employees reflected in the mindfulness curriculum and program? An evaluation of the themes from IQ5 through IQ7 indicated the perspectives of professionals regarding whether BIPOC employees are reflected in the mindfulness curriculum and programs implemented in workplace settings and concluded the following:

- There is an absence of attention given to BIPOC employees in the curriculum and programming implemented in workplace settings, though there is a rise of inclusivity happening.
- The mindfulness curriculums and programs implemented in workplace settings have an absence of culture, but the curriculum is evolving.
- Diversity, inclusion, and race-related themes are sensitive topics for workplaces therefore, they are currently disconnected and not integrated into mindfulness curriculums and programs implemented at work.

Discussion of RQ2

The results of RQ2 conclude that the experiences of BIPOC employees are unfortunately not reflected in the mindfulness curriculum and program. The majority of BIPOC professionals believe there is an absence of attention given to BIPOC employees in the curriculum and

programming that is implemented in workplace settings. Participants expressed that they have not seen too many mindfulness curriculums or programs in workplaces that give attention to the BIPOC community. This is consistent with research noting mindfulness is not typically designed for BIPOC. The majority of Americans who participate in mindfulness research are white, non-minority people (Watson et al., 2016; DeLuca et al., 2018); therefore, mindfulness techniques and programs are often tailored for this group.

Moreover, the results from RQ2 concluded that the mindfulness curriculums and programs implemented in workplace settings have an absence of culture. All participants stated that the mindfulness programs they have seen in corporations are not culturally attuned, and they need to add some relevance. This also ties to the void in research that I was examining.

This agrees with the literature stating BIPOC's distinctive viewpoints and opinions have typically been left out of the conversation as mindfulness has become mainstream in America. BIPOC are often excluded from mindfulness studies and procedures, and mindfulness programs are not often created or suited for BIPOC. Similar to clinical research in health-related fields, BIPOC communities have historically been underrepresented in scholarly mindfulness studies. In America, mindfulness practice is predominantly framed within a white, upper-middle-class, educated context (Mindful Staff, 2017; Watson et al., 2016; Yang, 2017). Mindfulness programs frequently incorporate white cultural references and viewpoints (Magee, 2016; Proulx et al., 2018; Watson et al., 2016), potentially affecting its reception among BIPOC communities which negatively affects how BIPOC people perceive mindfulness. Harrell (2018) insists that BIPOC may be less receptive to the Westernized cultural portrayal of mindfulness. Therefore, it might be challenging to introduce mindfulness in its practical applications to BIPOC populations as a result.

All participants stated they are seeing more attention given to BIPOC in community setting programs, but they are not seeing that same attention given to BIPOC employees inside of organizations. This ties to the void in research I was examining and the literature on the lack of representation within workplace mindfulness programs. This supports the research that shows mindfulness programs highlighting cultural topics are being implemented in settings outside of workplaces. The development of mindfulness curricula emphasizing cultural themes is beginning to be established in community and clinical settings (Harrell, 2020; Spears et al., 2017), but these modifications have not yet been implemented in work environments. There is academic research on culturally appropriate mindfulness for BIPOC with reference to stress, prejudice, and well-being (Spears et al., 2017; Watson-Singleton et al., 2019; Woods-Giscombé & Gaylord, 2014), but not in the workplace. Few workplace mindfulness programs incorporate cultural values and perspectives.

The BIPOC mindfulness professionals noted the rise of inclusivity within mindfulness programs. They believe attention to minority communities within the programming is a new trend they are starting to see, and changes are beginning to happen. The majority of participants stated that they have recently been seeing calls for more BIPOC inclusion, so they believe the conversations about focusing on the BIPOC community will increase. The professionals also mentioned that culturally attuned mindfulness programs in work settings are a work in progress. A participant stated that mindfulness organizations are bringing more intentionality to integrating culture. They stated the curriculum is evolving, but companies are starting to make modifications and tweaks. A few more options are being given, and now mindfulness teachers are even being asked to consider cultural practices when working with particular groups. These findings are in agreement with current literature and conversations among certain mindfulness communities

insisting cultural references and voices should be more incorporated. For example, Mindfulness for the People is an organization that seeks to challenge systemic whiteness in mindfulness practices and research by centering BIPOC perspectives and knowledge (Black, 2016). This study also adds to the literature advocating for more BIPOC inclusion within the mindfulness movement.

The final conclusion from RQ2 concluded that when it comes to diversity, inclusion, and race-related themes being integrated into the curriculum, BIPOC mindfulness professionals believe they are disconnected and may be too sensitive to bring into workplaces. Participants stated that they have not seen much integration in the workplace. All participants stated they believe that diversity and race-related themes need to be talked about, but themes are not addressed in the workplace. A participant directly said that D&I in workplace settings is insufficient. All participants disclosed that mindfulness and D&I departments need to come together. This supports the theory that mindfulness can be a great help in supporting D&I initiatives. When it comes to assisting BIPOC employees with stress, mindfulness can be beneficial in promoting D&I initiatives. D&I training and mindfulness go hand in hand because mindfulness encourages employees to contemplate and get a better understanding of what they have learned and to value an inclusive workplace culture. Practicing mindfulness can reduce the biases that white people harbor (Lueke & Gibson, 2015, 2016) and can assist BIPOC in coping with racial stressors (Brown-Iannuzzi et al., 2014). D&I is widely accepted as a valuable organizational practice. Numerous studies suggest that embracing diversity in businesses improves outcomes, including enhanced creativity, innovation, profitability, problem-solving skills, and broader awareness (Cox, 2004; Thomas & Ely, 1996; Forbes, 2011; Wiley-Little, 2013; Phillips et al., 2006).

Although all of the professionals believed these themes should be integrated, they cautioned that incorporating these themes can be sensitive or overly complex for work settings. A few participants mentioned that it might be triggering because the level of discomfort would be apparent along racial lines. This agrees with research by Lueke and Gibson (2016), which acknowledges people tend to feel uncomfortable during training or discussions regarding combating racism and discrimination. Mindfulness can lay the groundwork for social justice in the workplace by addressing sensitive subjects revolving around racial issues. Mindfulness supports challenging conversations and transformation within organizations (Magee, 2016). When utilizing mindfulness as a technique for sensitive conversations, people are less likely to feel that others are imposing their own opinions on them. Mindfulness enables people to be attentive, actively listen, and respond with empathy (Magee, 2016).

Results for R3

The third research question (RQ3) asked, what recommendations do BIPOC mindfulness professionals make to other mindfulness specialists who want to incorporate cultural themes in their mindfulness programs? An evaluation of the themes from IQ8 through IQ11 indicated the recommendations BIPOC professionals would give to other mindfulness professionals who are interested in incorporating diversity and culture concluded the following:

- BIPOC mindfulness professionals shared implementation strategies, tips for teaching, and wisdom about the power of mindfulness for transforming workplaces.
- Nurture curiosity, understanding sociocultural issues, adding culturally inclusive content, and amplifying BIPOC voices are strategies to help BIPOC employees feel included.

- White mindfulness professionals should opt-out and acknowledge their identity and limitations, understand their whiteness, engage with their own, and use their privilege for action when it comes to working with the BIPOC.
- Mindfulness professionals interested in culturally attuning mindfulness curriculums and programs should understand BIPOC culture and barriers, immerse themselves within the BIPOC community, commit to self-development, and participate in continuous education and training.

Discussion of RQ3

BIPOC mindfulness professionals affirmed and shared wisdom about the power of mindfulness to transform workplaces and help businesses make a real difference. Regarding the positive impact and ripple effects mindfulness has on people in the workplace, all participants mentioned how mindfulness can be transformative for the workplace and how workplaces can be revitalized if mindfulness is implemented.

The professionals described how mindfulness helps people balance their needs with the demands of work, makes us better leaders, makes us better at our work, and overall makes us better people. Moreover, it was stated multiple times that bringing mindfulness into the workplace makes it more acceptable for some individuals.

BIPOC mindfulness professionals shared strategies to help BIPOC employees feel included, such as mindfulness professionals should remain curious and open to learning, understand sociocultural issues, add culturally inclusive content, and amplify BIPOC voices. When it comes to modifying the program and adding culturally inclusive content to ensure BIPOC employees feel included, participants recommend that mindfulness professionals use things that are relatable to the group, change the title of the class, adapt the content so it is more

sensitive to the group, consider trauma-informed modifications, and set the frame for cultural respect. This aligns with the literature and research regarding incorporating cultural themes into mindfulness curriculums. The professionals also advise changing how you teach mindfulness programs and making mindfulness classes more accessible. In regards to amplifying BIPOC voices, participants recommend that individuals should acknowledge the lived experiences BIPOC have in corporations and pull in the wisdom of people from BIPOC communities. For example, Woods-Giscombé and Gaylord (2014) recommended making a number of changes, including emphasizing the health advantages, connecting it to well-known spiritual beliefs and cultural traditions, replacing the reading material with works by Black authors, and including more Black teachers and participants.

The third conclusion from RQ3 concluded that white mindfulness professionals should opt out of working with the BIPOC community regarding diversity-related themes, especially around issues of racial stress. Instead, white mindfulness professionals should acknowledge their identity and limitations, become aware and understand their whiteness, engage with their own by talking to other white people, and use their privilege for action. Mindfulness typically takes a one-size-fits-all approach with participants. Due to wider structures of racism, such as systemic racism, where biases and stereotypes are established, this approach can reinforce discriminatory practices and ingrained biases among mindfulness teachers (Proulx et al., 2018). Although mindfulness professionals may not be conscious of the white references rooted in mindfulness, mindfulness programs are considered color-blind (Magee, 2016). Mindfulness teachers' biases can go unchecked when facilitating mindfulness programs, which creates a setting that prevents BIPOC from being fully present throughout the program. The metaphors and stories that are

used, as well as how they are addressed, may reflect the inherent biases of white mindfulness teachers.

The final conclusion from RQ3 concluded that mindfulness professionals interested in culturally attuning mindfulness curriculums and programs should understand BIPOC culture and barriers, commit to self-development and enlightenment, get informed by engaging in continuous education and training, and engage in community integration by having immersive experiences with BIPOC. Regarding understanding barriers, participants recommend mindfulness professionals should be aware of what they do not know, understand the different types of people within a race, and know what gets in BIPOC's way. Most importantly, the professionals suggest that those interested in culturally attuning mindfulness should understand systems of oppression and consider that BIPOC's historical experiences have been traumatic.

Participants suggest mindfulness professionals ask questions, do research, and get constant education. Specifically, BIPOC mindfulness professionals recommend that mindfulness professionals interested in culturally attuning mindfulness should understand definitions and read books related to mindfulness and the experience of BIPOC. Moreover, individuals in the mindfulness industry that want to modify mindfulness programs should look for decolonizing classes and attend cultural competency training. This relates to the literature on decolonization and cultural competence. Decolonization refers to the act of challenging inequalities, oppression, and white supremacy, substituting them with practices and theories rooted in minority communities (Enns et al., 2020; Mignolo, 2011; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013). Cultural competence refers to the idea that individuals from the prevailing culture should familiarize themselves with BIPOC traditions and values (Falicov, 2009). Cultural competence usually involves gaining knowledge and understanding of cultures distinct from our own. Engaging with individuals from

varied backgrounds necessitates delving into their cultural viewpoints and unique perspectives (Mayeno, 2007). Beyond adapting to diverse cultures, it's essential to address deep-rooted systemic injustices tied to factors like race, gender, and class.

Implications of the Study

The purpose of this research was to gain knowledge about the experience of BIPOC mindfulness professionals, their perspectives on BIPOC employee inclusion, and recommendations to modify mindfulness programs in organizations to be culturally attuned. As workplaces seek to become more diverse and inclusive, the study's findings can be used to encourage transformational change in workplace settings and in mindfulness organizations that train mindfulness professionals. The findings of this research revealed prominent themes and relevant implications for corporations and other mindfulness professionals.

The findings of this study may provide valuable insights regarding best practices for implementing and facilitating mindfulness programs in workplace settings. The themes from this phenomenology study demonstrated cultural and societal dilemmas encountered, strategies to overcome the dilemmas, pitfalls, or barriers to effectively implement mindfulness in organizations, and strategies to address the pitfalls and barriers. The themes from this study also revealed recommendations that are critical for ensuring BIPOC employees feel included when in mindfulness programs and recommendations for skills that are needed to develop culturally attuned mindfulness programs. The findings from this study can inform mindfulness professionals (teachers, facilitators, coaches, and practitioners) who work within corporations, researchers studying decolonized and culturally attuned mindfulness, and other stakeholders interested in developing mindfulness programming for BIPOC communities. While prior literature has suggested that mindfulness can be a liberating and empowering practice for

BIPOC, especially when diversity and cultural themes are infused into the program (Alston, 2012; Harrell, 2019; Magee, 2016; Watson et al., 2016; Woods-Giscombé & Black, 2010), this study provides best practices (strategies and recommendations) for how to enact a similar approach in workplace settings.

Implications for Practice

The data analysis from this study yielded five significant categories: (a) dilemmas encountered and strategies to overcome them, (b) pitfalls or barriers encountered at work and strategies to address them, (c) implementation strategies and suggestions, (d) recommendations to ensure BIPOC feel included, and (e) recommendations for skills needed to develop culturally attuned mindfulness program. These categories were linked to the literature on mindfulness programming and the research on culturally modified mindfulness. The Culturally Attuned Model Inclusion (CAMI) chart was developed as a visual representation of the results derived from this study (Figure 15). The CAMI chart can serve as a visual reminder of best practices for mindfulness professionals and other individuals interested in implementing mindfulness in organizations, especially for the BIPOC community.

Figure 15

The Culturally Attuned Model Inclusion (CAMI) Chart

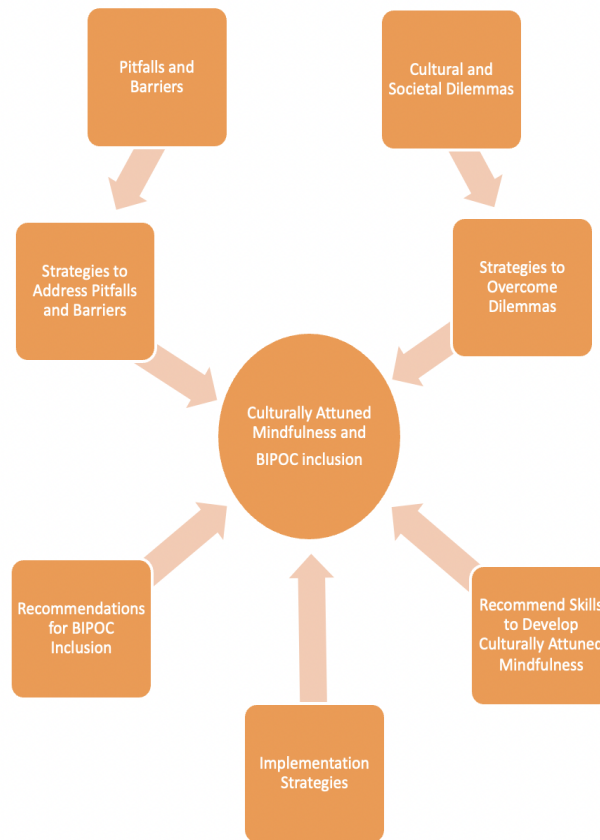


Figure 15. The Culturally Attuned Model Inclusion (CAMI) Chart

Note. This figure serves as a visual representation of best practices in implementing culturally attuned mindfulness in organizations derived from this study.

Implications for Mindfulness Training Organizations

Mindfulness is one increasingly popular approach to promoting wellness, resilience, and stress management (Brown et al., 2007), yet little research exists regarding the cultural relevance of mindfulness with BIPOC employees at work. Thus, mindfulness training organizations that certify individuals that are interested in implementing mindfulness must train students enrolled in

their programs on how to deliver mindfulness training in a culturally appropriate way that is relevant to the experiences and worldviews of people from BIPOC communities.

As shown in this current study, mindfulness professionals who implement mindfulness in workplace settings utilize culturally modified strategies to cultivate inclusion with BIPOC. When BIPOC feel included, they are more likely to be engaged in the mindfulness program, leading to a greater chance of reaping the stress-management benefits associated with practicing mindfulness. Mindfulness training organizations that certify professionals should strive to train students on how to introduce training and programs in a culturally relevant way that is empowering to participants from BIPOC communities. Thus, mindfulness training organizations could include discussions on utilizing culturally attuned mindfulness training in their training pedagogy and certification courses using the findings from this study. Mindfulness training organizations can help students recognize the multiple factors, such as dilemmas they may encounter in the field and the barriers and pitfalls that can impact the ability to implement mindfulness in workplaces.

Implications for Mindfulness Professionals

The findings of this research are essential for mindfulness professionals who are currently working with the BIPOC community and those who are interested. Mindfulness professionals can utilize the implementation and facilitation strategies derived from the findings of this study to offer mindfulness programming. Due to the rise of stress, workplace stress, discrimination, and racial stress affecting BIPOC, there is a great need to prepare mindfulness professionals to work with this population. Without this knowledge and experience, mindfulness professionals may inadvertently cause BIPOC participants distress or harm by not modifying practices to participants' unique needs, such as cultural modifications and trauma sensitivity. The findings

from this study may assist mindfulness professionals in recognizing pitfalls, barriers, and dilemmas they may encounter and valuable strategies to address and overcome them that are effective for BIPOC participants. With knowledge of best practices for culturally attuned mindfulness programs and training, mindfulness professionals may be able to cultivate inclusion for people from the BIPOC community.

Additionally, the BIPOC mindfulness professionals interviewed mentioned that since the racial uprising that happened in the summer of 2020, after the murder of George Floyd, mindful training organizations have begun reaching out to BIPOC mindfulness professionals for their input and help with modifying their curriculums. As this research demonstrates, there has been a new trend of mindful organizations wanting to incorporate cultural themes in their programs. The participants interviewed also discussed the increased attention and demand for BIPOC mindfulness professionals across all industries. BIPOC mindfulness professionals who are now on the D&I boards of these mindful organizations and are assisting training organizations with altering their pedagogy to be more inclusive may utilize the findings from this study as a supplemental aid.

Limitations of the Study

The purpose of this study was to explore the experiences and observations of BIPOC mindfulness professionals who implement mindfulness practices and programs in workplace settings. The goal was to understand BIPOC mindfulness professionals' unique experience of implementing mindfulness in workplace settings, their perspectives on BIPOC employee inclusion within mindfulness curriculums in workplaces, and their recommendations to ensure cultural themes and values are incorporated. I aimed to learn strategies and recommendations for

culturally attuning mindfulness programs that could promote stress management and cultivate inclusion for BIPOC employees.

This study's participant homogeneity in regard to gender and ethnicity may be viewed as a limitation. Although I set out to explore the perspectives of BIPOC mindfulness professionals, the majority of participants in the study ($n = 10$) were Black women. Out of the 12 mindfulness professionals interviewed, 1 participant identified as Asian and 1 as Arab. With this homogeneity, the study lacked observations and strategies from other racial and ethnically diverse mindfulness professionals in the BIPOC community. Additionally, of the 12 mindfulness professionals that participated, 11 identified as women, and one identified as gender non-conforming. By unintentionally limiting the voice of mindfulness professionals who identify as men, the experiences and observations of men who implement mindfulness at work are unclear. These limitations may limit the transferability of this study to men and other BIPOC members. There is a need to interview this population as they could add a different perspective, including additional wisdom, strategies, and recommendations for implementing mindfulness.

Recommendations for Future Research

Research about mindfulness implementation in workplace settings generally focuses on the behavioral and psychological effects of mindfulness. While previous studies have demonstrated the effectiveness of mindfulness for BIPOC, this study provides additional insight into cultural modifications and implementation strategies that may be used to cultivate inclusion specifically for BIPOC employees within organizations, which in turn can lead to BIPOC reaping the stress-management benefits correlated with mindfulness. Moreover, this study shows specific pitfalls and barriers mindfulness professionals may face when implementing mindfulness programs.

While mindfulness is rising in popularity within various organizational contexts and leaders in the mindfulness industry are starting to recognize the need for more BIPOC voices, more studies highlighting the voices of BIPOC mindfulness professionals are recommended. A replication of this phenomenological study with a larger sample that includes varying genders and other racial-ethnic groups is warranted. Further research that includes individuals who identify as men, gender non-conforming, and additional ethnic groups could add depth to the understanding of how people from their specific demographic group experience mindfulness and ways to better adjust mindfulness implementation and programming to their unique needs. Such research may be valuable to the mindfulness industry considering the heightened popularity of mindfulness and the ‘new lens of what is needed,’ as found in the current study.

The results of this study also demonstrated the importance of mindfulness professionals having an expansive background in mindfulness. The demographic survey utilized in this research study asked participants to discuss their training in mindfulness. Future research can explore the specific certifications mindfulness professionals obtained to investigate and compare the differences and similarities of mindful training organizations. This may be helpful for individuals interested in implementing mindfulness to get a better understanding of the different training routes. This could also be useful for mindful training organizations to examine their training curriculums and determine if changes should be made or if certain content should be added to the training pedagogy. Moreover, this may result in cultivating evidence-based practices and strategies that mindful training organizations may include in the future.

Final Thoughts and Reflections

The summer of the social uprising in 2020 and the COVID-19 pandemic made people’s pain, trauma, and stress more evident, especially for BIPOC. As a result, individuals and, even

more so, corporations could no longer be silent about the blatant racism, discrimination, and RBTS that their employees might be facing. Therefore, many workplaces are trying to advocate for social justice and implement mindfulness programs or introduce diversity-related themes, such as racial stress to the general conversation of workplace culture, but the change has been a slow process. For those professionals who support organizations as they navigate this new wave of stress management, particularly within a racial-social justice context, the road is mired with significant challenges and is one of the guiding reasons for this study, to capture their experiences and address the dearth of work regarding the specific needs of BIPOC populations. With the heightened stress stemming from COVID-19, the opportunity for organizations to adopt mindfulness training is now. Organizations must acknowledge the additional stress BIPOC encounter, be intentional about minimizing discrimination and racial stressors, and be mindful of creating inclusion.

The coronavirus's adverse mental health effects will be long-lasting (APA, 2020); therefore, organizations should seek ways to help their employees in these unexpected times. As COVID-19 continues to create uncertainty and stress, it is evident that the demand for mindfulness training in organizations will increase. Mindfulness has the potential to cultivate resilience in the workplace by decreasing emotional and physiological reactivity after adverse events, enhancing an employee's ability to recover from toxic events, and through growth following adversity (Slutsky et al., 2019). Therefore, mindfulness may be an important and appropriate protective barrier in the link between workplace stress, discrimination, and race-related stressors for BIPOC.

The mindfulness professionals who elected to participate in this study were engaged and invested in discussing ways mindfulness programs could be culturally attuned. The participants

are highly sought-after professionals in the mindfulness industry. A handful of the participants have been on the list of the most influential people in the field or people to keep an eye out for in the future. The fact that the participants took time out of their busy schedules demonstrates their commitment to helping workplaces, mindfulness organizations, and other professionals by sharing their lived experiences. The answers provided by the participants led to the data collection and findings of what professionals implementing mindfulness in workplace settings should understand when it comes to cultivating inclusion for BIPOC employees in mindfulness programs.

A more thorough and detailed guidebook will be published in the future that will include more inputs from participants during the study, including quotes, stories, and wisdom shared. This more detailed guidebook will also include what BIPOC mindfulness professionals may experience while implementing mindfulness and additional insights and wisdom shared by the professionals that were interviewed. Moreover, more than half of the participants mentioned they were unsure if the workshops and training they implement are helpful, have stuck with participants, or change systems within the organization. Thus, the future guidebook will include an evaluation and survey that professionals can utilize to determine how valuable and effective the program they implemented was. The evaluation and survey may help mindfulness professionals understand if mindfulness is being embedded within the institution.

Conclusion

This study explored the experiences and perspectives of BIPOC mindfulness professionals who implement mindfulness in workplace settings. In this study, a mindfulness professional is defined as a professional who incorporates a minimum of 50% of mindfulness components in their work consultations. I intended to understand BIPOC mindfulness

professionals' unique experiences, their perspectives on BIPOC inclusion in mindfulness programs implemented in organizations, and recommendations for ensuring diversity-related themes are included in the curriculum. Using a phenomenological approach which includes thematic analysis of results, I identified challenges experienced when implementing mindfulness, cultural and societal barriers that may stand in the way, pitfalls and barriers that may be encountered, strategies for BIPOC inclusion, implementation strategies, and recommendations for skills to develop culturally attuned mindfulness programs.

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APPENDIX A

IRB Approval Notice

Pepperdine University
24255 Pacific Coast Highway
Malibu, CA 90263
TEL: 310-506-4000

NOTICE OF APPROVAL FOR HUMAN RESEARCH

Date: December 13, 2021

Protocol Investigator Name: Bemí Fasalojo

Protocol #: 21-04-1577

Project Title: (Re)Imagining Mindfulness in the Workplace: Strategies for integrating culture and cultivating inclusion for BIPOC

School: Graduate School of Education and Psychology

Dear Bemí Fasalojo:

Thank you for submitting your application for expedited review to Pepperdine University's Institutional Review Board (IRB). We appreciate the work you have done on your proposal. The IRB has reviewed your submitted IRB application and all ancillary materials. As the nature of the research met the requirements for expedited review under provision Title 45 CFR 46.110 of the federal Protection of Human Subjects Act, the IRB conducted a formal, but expedited, review of your application materials.

Based upon review, your IRB application has been approved. The IRB approval begins today December 13, 2021, and expires on December 12, 2022.

The consent form included in this protocol is considered final and has been approved by the IRB. You can only use copies of the consent that have been approved by the IRB to obtain consent from your participants.

Your research must be conducted according to the proposal that was submitted to the IRB. If changes to the approved protocol occur, a revised protocol must be reviewed and approved by the IRB before implementation. For any proposed changes in your research protocol, please submit an amendment to the IRB. Please be aware that changes to your protocol may prevent the research from qualifying for expedited review and will require a submission of a new IRB application or other materials to the IRB. If contact with subjects will extend beyond December 12, 2022, a continuing review must be submitted at least one month prior to the expiration date of study approval to avoid a lapse in approval.

A goal of the IRB is to prevent negative occurrences during any research study. However, despite the best intent, unforeseen circumstances or events may arise during the research. If an unexpected situation or adverse event happens during your investigation, please notify the IRB as soon as possible. We will ask for a complete written explanation of the event and your written response. Other actions also may be required depending on the nature of the event. Details regarding the timeframe in which adverse events must be reported to the IRB and documenting the adverse event can be found in the *Pepperdine University Protection of Human Participants in Research: Policies and Procedures Manual* at community.pepperdine.edu/irb.

Please refer to the protocol number denoted above in all communication or correspondence related to your application and this approval. Should you have additional questions or require clarification of the contents of this letter, please contact the IRB Office. On behalf of the IRB, I wish you success in this scholarly pursuit.

Sincerely,

Judy Ho, Ph.D., IRB Chair

cc: Mrs. Katy Carr, Assistant Provost for Research

APPENDIX B

Recruitment Script

Dear [name],

My name is Bemí Fasalojo, and I am a doctoral student in the Graduate School of Education and Psychology at Pepperdine University. I am conducting a research study examining the experiences of BIPOC mindfulness professionals who implement mindfulness in workplace settings, and I need your help! I am seeking volunteer study participants to complete an electronic demographic questionnaire and virtual interview. Your participation in the study will be audio recorded and is anticipated to take no more than 45-60 minutes.

Participation in this study is voluntary, and your identity as a participant will be protected before, during, and after the time that study data is collected. Strict confidentiality procedures will be in place during and after the study. To mitigate the risk of breach of confidentiality, pseudonyms will be assigned to each participant to conceal identifiable information.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at your earliest convenience.

If you are interested in participating, I invite you to follow the link below to complete the questionnaire: <https://forms.gle/zh24fCgquuoVJe1y6>

I also kindly ask that you pass this on to other BIPOC mindfulness professionals.

Thank you for your participation,

Bemí Fasalojo
Pepperdine University
Graduate School of Education and Psychology
Professional Status: Doctoral Candidate
bemi.fasalojo@pepperdine.edu

APPENDIX C

Final Prima-facie Validity Table:

Research Questions and Corresponding Interview Questions

Research Questions	Corresponding Interview Questions
<p><i>(BIPOC professionals' experience)</i></p> <p>RQ1: What cultural challenges are experienced by BIPOC mindfulness professionals in their work?</p>	<p>IQ 1: Please describe your experience as a Black, Indigenous, Person of Color (BIPOC) implementing mindfulness in the workplace.</p> <p>IQ 2: What have you observed about diversity and race in the workplace?</p> <p>IQ 3: Please describe any (cultural and societal) dilemmas (if any) you encountered in this field of work and how you overcame them.</p> <p>IQ 4: Please describe any pitfalls or barriers that impact the ability to effectively implement mindfulness in the workplace and how you address those.</p>
<p><i>(BIPOC professionals' perspectives of BIPOC employee inclusion)</i></p> <p>RQ 2: To what extent (if at all) are the experiences of BIPOC employees reflected in the mindfulness curriculums and programs?</p>	<p>IQ 5: How much attention is given to BIPOC employees within the mindfulness curriculum and program?</p> <p>IQ 6: How are mindfulness curriculums and/or programs in workplace settings culturally attuned for BIPOC employees?</p> <p>IQ 7: In what ways are diversity, inclusion, and race-related themes (such as racial stress, decolonization, liberation, microaggressions, unconscious bias, etc.) integrated into the curriculum and/or program?</p>
<p><i>(BIPOC professionals' recommendations)</i></p> <p>RQ3: What recommendations do BIPOC mindfulness professionals make to other mindfulness specialists who want to incorporate cultural themes in their mindfulness programs?</p>	<p>IQ 8: What wisdom have you gained from implementing mindfulness in the workplace?</p> <p>IQ 9: What are your recommendations for ensuring BIPOC employees feel included when going into mindfulness classes and programs?</p> <p>IQ 10: What advice would you give a white mindfulness professional working with BIPOC employees around issues of racial stressors?</p> <p>IQ 11: How can mindfulness professionals acquire the skills to develop culturally attuned mindfulness for BIPOC?</p>

APPENDIX D

Interview Questions

Ice breaker: Tell me a little about your career journey and how you learned about implementing mindfulness in the workplace.

IQ 1: Please describe your experience as a Black, Indigenous, Person of Color (BIPOC) implementing mindfulness in the workplace.

IQ 2: What have you observed about diversity and race in the workplace?

IQ 3: Please describe any (cultural and societal) dilemmas (if any) you encountered in this field of work and how you overcame them.

IQ 4: Please describe any pitfalls or barriers that impact the ability to effectively implement mindfulness in the workplace and how you address those.

IQ 5: How much attention is given to BIPOC employees within the mindfulness curriculum and program?

IQ 6: How are mindfulness curriculums and/or programs in workplace settings culturally attuned for BIPOC employees?

IQ 7: In what ways are diversity, inclusion, and race-related themes (such as racial stress, decolonization, liberation, microaggressions, unconscious bias, etc.) integrated into the curriculum and/or program?

IQ 8: What wisdom have you gained from implementing mindfulness in the workplace?

IQ 9: What are your recommendations for ensuring BIPOC employees feel included when going into mindfulness programs?

IQ 10: What advice would you give a white mindfulness professional working with BIPOC employees around issues of racial stressors?

IQ 11: How can mindfulness professionals acquire the skills to develop culturally attuned mindfulness for BIPOC?