



# Racism in Faculties: The Plight of Men of Color in Focus

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## Abstract

Racism permeates most institutions in the United States (U.S.). In institutions of higher learning, Black male tenured professors confront many hurdles that impact their experiences. This study investigated the discriminatory practices that continue to marginalize and disadvantage Black male faculty professors in Predominantly White Institutions (PWIs) in this era of culture wars in the U.S. Using Critical Race Theory as a theoretical framework, this study has provided the historical and philosophical perspectives of racism in higher education. In-depth interviews were used to investigate the lived experiences of Black tenured faculty professors. Three Black male tenured professors from three four-year PWIs in the U.S. were interviewed. The participants have spent at least 25 years as faculty members. The study examined the intersectionality of race and gender in the experiences of Black faculty professors. The study found that Black male faculty professors continue to face significant racial discrimination in institutions of higher learning in the U.S.

## Subject Areas

Sociology

## Keywords

Racism, Men of Color, Discrimination, Marginalization, Cultural Wars, Historical Perspectives, Philosophical Perspectives

## 1. Introduction

Racism is a pervasive issue that impacts numerous aspects of society [1]. The authors termed racism as “systemic” because racially unequal opportunities and outcomes are inbuilt or intrinsic to the operation of a society’s structures. They contend that racism permeates a society’s institutional structures (practices, policies,

climate), social structures (state/federal programs, laws, culture), individual mental structures (e.g., learning, memory, attitudes, beliefs, values), and everyday interaction patterns (norms, scripts, habits). What makes the problem of systemic racism so perverse is that “good people” with no explicit expression of what we would call “racism” are the contributors to such decisions that produce widespread and unnoticed bias, resulting in systemic racism ([2], p. 12). In [3] analysis, he described racism as a complex and multifaceted social phenomenon that intertwines individual prejudices with structural inequalities. [3] argues that “racism is not solely about individual biases but also about the broader social structures that sustain and perpetuate discriminatory practices” (p. 11). From the perspectives of [3] literature, racism manifests in subtle (covert) and overt forms that intersect with other forms of oppression to influence societal norms and policies. Racism represents the biases of the powerful [4], as the biases of the powerless have little consequence [5].

In the U.S., racism is a significant issue that affects many aspects of society, including higher education [6]. Racism operates at multiple levels and can emerge with or without animus or intention to harm and with or without awareness of its existence [1]. Racism is intricately intertwined with discrimination ([3], p. 14). Discrimination is defined as “behavior that denies equal treatment to people because of their membership in a particular group” ([7], p. 185). [7] contends that racism is based on the “beliefs, feelings, fantasies, and motivations of prejudice” (p. 185), but these mental or social concepts are not in themselves discrimination. Discrimination involves behavior ([3], p. 15). Black male faculty members often face discrimination, marginalization, and unequal representation within educational institutions [8]. They argue that this problem is deeply rooted in U.S. history and is perpetuated by systemic factors that create barriers to the success and advancement of faculty members of color. This study provides historical perspectives on racism in higher institutions in the U.S.

It is difficult to talk about racism without mentioning race. Race organizes social relationships and shapes individual experiences [6]. [6] defined race as a “concept that signifies and symbolizes social conflicts and interests regarding different types of human bodies” (p. 109). They argue that race is not a fixed or biological fact but rather a social and political construct shaped by historical and cultural contexts (p. 110). They further argue that “race is produced and reproduced through social and political struggles and is closely tied to power relations and inequality” (p. 110). They again contend that racism is a central aspect of American society and politics and, therefore, define the concept of “racial formation” as “the process of creating and reproducing racial categories and meanings” (p. 111).

[6] definition of race emphasizes its social and political construction. It exposes how race is used to justify and perpetuate inequality, discrimination, and social injustices in the system. [6] understanding of race, as outlined in their racial formation theory, aligns with several Critical Race Theory (CRT) principles. Both frameworks view race as a social construct, emphasizing that it is shaped by socio-political forces rather than being a biological or fixed reality. [6] aver that race and

racism are deeply embedded in societal structures and operate as mechanisms of power, reflecting CRT's focus on the systemic nature of racial inequality.

In a related narration to [6] definition of race, [9] has also defined racism to encompass individual actions, institutional structures, and societal norms that disadvantage and harm people of color while sustaining White privilege. It is essential to mention that, in academia, racism can occur in any educational institution, regardless of its demographics. Even Black-dominated higher institutions in the U.S. are not immune to racism [10]. However, racism is more prevalent, especially in educational institutions with mixed faculty members (both Black and White identities) than in Black-dominated ones [11]. Biased hiring practices, hostile classroom environments, and unequal opportunities for professional growth manifest themselves more in predominantly White-dominated higher institutions in the U.S. [8].

Research has shown that, although there have been significant improvements in collegiate environments for faculty men of color [12], they still face numerous challenges. There are feelings of isolation for Black male instructors [13]. They must prove themselves as academics [14] [15]. Faculty men of color tend to be assigned additional responsibilities for race and gender issues more than their White counterparts [13] [14]. Again, Black male faculty members frequently encounter challenges in faculties and in the classrooms that their white colleagues do not face [13] [15]. Students, mainly White, question the authority and expertise of faculty members of color [16] [17]. These attitudes and devaluation can lead to lower teaching evaluations for black male faculty members compared to their white peers [18]. Such experiences undermine the well-being and success of individual Black faculty members and perpetuate systemic inequities that hinder the recruitment, retention, and advancement of scholars of color in higher education [8].

Against this background, it is essential to dive into historical and philosophical perspectives of racism and investigate the discriminatory practices that continue to marginalize and disadvantage Black male tenured professors in the four-year Predominantly White Institutions (PWIs) in this era of culture wars in the U.S. The study also examines the tenure and social lived experiences of some faculty men of color to explore what constitutes discrimination in PWIs in the United States. Additionally, it explores the intersectionality of race and gender among faculty men of color in PWIs in the U.S. For this work, "Black males or people of color" refers to all dark-skinned men in the faculties of four-year PWIs in the U.S.

The term "era of culture wars" used in this study refers to the current era where intense ideological and political debates are prevalent over cultural and social issues. The term, which gained prominence in the U.S. in the late 20th century, is often used to express disagreements over values, identity, and societal norms, with opposing sides passionately defending their respective views. Sociologist [19] largely influenced the term "culture wars" in 1991. [19] argued that American society was increasingly divided along cultural and moral lines, and cultural and ideological divisions have influenced the broader societal dynamics as they man-

ifest in both local and global conversations. Debates over racism and Critical Race Theory in schools, policies on cross gender rights in sports or public facilities, and debates about free speech versus hate speech in media and technology platforms, among others, are examples of cultural war conversations.

[20] Critical Race Theory (CRT) will inform the theoretical framework of this study. Using this theoretical framework, this study will provide a broad examination of the systemic origins, philosophical perspectives, and historical underpinnings of racism in the U.S. education system. CRT has been applied in various domains, including education, to examine the impact of racism and race on educational practices, policies, and student experiences. CRT examines the intersection of race, law, and power in society.

### 1.1. Theoretical Framework

This study will be guided by Critical Race Theory (CRT). CRT is an academic discipline that applies critical theory, a crucial examination of society and culture, to the intersection of race, law, and power [21]. CRT examines the intersection of race, law, and power in society. It asserts that racism is ingrained in societal institutions, legal procedures, and cultural norms and is not only a problem of personal prejudice [22]. According to CRT researchers, racism is a social construct rather than a biological reality, and it has historically been utilized to support and maintain oppressive and unequal structures of society [23]. The CRT's notion of racism as a social construct is like [6] racial formation concept, who see racism as a process of creating and reproducing racial categories in a society.

The objectives of this study best go with the fundamental tenets of CRT. In the first place, [24] has opined that racism is everyday and ubiquitous in society. [24], an American lawyer, professor, and civil rights activist's work, challenged the notion that racism was an aberration or a deviation from the norm, instead arguing that it is a fundamental aspect of American society, deeply ingrained in its institutions and structures. [24] contends that racism is not only about individual prejudice but also systemic and institutional that perpetuates racial inequality and oppression. Secondly, the "Interest-Convergence Principle" ([24], Ch. 2, p. 7) is a strong pillar of CRT. "Interest convergence" occurs when the interests of dominant groups (typically Whites) align with those of subordinate groups (typically Blacks) in this context, resulting in incremental progress for the subordinate group. In other words, advancements in racial equality happen only when they coincide with the interests of the dominant group. Advances for marginalized groups are only achieved when they align with the interests of the dominant group. The concept of "interest convergence" emphasizes how power dynamics influence social and political transformations. This means that equality and justice we require necessitate a more deliberate action and transformation of the system rather than mere preaching about it. Thirdly, the significance of counter-narratives and the lived experiences of people of color in contesting dominant narratives is a key aspect of Critical Race Theory (CRT). When addressing racism as a social phenomenon, the complexity of individual experiences and dominant nar-

ratives must be taken into account. This will provide a more comprehensive understanding of oppression, ultimately addressing the unique challenges faced by marginalized groups and communities.

Moreover, the intersectionality of race with other forms of oppression, like gender and class [23], is an ideology of CRT. CRT emphasizes intersectionality by recognizing that individuals have multiple identities, such as race, gender, sexuality, class, and disability, that intersect and interact to produce unique experiences of discrimination and oppression in society. From the literature of [23], intersectional analysis reveals how different forms of oppression (racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, ableism, and classism) intersect and compound, worsening the plight of marginalized and minoritized groups in society. Intersectionality again emphasizes the need to center the voices and perspectives of those at the intersections rather than relying on a single and dominant narrative.

Researchers have utilized CRT to examine various topics, including the perspectives of staff and students of color, curriculum design, school segregation, and the achievement gap [20]. Colorblindness and meritocracy in education [25] have also been criticized using CRT, claiming that these ideas often help preserve racial disparities.

When investigating the experiences of Black male faculty members in American higher institutions, CRT is an invaluable resource. Scholars have employed the CRT framework to examine the various manifestations of racism in higher education, ranging from interpersonal interactions to institutional policies and procedures. According to [16] and [17], CRT may provide insight into how racial stereotypes, biases, and microaggressions affect the hiring, advancement, and retention of faculty members of color. It could also demonstrate how dominant norms and values at mostly white universities might marginalize and reject Black male teachers' perspectives and contributions [18].

CRT is a valuable theory, primarily when a study aims to amplify the voices and narratives of Black male faculty members, focusing on counter-storytelling and the lived experiences of people of color. Researchers may use CRT to challenge prevailing discourses that downplay or deny the existence of racism in academia by highlighting their own experiences and viewpoints [26]. Additionally, CRT may inform initiatives to transform educational institutions and foster more inclusive and equitable work environments for faculty members of color [8]. In the end, Critical Race Theory will provide a valuable framework for comprehending and resolving the discriminatory practices that continue to marginalize and disadvantage Black male faculty members in the U.S.

## 1.2. Literature Review

A related definitional distinction regarding racism concerns whether an intent of harm or exclusion is necessary to define thoughts or actions as racist [3]. "Racism is not a concrete reality but a social construction" ([27], p. 49). For [27], "the concept of racism should refer to the function, rather than the content of the dis-

courses” (p. 49), allowing racism to include things that may not sound racist but still seek to exclude the other. [27] differentiates racism from racialization, the categorization of people based on supposed biological differences. [27] bases racism not on the intent of an action but on the result. He argues that racism is an ideology based on differentiation that leads to “exclusionary practices” (pp. 77-78). Such exclusionary practices can include differential treatment or allocation of resources and opportunities, regardless of one’s intent or even awareness of the ideological underpinnings of one’s actions ([27], p. 78). However, [28] argues that we should allow racism to include either intent or result.

Racism in academic faculties, particularly against men of color, is a significant issue that impacts their experiences and opportunities [29]. According to the authors, men of color often face both subtle and overt acts of racism and microaggressions from peers and faculty. To them, these barriers create obstacles to accessing campus resources and support systems, which are essential for their academic success. They further argue that these experiences are primarily prevalent in Predominantly White Institutions (PWIs). PWIs refer to colleges and universities in the U.S. that have a student body composed of a majority (50% or more) of White students. These institutions have historically been shaped by a legacy of systemic racism, discrimination, and exclusion [30]. PWIs characteristically perpetuate White dominant cultural norms, which have the potential to create some form of marginalization, discrimination, and inequity for both students and faculty members of color [31]. [30] again contends that many PWIs have a history of excluding Black students and faculty members of color through discriminatory practices like segregation and restrictive admissions policies. He has further said that PWIs still exhibit significant racial disparities in areas like student demographics, faculty diversity, faculty appointments, academic outcomes, and campus climate. [32] argued that PWIs generally have more resources, funding, and access to opportunities than Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) and other Minority-Serving Institutions (MSIs) in the U.S.

Existing research on racism in academia has extensively documented the various challenges and barriers faced by Black male faculty members in U.S. higher education institutions. [33]-[35] have found that Black male faculty professors are often subjected to racial stereotypes, biases, and microaggressions that negatively impact their professional experiences and advancement opportunities. [33] have argued that faculty members face challenges in the classroom, such as student resistance and disrespect, which can lead to lower teaching evaluations compared to their White colleagues. Additionally, research has highlighted the systemic nature of racism in academia, which is deeply embedded in institutional policies, practices, and norms that perpetuate racial inequities [35].

[36] study provides empirical evidence that supports the current research on the discriminatory practices that continue to marginalize and disadvantage Black male faculty members in the U.S. higher education system. The study emphasizes the pervasive nature of racism in academia, which is deeply ingrained in institu-

tional policies, procedures, and practices. It highlights the shifting racial dynamics in higher education and the growing recognition of the need to study and address racism on college campuses. [36] work underscores the importance of acknowledging and addressing the unfortunate experiences of individuals affected by racism in higher education, which aligns with the current study's aim to identify the discriminatory practices and narratives of Black male faculty members through the application of CRT as a framework to understand and challenge the systemic racism in academia.

There are shreds of evidence of stereotypes and biased assumptions about faculty men of color's research interests, teaching abilities, and intellectual capabilities based on their race in the literature of [11]. [11] contends that these stereotyping and biased assumptions hinder their career advancement and success opportunities, thus defeating the idea of diversity, equity, and inclusion in higher education the world is pursuing in all facets of life. Also, regarding performance expectations, faculty men of color are held to higher standards, with their performance or work being subjected to greater scrutiny and criticism [37]. According to [38], students and faculty men of color are mostly questioned or undervalued due to racial stereotypes about their field or research area.

[39] literature, "Understanding Structural Racism in UK Higher Education," discusses how systemic inequalities are perpetuated within UK higher education institutions through policies, practices, and cultural norms that have inadvertently disadvantaged minority ethnic groups. It argues that racism is structured in the educational system and continues to perpetuate inequalities. It contends that structural race inequality involves systemic policies and practices that result in unequal opportunities and outcomes for different racial groups. [39] advanced argument for higher institutions to critically examine their policies and practices, engaging in open dialogues about race and implementing strategies to create more equitable and inclusive environments for minoritized groups. [40] argue that institutional racism is deeply embedded within British higher education. Their work comprehensively examined structural racism within British higher education institutions and explored its manifestations in ostensibly post-race times. They established that structural racism hinders social mobility and equality for Black and ethnic minority students and academics within inherently white higher education institutions in Britain. In their view on the "departure of Black academics" within UK higher education institutions, they argued that Black academics often encounter systemic racism embedded within the policies and practices of higher education institutions. This structural racism manifests in limited opportunities for advancement, unequal treatment, and a lack of support, leading to feelings of isolation and frustration. On what they termed "cultural taxation and additional responsibilities," they contended that Black academics are often expected to undertake additional, uncompensated responsibilities, such as mentoring minority students, serving on diversity committees, and representing diversity initiatives. This "cultural taxation" can lead to burnout and detract from their research and teach-

ing responsibilities.

[40] studied “Black academic experiences of discrimination in an education faculty at a South African university.” [40] study found that despite the presence of Black individuals in leadership positions, Black academics continue to face discriminatory practices, indicating that representation alone does not dismantle systemic racism. The author admitted that there is an intricate nature of power relations, where racial biases and systemic barriers persist even under Black leadership, challenging assumptions that racial representation automatically leads to equitable environments. Even though [40] work did not only emphasize faculty men, there was an existence of discrimination against Black faculty members, including men. The author concluded that addressing discrimination requires more than diversifying leadership. Fighting discrimination necessitates comprehensive structural changes within institutional cultures and policies to combat entrenched racism effectively. The UK and South African context emphasize the fact that racism is structural and is institutionalized to marginalize certain minor groups in society.

### **1.3. Equity, Marginalization, and Racism**

Philosophical and theoretical literature has thoroughly examined the complicated themes of equity, marginalization, and racism. According to philosophers like [41], the equal allocation of rights, opportunities, and resources among all members of society is a basic premise of justice. Rawls is the leading proponent of the Rawlsian theory.

Rawlsian theory, also known as “Justice as Fairness,” posits that everyone has the same fundamental rights and basic freedoms and should have equal opportunities in society. It also argues that inequalities are only acceptable if they benefit the least fortunate. It further emphasized that justice should be viewed from an original position behind a “veil of ignorance” ([41], p. 118), where one’s characteristics, such as race and social status, are unknown. According to [41], resources and goods should be distributed equally unless an unequal distribution would benefit the least fortunate. His original position and veil of ignorance concepts are viewed as thought experiments in which people are asked to design a fair society without knowing their own position.

To Rawls, fair equality of opportunity is prioritized over different principles, allowing for inequalities that benefit the least fortunate. Rawlsian theory prioritizes the CRT’s liberty principle, which emphasizes individual freedom and fundamental rights. Rawlsian theory and CRT aim to balance personal freedom with social equality and justice. On the other hand, marginalization happens when certain groups are consistently kept out of society’s complete activities because of their gender, color, or other traits [42]. According to [6], racism is an oppressive system that upholds the socially created notion of race and continues to marginalize and subjugate people of color.

## 1.4. Historical Analysis of Racism

Acknowledging the historical background and ongoing plight of faculty members of color in higher institutions of learning is essential to understanding racism perspectives and addressing it holistically. This section summarily traces the history of racism against people of color in the U.S.

Enslavement marked the beginning of the history of racism against Blacks, especially Africans in the U.S. The transatlantic slave trade (approximately 12.5 million enslaved, which involved the forced migration of million enslaved Africans to the Americas) remains one of the most well-known and most devastating enslavement events in the history of humankind [43]. It must be stated that enslavement formed the basis for the ongoing systemic racism and inequality in the system. [44] has contested that the perception that the “master or buyer” (in this case, the Whites) are superior to the ones being “bought or servant” (Blacks in this context) has its route from enslavement. [44] further argues that the transatlantic slave trade and other forms of enslavement have had a lasting impact on the world today, contributing to ongoing systemic racism and inequality.

Slavery occurred between 1619 and 1865, spanning approximately 246 years, and Reconstruction followed from 1865 to 1877, lasting approximately 12 years [45]. The Civil War ended in 1865 when slavery was officially abolished with the 13th Amendment. “From the close of the war until 1876, was the period of uncertain groping and temporary relief for African American slaves” ([45]: Ch. 6: p. 5). For instance, the 14th Amendment of 1868 granted citizenship to formerly enslaved people, while the 15th Amendment of 1870 granted voting rights to Blacks. According to [45], during this period, African Americans in the U.S. typically worked on farms and plantations. After the Civil War, newly freed slaves sought education, but most colleges and universities were closed to them [45]. [45] stated:

“At this time, race-prejudices, which keep brown and black men in their ‘places,’ we are coming to regard as useful allies with such a theory, no matter how much they may dull the ambition and sicken the hearts of struggling human beings. Above all, we daily hear that an education that encourages aspiration that sets the loftiest of ideals and seeks as an end culture and character rather than bread-winning is the privilege of White men and the danger and delusion of Black.” (Ch. 6, p. 6).

Black people were systematically excluded from access to higher education during the era of enslavement, thereby limiting their opportunities for social mobility and academic careers [44]. Even though most people in the U.S. (of all races) lacked access to higher education until about the mid-nineteenth century, [44] argues that Black academics’ opportunities for advancement were significantly limited throughout this period, as they were explicitly barred from academic institutions. Higher education institutions were segregated, with Black students and faculty members relegated to under-resourced and underfunded institutions, thereby perpetuating racial disparities [46]. [47] has hinted that Black male instructors have historically been subjected to negative stereotypes, bias, and racist

tropes that impacted their ability to gain respect and credibility in the academic community. [47] has further documented that till recent times, faculty instructors of color continue to experience tokenization because they are seen as representatives of their race rather than as individual scholars and, therefore, face isolation due to their underrepresentation in academic departments and institutions.

What aggravated the plight of Blacks was the emergence of Jim Crow Laws in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The primary purpose of Jim Crow Laws was to enforce racial segregation and discrimination against African Americans in the U.S., particularly in the South. These laws made it very difficult for Blacks to attend PWIs in the U.S. In [48] article titled “The Rise and Fall of Jim Crow,” he enumerated the purpose of Jim Crow Laws as follows: 1) to segregate the usage of public facilities, services, and spaces, such as schools, restaurants, restrooms, drinking fountains, and public transportation for Blacks and White. 2) To restrict Black voting rights through literacy tests, poll taxes, and grandfather clauses. 3) To limit Blacks’ access to education, employment, and economic opportunities. 4) To enforce “separate but equal” facilities, which were often substandard and unequal. 5) To criminalize interracial relationships and cohabitation, and lastly, to reinforce white supremacy and maintain racial hierarchy, among others. These provisions were binding to the very survival of the people of color. According to [48], the rationale behind Jim Crow Laws was to circumvent the 13th, 14th, and 15th Amendments to the U.S. Constitution, which aimed to establish freedom, citizenship, and voting rights for people of color. [48] further mentioned that the laws were enforced through violence, intimidation, and discrimination, thereby fueling racial segregation and oppression in the education system in the U.S.

[48] believes that persistent racism, marginalization, inequity, and discrimination in almost all-American educational institutions led to the formation of “Historically Black Colleges and Universities” (HBCUs). The purpose of HBCUs was to provide education and opportunities to Black students, faculty, and staff, who were often excluded from PWIs in the U.S. [10]. HBCUs were formed in response to the lack of access to higher education for people of color dating to the post-Civil War era in the U.S. That was during the era of segregation and discrimination. The first HBCU, Cheyney University of Pennsylvania, was founded in 1837 as the African Institute. According to [49], there are currently approximately 107 HBCUs in the United States, comprising 56 private and 51 public institutions. Together, these schools have about 228,000 student enrollments as at 2024.

[45] mentioned that most HBCUs were established after the Civil War, during Reconstruction (1865-1877). However, did this eradicate the racial discrimination against people of color in educational institutions? Hopes and aspirations of faculty men of color emanating from HBCU creation were shattered because discriminatory practices persisted even after desegregation, preventing them from obtaining research funding, leadership positions, and tenures [33]. Despite the racial discrimination motive behind the formation of HBCUs, HBCUs continue to play a vital role in promoting educational equity and providing opportunities

for students of color and other underrepresented groups. This racial discrimination continued until the 1940s.

In the late 1940s, when racial discrimination against people of color in educational institutions gained popularity, the “Civil Rights Movement” in the U.S. started and continued to the late 1960s. In the literature of [50], the Civil Rights Movement was a grassroots effort led by Blacks, with support from White allies, to challenge the status quo and demand fundamental changes in American society regarding racism and discrimination. The primary purpose of the Civil Rights Movement was to end racial segregation, discrimination, and inequality in the U.S. and to achieve equal rights and opportunities for people of color at all levels, an idea engrained in CRT.

[50] outlines some of the specific focus of the movement to include 1) to combat discrimination and violence against people of color, including police brutality and lynching. 2) To challenge systemic racism, stereotypes, and biases in institutions such as government, education, and criminal justice. 3) To end Jim Crow laws and segregation in public facilities, education, employment, housing, and transportation. 4) To secure voting rights and political representation for people of color in the U.S. 5) To promote economic opportunities and equality, including access to good jobs, education, and healthcare. 6) To empower Black communities to promote self-determination and pride and, finally, to create a more inclusive and equitable society for all Americans. It is important to emphasize that the movement achieved significant legislative victories, which made these movements gain some popular support. This considerable legislation and its popular support continue to shape American society. This has somewhat diminished racism from overt to covert [3].

In the literature of [50], the turning point in the history of higher education in the U.S. was the Civil Rights Movement in the late 1940s. The movement led to the desegregation of public universities, previously segregated by race. The desegregation policy was backed by the landmark Supreme Court ruling of *Brown v. Board of Education* in 1954 [51]. The movement also expanded access to higher education for marginalized groups, including people of color, Latinos, and women [52]. Another reason the civil rights movement is considered a turning point in the history of U.S. higher education, according to [52], is the implementation of affirmative action policies to address historical disparities and promote diversity on campus. The movement empowered student activism, making them crucial in demanding change and shaping university policies. Another remarkable achievement of the movement was that it pushed for the incorporation of new courses on African American studies, ethnic studies, and social justice. That is to say, the movement influenced curriculum changes, thereby broadening the academic landscape in the U.S. This has helped to transform campus culture, fostering a more inclusive and diverse environment with a growing emphasis on social justice and equality [52].

Segregation in U.S. schools officially ended in 1954 with the landmark Supreme

Court case of *Brown v. Board of Education*. The Supreme Court ruled that separate educational facilities are inherently unequal, violating the Equal Protection Clause of the 14th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. Even though the legal segregation ended in 1954, the de facto segregation and disparities in education continued in many parts of the U.S. [53]. Segregation in schools began to be dismantled in practice in the mid-1960s and early 1970s, with the enforcement of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare's (HEW) regulations [52]-[54].

At this point, providing a brief overview of the post-World War II history of higher education in the U.S. is essential to establish a continuum of historical perspectives on racism. In 1944, when the Government Issue or General Issue (GI) Bill was passed, the law allowed veterans of World War II to attend college. This move led to an influx of students and, therefore, called for the expansion of universities in the U.S. Between the 1950s and 1960s, higher education in the U.S. experienced rapid growth. This led to the establishment of additional educational institutions due to a high increase in enrollment. The expansion of educational institutions made higher education more accessible and diverse around the 1970s and 1980s for all, including people of color.

Nonetheless, institutionalized racism remained, and Black scholars encountered a range of obstacles, such as lack of mentorship, microaggressions, and tokenism [55]. There is still a minimal increase in the number of Black academics in the U.S. [56]. That is to say, the number of Black male academics grew very slowly after these movements were well underway. According to [57], despite the progress of the Civil Rights Movement, several factors contributed to the minimal increase in the number of Black academics. Centuries of slavery, segregation, and discrimination hindered Black people's access to education and academic opportunities. This has resulted in a limited presence of Black faculty and fewer role models and mentors for aspiring Black academics. [57] have again argued that discriminatory practices, bias, and microaggressions in academia continue to affect Black scholars' career advancement. They further contend that implicit bias influences hiring decisions, performance evaluations, and opportunities for career advancement, thereby limiting the number of Black academics.

[55] has also argued that despite these obstacles, Black male educators have made significant contributions to academia by tenaciously advocating for equality and working to dismantle discriminatory practices inside schools with a preponderance of White students. In elaborating on the historical context, it is critical to recognize that Black male faculty members have had possibilities and challenges because of racism's ongoing influence in American higher education. The underrepresentation of these faculty members in academia may be partly attributed to enduring systemic obstacles and injustices. Furthermore, it has become increasingly challenging for Black male faculty members to excel in their professions and navigate the academic environment due to the scarcity of diverse mentors and role models within the educational community [35]. Despite the progress achieved

during the Civil Rights Movement, the experiences of faculty men of color in American higher education are still influenced by the historical foundations of racism. This highlights the importance of addressing structural inequities and fostering more inclusive and equitable learning environments in academic settings.

### **1.5. Philosophical Perspectives of Racism**

It is essential to emphasize that all human beings possess inherent dignity and worth, regardless of their race or ethnicity. It is, therefore, essential to tackle racism holistically because it denies individuals their fundamental human rights. Also, the equality principle dictates that all individuals should be treated fairly and justly, without discrimination or prejudice. Racism violates this principle by privileging certain groups over others in society. In U.S. higher education, race (as discussed in the preceding sections) poses significant philosophical questions of marginalization, equality, and the democratic ideals of inclusion and equal educational opportunity. Since equity stresses the value of fair treatment and access to opportunities and resources, it is essential to understand the injustices Black male instructors in faculties have encountered [58].

Male faculty members often face marginalization, which can be described as excluding some individuals from society and preventing them from fully participating in it. By putting obstacles in the way of faculty members' advancement and growth based on their ethnicity, racism in higher education undercuts democratic ideals of inclusion and equal educational opportunity [59]. The fundamental tenets of democracy, which demand that everyone be treated fairly and equally regardless of background, are broken by racism. Since racism in academia impacts specific faculty members and society at large, it has broad philosophical implications. Due to unequal chances for Black male academics to contribute to research, teaching, and leadership, racial discrimination in higher education narrows the range of perspectives and knowledge generated and shared [60]. Consequently, this restricts access to a wide range of perspectives and experiences, undermining the democratic ideal of an informed and engaged populace. [61] critiques systemic and institutional racism, which perpetuates inequalities through policies and practices, even if individuals do not intend to be racist. Therefore, addressing racism in higher education is a matter of personal justice and a crucial step in creating a more inclusive and equitable society that upholds democratic values, such as participation and fair opportunities for everyone.

## **2. Methodology**

To investigate the discriminatory practices that continue to marginalize and disadvantage Black male tenured professors in the four-year PWIs in the U.S., the study was not particular about the geographical location of the three universities selected or their students' enrolments. However, it was particularly interested in PWIs with at least 90% of White tenured faculty members. The study interviewed three participants, as it was realized after the third respondent that no new infor-

mation, themes, or insights emerged from the data collection process. Therefore, collecting additional data will no longer contribute new knowledge to the study.

Simple random sampling was used to select the three PWIs, and purposive sampling was used to select the Black male professors from these institutions. Since the number of Black male faculty members in the selected institutions is countable, it was not difficult to determine who has been in academia and for how long. Interestingly, the first Black professor identified through one of the school's faculty directorates could report the number of Black male faculty members in the school and their departments, including the years they had been there. This process was replicated for the other two selected schools. To be able to get the respondents' lived experiences as far as racism in faculties is concerned, I targeted Black male professors who have been in the profession in the U.S. for at least 20 years in their respective institutions.

A qualitative methodology has been employed to delve into the lived experiences of men of color in academia. In-depth interviews were conducted with three full-time tenured professors from three PWIs. This approach was particularly suitable for racism, where rich contextual information was needed to understand the complexities of the lived experiences of men of color in faculties and educational institutions. The interview with a professor at MU University (pseudonym) was held in person, while the other two were conducted via phone calls. The interviews were audio-recorded with participants' consent for later transcription and analysis. Interview recordings were transcribed verbatim to ensure accuracy. Thematic analysis was then conducted using a coding framework developed based on the research objectives and Critical Race Theory, adapted to the context of racism. This process involved identifying recurring patterns and themes within the data. Key themes and sub-themes were subsequently organized to address the research objectives. The themes provided a structured approach to understanding the discriminatory practices that continue to marginalize and disadvantage Black male tenured professors in the four-year PWIs.

### **3. Results and Discussion**

#### **3.1. Discriminatory Practices That Continue to Marginalize and Disadvantage Black Male Faculty Members in the U.S.**

Research has shown that Black male faculty members in U.S. higher education institutions face many factors that contribute to inequity in their professional experiences and advancement. At the institutional level, systemic racism is deeply ingrained in academic policies, practices, and norms [62]. This section discusses the experiences of three Black male tenured professors at three predominantly White institutions (PWIs) in the United States. To maintain the confidentiality of the respondents as they consented, all identities of these professors will remain anonymous. These full professors have taught in their universities for at least 20 years. The selected institutions for the study have been pseudonymized as MU, NKU, and SRU. The goal was to gather unique perspectives from different lived

experiences at various locations in the U.S. To understand whether discriminatory practices continue to marginalize and disadvantage Black male faculty members in the U.S. or not, in-depth interviews were conducted with these three professors.

For confidentiality, same pseudonyms have been used for these professors as Professor MU, NKU, and SRU, respectively. Professor MU came to MU University with a PhD, rose to the rank of Associate Professor, and eventually achieved full professorship. He has served 31 years as a professor in two departments within the same University. Professor NKU came to NKU University as a PhD Graduate Assistant. He was absorbed into his department after graduating from the PhD program to teach. He has been in NKU for 25 years as a full-time faculty member. Professor SRU's background was similar to that of NKU. The only difference was that he had been at SRU for 27 years.

Prof. MU sees racism as both a historical and contemporary issue, arguing that the existence of inequality and exclusion in human life has lived with us for a long time, and it is still ongoing. Prof. MU was quick to add that overt racism and discrimination are prohibited in the U.S. and can be reported. However, he admitted the existence of overt racism in the system, saying:

Presently, I do not experience overt racism, as it has changed in form compared to about 30 years ago when I became a tenured faculty member at this university. Now, what I see in this PWI is a "subtle or covert form" of marginalization. Your ideas and contributions may be overlooked or attributed to others. The subtle nature of racism nowadays makes it challenging to prove and address. This can hinder your intellectual growth and career advancement if you fail to recognize it.

To elaborate on this, Prof. MU provided an example where he spearheaded the development of a new course in the department. Eventually, the new program's success was attributed to another White counterpart in the faculty. This supports the assertion by [63] that subtle systemic and structural barriers and biases, nurtured in educational institutions, perpetuate discrimination and inequalities in employment opportunities, resource allocation, and academic ranks and positions.

On the covert form of racism in faculties, Prof. NKU lamented, "*I had raised a point in a meeting. Even though the department chair hailed the salient point, he mentioned a colleague who had spoken earlier and attributed that conversation to him. I felt undervalued. This has happened to me at least three times.*"

On the continuity of discriminatory practices in faculties presently, Prof. SRU said:

Discriminatory practices continue in this institution. This is my 27<sup>th</sup> year as a faculty professor at this university. There is a discriminatory practice in the end-of-semester/year academic performance evaluation criteria. Despite my assiduous work in the department, faculty and students' evaluations do not essentially encourage me. Since performance evaluations are mostly discre-

tional, you cannot complain about your evaluation remarks to anyone.

Prof. SRU expressed worry about the evaluation assessment. According to him, evaluation carries weight regarding one's promotion and recommendation as a faculty professor. He mentioned that about 20 years ago, students questioned his authority and expertise as a male faculty of color more frequently than his white counterparts. *"I no longer experience students questioning my expertise, but I now see it as bias against me as a professor of color, which is often reflected in my students' teaching evaluation assessments."* Prof. SRU commented. Prof. SRU's experience aligns with [14]-[17] literature, which found that male instructors of color are more challenged by their students than their White counterparts. The study uncovered that an unimproved course teaching and performance evaluation report negatively affects faculty members' promotional advancement. This is consistent with the work of [11], who contends that stereotyping and biased assumptions through evaluation hinder the career advancement and success opportunities of faculty members of color, thus defeating the idea of diversity, equity, and inclusion in the world of academia, which is pursuing these ideals in all facets of life. Again, regarding performance expectations, [37] have found that faculty men of color are held to higher standards, with their performance or work subjected to greater scrutiny and criticism. These biases and stereotypes in teaching evaluation would deny some faculty men of color promotions, tenure, or leadership roles. It is essential to mention that constantly maneuvering through racism and discriminatory challenges in faculties would ultimately affect faculty members of color by causing physical, mental, and emotional exhaustion.

The research explored hiring and representation as a Black faculty member, examining whether there is any evidence of discriminatory practices. Prof. SRU narrated that:

The underrepresentation of faculty of color in leadership roles and tenure-track positions in this university is a significant issue that needs more attention. This institution needs to demonstrate a greater commitment to diversity in its hiring and appointment practices, resulting in more representative representation. For the past 20 years, I have applied for numerous leadership roles within my area of knowledge and capacity at this institution, but I have been consistently denied. I have resolved not to worry about myself over such a fruitless effort anymore due to what I perceive as biases in hiring and appointment.

These attitudes and devaluation can lead to lower teaching evaluations for black male faculty members compared to their white peers [18]. Black academics. Prof. SRU's experience resonates with [57], who have argued that discriminatory practices, bias in hiring, and microaggressions in academia continue to affect Black scholars' career advancement. They further contend that implicit bias influences hiring decisions, performance evaluations, and opportunities for career advancement, thereby limiting the number of Black academics.

Prof. SRU explained that the department chair is the ultimate authority regarding faculty performance evaluations. Since these evaluations are primarily discretionary, the chair's biases can significantly affect the outcome of one's evaluation report. He admitted that he is sometimes assigned to a role. Still, he views those engagements as discriminatory and unrewarding, saying, "*I am frequently asked to take on additional unpaid responsibilities, such as mentoring minority students or serving on minor and diversity committees. These 'invisible assignments' are rarely recognized when it comes to promotion and tenure evaluations by the university.*" The experience of Prof. SRU is reflected in what [64] has put forward. There are biases in hiring and promotion processes, a lack of diversity in leadership positions, and the marginalization of research and scholarship in many PIWs. [39] has argued that Black academics are often expected to undertake additional, uncompensated responsibilities, such as mentoring minority students, serving on diversity committees, and representing diversity initiatives. This also confirms the assertion that the prevalence of racial stereotypes and biases within academic culture can lead to the devaluation of Black male faculty members' contributions and competencies in academia [65]. [66] posit that the underrepresentation of Black men in faculty roles and the teaching profession reflects broader societal barriers and disparities that limit their educational and career advancement.

Considering the workplace climate in the faculty, whether you feel included as a faculty member of color was an interview question posed to Prof. NKU. He said:

I feel isolated and primarily marginalized within this PWI. The "Whites" discuss issues among themselves, which makes me feel isolated from most conversations, and we are only two Blacks in this faculty. I mostly isolate myself as a coping strategy because of my experience of microaggressions, stereotyping, and doubts about my qualifications and expertise. My article on Race was heavily criticized as racially biased lenses judged it.

Prof. NKU further lamented, "*This is a large university with a substantial staff and student body.*" *Nevertheless, I see it as a big forest. You see it as one entity when you are far away from the forest. However, as you go closer, you will see individual trees standing.*" The experience of Prof. NKU resonates with [14] assertion that there is a price to be paid for being "one of a few" ethnic minorities in the faculty ranks, such as the emotional stress of heightened visibility in an ethnically or racially unbalanced environment and expectations that the individual is representative of the entire group. The emotional stress comes from isolation from the dominant group (White) in the faculty. It was learned from the professor's experience that one of the significant contributors to academic success is the association with faculty members to share ideas about publication and other academic prospects. Without these affiliations, faculty men of color will be isolated and likely struggle through the scholarship ladder. Prof. NKU appreciated the isolation challenge, saying that it has helped him to produce a reasonable number of publications as he has more time to concentrate on things that matter most to him while alone. This is consistent with [67], who argue that racial inequalities in ac-

cess to education, resources, and opportunities shape the pipeline and pathways for Black faculty members through coping and surviving strategies.

The undervaluation and undermining of Black academics' teaching and research were identified as areas where discriminatory practices still prevail. Prof. SRU mentioned what he calls "disregard in the teaching profession," saying:

Nowadays, students rarely challenge the authority and expertise of Black instructors. They will refuse to respond to your questions and conversations in class, which makes teaching and learning non-interactive. This situation has compelled me to use a teacher-centered lecture method, which is unsuitable for seminar courses. What is concerning about this situation is that these students, who have gone on a "speaking strike" in class, will write in their evaluation report that "the professor's teaching is boring and non-interactive" to prove a point that the instructor is incompetent. I have adopted a coping strategy whereby I mostly ask them to write responses to questions I pose in class for points or marks. This strategy prompts them to provide some responses, at least.

This justifies the assertion that the negative behaviors and attitudes of students and complaints being made to faculty chairs and administrators about their instructors' teaching efficacy demonstrate clear discrimination against Black faculty members [68]-[70].

The study has revealed factors that put Black professors at a disadvantage in their research.

Academic works and publications on diversity, race, discrimination, culture, ethnicity, and related topical issues by Black scholars are often considered affirmative action research and are less regarded in academia. Such research seeks racial Blacks' emancipation but is unfortunately considered less rigorous. This is pure discrimination and discouraging. Prof. MU lamented.

Prof. MU's experience supports the argument of [16] that discrimination extends across various areas of the academy, including teaching, research, service, and overall experiences within the campus community. [16] further contests that the dominant racial group often views academic writings on diversity, culture, ethnicity, and inclusion as "risky" and not mainstream research.

### **3.2. Intersectionality of Race and Gender in Faculties**

The experiences of Black male faculty professors are shaped by the intersectionality of their racial and gender identities. The intersection of race and gender creates unique challenges and barriers for Black male faculty members, who may face stereotypes and expectations based on both their racial and gender identities [71] [72]. Black male faculty members may be perceived as threatening or intimidating, which can lead to negative evaluations and interactions with students and colleagues [73] [74]. It is essential to mention that when racism intersects with other forms of oppression (sexism, homophobia, classism, etc.), it will result in a

unique experience of discrimination and marginalization. [73] have argued that individuals should be free from harm and coercion.

The study revealed the intersection of race and gender in relation to faculty men of color. It was revealed that race and gender can limit the opportunities and support available to Black male faculty members in PWI in the U.S., who are underrepresented in both racial and gender-based roles and programs. The professors' experiences are shaped by their gender and racial identities, leading to unique challenges. The study uncovered experiences of gendered racism that uniquely affect Black male professors, such as stereotype threat, hypermasculinity, or the expectations tied to Black male identity in PWI academic spaces. The experiences of Black male faculty who also identify as various gender orientation or have disabilities may be further complicated by the intersection of multiple marginalized identities [75].

Prof. MU admitted the intersectionality of gender and race in his circumstances as he is the only Black male professor in his department. He complained about additional responsibilities in the department, such as orienting newly admitted students and nominating them to attend book and program launches, among others. This is consistent with the findings of [13] [14] [76], who argue that faculty men of color tend to be assigned additional responsibilities for race and gender issues more so than their White counterparts. Prof. MU's view on dealing with the intersectionality of gender and race as a Black male faculty member was similar to that of [77]. [77] have postulated that the intersectionality of gender and race requires an intersectional approach that recognizes Black faculty members' unique challenges and experiences with multiple marginalized identities to address the systemic and structural barriers that perpetuate inequity in faculties.

[78] contends that men from dominant racial groups often hold positions of power and privilege more than those in minoritized groups, which can perpetuate systemic inequalities. He argues that men of color may face both racism and sexism, leading to marginalization and exclusion from mainstream society. Men of color also lose their uniqueness because of society's expectation that they assume stereotypical roles and are not allowed to grow professionally in other areas of the academy [79]. [79] further argues that men are often subjected to stereotypes based on their race and gender, perpetuating harmful ideas about masculinity and racial identity. The intersection of race and gender affects men's identity development, self-perception, and sense of belonging [80].

Still, on the intersectionality of race and gender, [69] has asserted that most Black faculty men of color come to a workplace with the complete understanding that they will be heavily scrutinized and held to a higher standard of assessment than their White counterparts. This has been supported by [14] [15], who argue that, in most cases, "proven" Black male academics still must prove themselves as academics in U.S. higher education faculties. This assertion was confirmed by Prof. NKU, who mentioned:

Although, according to the faculty's profile directory, I have more publica-

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tions than any professor in this faculty, I still need to prove myself as an academic at times, despite my notable academic achievements. This shows an ingrained systemic marginalization that mitigates against Black men's scholarly advancement in academia.

As a Black male researcher researching the topic of "*Racism in Faculties: The Plight of Men of Color in Focus*," my positionality is shaped by my identity, experiences, and perspectives, which may influence my approach to this research. I have a unique, insider perspective on the experiences of men of color in academic settings. This offers valuable insights into the subject under discussion. Notwithstanding, I cultivated self-awareness and critical reflection on how my experiences may shape the interpretations of data and findings. Also, my positionality led me to approach the research with keen empathy for the marginalized group under study. This work aims to give a voice to those whose experiences are often overlooked or silenced, and I feel a sense of responsibility to advocate for change and greater understanding within academic institutions. Again, it is important to acknowledge that my background and identity may introduce biases, even while I strive for objectivity. Being aware of these potential biases helped me to maintain rigorous standards in the research methods, data analysis, and conclusions. Furthermore, my positionality might also influence how I interact with participants, particularly as I share similar experiences. To overcome this, I navigated the ethical complexities of maintaining professional boundaries while acknowledging shared struggles, ensuring that participants' voices were authentically represented. By critically examining my positionality, I ensured that the research was conducted with high integrity, openness, professionalism, and awareness of how my identity might shape the research process and findings.

The lived experiences of faculty men of color in U.S. higher institutions per this study and the similar experiences of academics in the UK and South Africa confirm the ingrained, structural, and institutionalized nature of racism in higher education in society. This research highlights the complexity of addressing racial discrimination in higher education, demonstrating that systemic reforms must be accompanied by leadership diversity to create genuinely inclusive academic environments. This work offers valuable insights into the systemic issues Black male faculty members encounter and contributes to the broader discourse on transforming higher education worldwide, especially in areas with potential racial instincts. As part of a call for institutional reforms, mandatory training on institutional biases and revised inclusive tenure criteria are recommended in higher institutions.

This study makes a significant contribution to the literature on racism in higher education. The findings of this research have signaled to higher education administrators and players that there is still a significant amount of racism in faculties, even though they are subtle in contemporary times. These higher educational institution stakeholders, including faculty and department heads, faculty members, and administrators, can use these findings to adjust their perceptions of the racism

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trends in their faculties. This will help them devise new strategies to improve the collegiate environment for faculty members of color. Additionally, this study will enhance academics' understanding of the work lives of Black male professors within predominantly White institutions (PWIs) in the U.S.

Again, a clear understanding of discriminatory practices that continue to marginalize and disadvantage Black male tenured professors in the four-year PWIs will signal the future aspiring Black male faculty of color on what to expect when working at the PWIs potentially so that they will be able to better adjust to the challenges they may face with regards to discrimination in faculties. The interview revealed a more subtle and indirect racist act where White students may refuse to contribute to class discussions facilitated by a Black professor. With the knowledge gained from this study, current and future Black professors will be informed about the teaching strategies to adopt in order to achieve their learning objectives.

Moreover, by providing the philosophical and historical context of racism in U.S. higher education faculties, the study advances knowledge by identifying temporal shifts in racism and the experiences of Black male faculty members, comparing current experiences with those documented decades ago. This highlights the evolution of the nature of discrimination. This approach provides insight into whether the field has made progress in terms of diversity and inclusion or if the same issues persist. This study has also examined coping strategies, resilience, and forms of resistance employed by these faculty members. By examining the experiences of Black male faculty members, the study contributes to the understanding of how these men navigate, challenge, or resist racism in their daily lives. This can provide actionable insights into support systems or strategies that promote professional survival and well-being in challenging environments, such as educational institutions and other organizational settings.

Ultimately, this article has made a substantial contribution to social justice, equity, and inclusion in educational institutions and society. Focusing on the experiences of men of color in academic faculties sheds light on the often overlooked and under-researched racial disparities in educational environments. This awareness can push institutions to confront uncomfortable truths about how systemic racism impacts faculty members of color, challenging the notion of a meritocratic academic system. Again, the article brings attention to the subtler yet pervasive forms of racism, such as microaggressions, bias in hiring and promotions, and alienation, which contribute to the marginalization of faculty men of color. By giving voice to these experiences, this article fosters a deeper understanding of how these barriers impede academic and professional success for faculty men of color. The article contributes to the advancement of knowledge by advocating for the creation of educational spaces that value and promote equity, inclusion, and justice for all faculty members, particularly those from historically marginalized groups. This stresses the importance of policies that ensure equal access to resources, opportunities for professional development, and fair performance evaluations. The paper further brings an intersectional lens to the racism discussion,

emphasizing how race, gender, and other factors intersect to create unique challenges for men of color in faculties. Understanding this complexity allows for more targeted interventions addressing the multiple dimensions of discrimination that faculty members of color face. This article can promote social justice beyond the confines of academia. Its findings resonate beyond academia, contributing to broader social justice movements. By documenting how institutionalized racism operates in universities in the U.S., the article can inspire similar investigations in other sectors, such as business, healthcare, or government, and push for social reform in those areas.

### 3.3. Limitations to the Study

While this study provides valuable insights into the discriminatory practices that continue to marginalize and disadvantage Black male faculty members in the U.S. in this era of cultural wars, it is equally important to acknowledge its limitations. In the first place, faculty members' experiences with racism can be deeply personal and varied, leading to challenges in generalizing findings across institutions or demographics. This variability may make it challenging to identify universal patterns or systemic issues related to racism. Again, comparing the experiences of Black male faculty members across different institutions, disciplines, or geographic locations may reveal different dynamics due to a lack of standardized metrics or prior research. This could hinder the identification of broader trends of racism. Lastly, social dynamics and policies surrounding racism are evolving, potentially affecting the relevance of findings over time. These results may become outdated, especially in rapidly changing social or institutional climates. Further studies on racism could integrate longitudinal studies to track trends in faculty discrimination over time, employing mixed-methods approaches to capture both qualitative and quantitative aspects of the experiences of men of color. Studies could also examine the coping strategies that have enabled faculty members to succeed in academia despite continued discriminatory practices.

## 4. Conclusions

This research looked at discriminatory practices that continue to marginalize and disadvantage Black male faculty members in the U.S., focusing on its deep historical and philosophical origins and the systemic factors that perpetuate unfairness in academia. Using Critical Race Theory as a framework, the study revealed the diverse experiences of some faculty male professors of color in three Predominantly White Institutions (PWIs) in the United States. The findings confirmed discrimination, marginalization, and uneven representation within higher educational institutions in the U.S. The study also explored how race and gender intersect to impact the experiences of faculty men of color. The conversation on covert racism that has led to discrimination in academia is critical for educational democracy and social justice. Racism contradicts the core ideals of fairness and inclusion that institutions must respect. To establish a more equitable and inclusive

environment for Black male faculty members, higher education institutions must proactively address systemic racism, reform policies and procedures, and provide targeted support and resources to faculty members of color. This will help build a more diverse and inclusive academic community that supports all members of society in their pursuit of success.

Finally, this study contributes to knowledge about the ongoing conversation on racial inequality in higher education with an emphasis on Black male faculty members' experiences and challenges in the U.S. This work does not only expose how race is used to marginalize minoritized faculty men of color but also helps to shape our understanding of the complex and multifaceted nature of racism as a social phenomenon in higher institutions of learning in the U.S. Racism is a morally and ethically reprehensible ideology that violates fundamental human rights and the dignity of the marginalized. Therefore, any attempt to undermine the effects of racism in any form in the academia amounts to the continuity of discriminatory practices that marginalize and disadvantage Black male faculty members.

### Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest.

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